

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

Case No. 08-civ-61686 (Seitz/O'Sullivan)

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION,

Plaintiff,

v.

ACE GROUP, INC., a Delaware corporation, d/b/a
AMERICAN CREDIT EXPERTS, INC., THE ACE
GROUP, INC., THE ACE GROUP, and ACE,

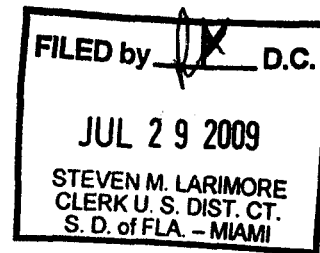
LEGAL CREDIT REPAIR CENTER, INC., a
Florida corporation, d/b/a LCRC,

MICHAEL SINGER,

MELVIN KESSLER, and

GERALD ROTH,

Defendants.



**CORRECTED STIPULATED FINAL JUDGMENT AND ORDER FOR
PERMANENT INJUNCTION AND OTHER EQUITABLE RELIEF
AGAINST DEFENDANTS ACE GROUP, INC., LEGAL CREDIT
REPAIR CENTER, INC., GERALD ROTH, AND MICHAEL SINGER**

Plaintiff, Federal Trade Commission ("FTC" or "Commission"), filed a Complaint for Injunctive and Other Equitable Relief pursuant to Sections 13(b) and 19 of the Federal Trade Commission Act ("FTC Act"), 15 U.S.C. §§ 53(b) and 57b, and Section 410(b) of the Credit Repair Organizations Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679h(b), to obtain preliminary and permanent injunctive relief, rescission of contracts and restitution, disgorgement of ill-gotten gains, and other

equitable relief against Defendants Ace Group, Inc., also d/b/a American Credit Experts, Inc., The Ace Group, Inc., The Ace Group, and ACE; Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc., also d/b/a LCRC; Gerald Roth, Michael Singer, and Melvin Kessler (collectively, "Defendants") for engaging in deceptive acts or practices in connection with the advertising, marketing, promotion, offering for sale, or sale of credit repair services in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), and in violation of sections of the Credit Repair Organizations Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1679-1679j.

Plaintiff and Defendants Ace Group, Inc., also d/b/a American Credit Experts, Inc., The Ace Group, Inc., The Ace Group, and ACE; Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc., also d/b/a LCRC; Gerald Roth, and Michael Singer (collectively, "Settling Defendants"), by and through their attorneys, have agreed to entry of this Stipulated Final Judgment and Order for Permanent Injunction and Other Equitable Relief Against Defendants Ace Group, Inc., Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc., Gerald Roth, and Michael Singer ("Order") by this Court in order to resolve all claims against Settling Defendants in this action. Plaintiff and Settling Defendants have consented to entry of this Order without trial or adjudication of any issue of law or fact herein and without Settling Defendants admitting liability for any of the violations alleged in the Complaint.

Being fully advised in the premises and acting upon the joint motion of the parties to enter this Order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED as follows:

1. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this case and personal jurisdiction over Settling Defendants.

2. The Complaint states a claim upon which relief may be granted against Settling Defendants under Sections 5, 13(b), and 19 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45, 53(b), and 57b, and Section 410(b) of the Credit Repair Organizations Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679h(b). Each Settling Defendant is a “credit repair organization,” as that term is defined in Section 403(3) of the Credit Repair Organizations Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679a(3).

3. Venue in this district is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and 15 U.S.C. § 53(b).

4. The activities of Settling Defendants are “in or affecting commerce” as “commerce” is defined in Section 4 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

5. Settling Defendants have read and fully understand the Complaint against them and the provisions of this Order, and they freely enter into this Order.

6. Settling Defendants waive: (a) all rights to seek judicial review or otherwise challenge or contest the validity of this Order; (b) any claim that they may have against the Commission, its employees, representatives, or agents; (c) all claims under the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, *as amended by* Pub. L. 104-121, 110 Stat. 847, 863-64 (1996); and (d) any rights to attorneys’ fees that may arise under said provision of law. The Commission and Settling Defendants shall each bear their own costs and attorneys’ fees incurred in this action.

7. This Order is in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other civil or criminal remedies that may be provided by law.

8. Entry of this Order is in the public interest.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Order, the following definitions shall apply:

A. **“Assets”** means any legal or equitable interest in, right to, or claim to, any real and personal property, including, but not limited to, “goods,” “instruments,” “equipment,” “fixtures,” “general intangibles,” “inventory,” “checks,” “notes” (as these terms are defined in the Uniform Commercial Code), and all chattels, leaseholds, contracts, mail or other deliveries, shares of stock, lists of consumer names, accounts, credits, premises, receivables, funds, and cash, wherever located.

B. **“Assisting others”** includes, but is not limited to: (1) performing customer service functions, including receiving or responding to consumer complaints; (2) formulating or providing, or arranging for the formulation or provision of, any marketing material; (3) providing names of, or assisting in the generation of, potential customers; or (4) performing marketing or billing services of any kind.

C. **“Credit repair organization”** shall have the meaning ascribed to that term in Section 403(3) of the Credit Repair Organizations Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679a(3). A complete copy of the Credit Repair Organizations Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1679-1679j, is attached.

D. **“Credit repair service”** means any service, in return for payment of money or other valuable consideration, for the express or implied purpose of: (1) improving any consumer’s credit record, credit history, or credit rating; or (2) providing advice or assistance to any consumer with regard to any activity or service the purpose of which is to improve a consumer’s credit record, credit history, or credit rating.

E. **“Customer”** means any person who has paid, or may be required to pay, for goods or services offered for sale or sold by Settling Defendants.

F. **“Individual Settling Defendant(s)”** means Gerald Roth and Michael Singer.

G. **“Corporate Settling Defendant(s)”** means Ace Group, Inc., also d/b/a American Credit Experts, Inc., The Ace Group, Inc., The Ace Group, and ACE; and Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc., also d/b/a LCRC, and their successors and assigns.

H. **“Settling Defendant(s)”** means all of the Individual Settling Defendants and the Corporate Settling Defendants, individually, collectively, or in any combination.

I. **“Document”** is synonymous in meaning and equal in scope to the usage of the term in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 34(a), and includes writings, drawings, graphs, charts, photographs, audio and video recordings, computer records, and other data compilations from which the information can be obtained and translated, if necessary, through detection devices into reasonably usable form. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of the term.

J. **“Person”** means a natural person, an organization or other legal entity, including a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability company, association, cooperative, or any other group or combination acting as an entity.

K. **“Plaintiff”** means the Federal Trade Commission.

L. The terms **“and”** and **“or”** in this Order shall be construed conjunctively or disjunctively, as necessary to make the applicable sentence or phrase inclusive rather than exclusive.

M. The term **“including”** shall mean “including without limitation.”

ORDER

I. PROHIBITED BUSINESS ACTIVITIES PURSUANT TO THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION ACT

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that, in connection with the advertising, marketing,

promotion, offering for sale, or sale of any good or service, including, but not limited to, any credit repair service, Settling Defendants, and their officers, agents, employees, and corporations, and those persons in active concert or participation with them who receive actual notice of this Order by personal service or otherwise, whether acting directly or through any trust, corporation, subsidiary, division or other device, are hereby permanently restrained and enjoined from misrepresenting, or assisting others in misrepresenting, expressly or by implication, any material fact, including, but not limited to:

- A. Their ability to improve or otherwise affect a consumer's credit report or profile or ability to obtain credit;
- B. The total cost to purchase, receive, or use the goods or services;
- C. Any material restrictions, limitations, or conditions to purchase, receive, or use the goods or services;
- D. Any material aspect of the nature or terms of a refund, cancellation, exchange, or repurchase policy for the goods or services; or
- E. Any material aspect of the performance, efficacy, nature, or central characteristics of the goods or services.

II. PROHIBITED BUSINESS ACTIVITIES PURSUANT TO THE CREDIT REPAIR ORGANIZATIONS ACT

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, in connection with the advertising, marketing, promotion, offering for sale, or sale of any credit repair service to consumers, Settling Defendants, and their officers, agents, employees, and corporations, and those persons in active concert or participation with them who receive actual notice of this Order by personal service or otherwise, whether acting directly or through any trust, corporation, subsidiary, division, or other

device, are hereby permanently restrained and enjoined from violating, or assisting others in violating, the Credit Repair Organizations Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1679-1679j, including, but not limited to:

- A. By making or using untrue or misleading representations to induce consumers to purchase their services, including, but not limited to, misrepresenting that a credit repair organization can improve substantially consumers' credit reports or profiles by permanently removing negative information from consumers' credit reports, even where such information is accurate and not obsolete, in violation of Section 404(a)(3), 15 U.S.C. § 1679b(a)(3); or
- B. By charging or receiving money or other valuable consideration for the performance of credit repair services, before such services are fully performed, in violation of Section 404(b), 15 U.S.C. § 1679b(b).

III. PROHIBITION ON COLLECTING ACCOUNTS

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Settling Defendants, and their officers, agents, employees, corporations, and those persons in active concert or participation with any of them who receive actual notice of this Order by personal service or otherwise, whether acting directly or through any trust, corporation, subsidiary, division or other device, are hereby permanently restrained and enjoined from attempting to collect, collecting, selling, or assigning, or otherwise transferring any right to collect payment for any credit repair services from any consumer who purchased or agreed to purchase credit repair services from any Defendant prior to the entry of the Stipulated Order for Preliminary Injunction and Other Equitable Relief, dated December 3, 2008.

IV. PROHIBITION ON DISCLOSING CUSTOMER INFORMATION

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Settling Defendants, and their officers, agents, employees, and corporations, and those persons in active concert or participation with any of them who receive actual notice of this Order by personal service or otherwise, whether acting directly or through any trust, corporation, subsidiary, division or other device, are hereby permanently restrained and enjoined from:

- A. Selling, renting, leasing, transferring, or otherwise disclosing the name, address, telephone number, email address, Social Security number, credit card number, bank account number, date of birth, or other identifying or financial information of any person about whom any Settling Defendant obtained such information in connection with the activities alleged in the Complaint; and
- B. Benefitting from or using the name, address, telephone number, email address, Social Security number, credit card number, bank account number, date of birth, or other identifying or financial information of any person about whom any Settling Defendant obtained such information in connection with the activities alleged in the Complaint.

Provided, however, that Settling Defendants may disclose identifying information to a law enforcement agency or as required by any law, regulation, or court order.

V. DISPOSAL OF SENSITIVE CONSUMER INFORMATION

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

Settling Defendants, and their officers, agents, employees, and corporations, and those persons in active concert or participation with any of them who receive actual notice of this

Order by personal service or otherwise, whether acting directly or through any trust, corporation, subsidiary, division or other device, are hereby permanently restrained and enjoined from failing to take reasonable measures to protect against unauthorized access to or use of sensitive consumer information when disposing of information obtained in connection with the advertising, marketing, promotion, offering for sale, or sale of any credit repair services or other credit-related services. Reasonable measures include but are not limited to: (i) burning, pulverizing, or shredding of papers containing sensitive consumer information so that the information cannot practicably be read or reconstructed; and (ii) destroying or erasing electronic media containing sensitive consumer information so that the information cannot practicably be read or reconstructed.

For the purposes of this section, “sensitive consumer information” shall mean: (i) an individual’s Social Security number; financial account number; or any other information that enables a person to access another person’s account (such as credit card, debit card, checking, savings, money market, stock, commodities, share or similar account, utility bill, or mortgage loan account); or (ii) individual’s name or address or phone number **in combination with the** individual’s date of birth, driver’s license number or other state identification number or a foreign country equivalent, or passport number.

VI. MONETARY JUDGMENT

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

A. Judgment for equitable monetary relief is hereby entered jointly and severally against Settling Defendants, in the amount of Twenty Million, Six Hundred Forty-five Thousand, Seven Hundred Fifty-four Dollars (\$20,645,754), and the FTC is awarded a monetary

judgment in this amount. *Provided, however,* that payment of this judgment shall be suspended for the Corporate Settling Defendants subject to the conditions set forth in the Section of this Order titled "Right to Reopen;" and that payment of this judgment shall be suspended for the Individual Settling Defendants, upon the Payments set forth in Subsection B of this Section, and subject to the conditions set forth in the Section of this Order titled "Right to Reopen;"

B. Individual Settling Defendants Gerald Roth and Michael Singer each shall pay the Commission the amount of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000), for a total of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) (the "Payments"). The Payments shall be made to the Commission as follows: prior to or concurrently with their execution of this Order, each Individual Settling Defendant shall transfer their respective first installment of the Payments in the amount of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000), to their attorney, Reed B. McClosky, Esq., who shall hold the entire sum for no purpose other than payment to the Commission after entry of this Order by the Court; and within thirty (30) days of their execution of this Order, each Individual Settling Defendant shall transfer their respective second installment of the Payments in the amount of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000), to their attorney, Reed B. McClosky, Esq., who shall hold the entire sum for no purpose other than payment to the Commission after entry of this Order by the Court. Within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of notice of the entry of this Order, the Individual Settling Defendants' attorney, Reed B. McClosky, Esq., shall transfer the Payments, totaling Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000), to the Commission by wire transfer in accordance with directions provided by the Commission, or in such other manner as agreed to by the Commission.

C. All funds paid pursuant to this Order shall be deposited into a fund administered by the Commission or its agent to be used for equitable relief, including, but not limited to,

consumer redress, and any attendant expenses for the administration of such equitable relief fund. Settling Defendants shall cooperate fully to assist the Commission in identifying consumers who may be entitled to redress pursuant to this Order. If the Commission determines, in its sole discretion, that redress to consumers is wholly or partially impracticable or funds remain after redress is completed, the Commission may apply any remaining funds for such other equitable relief (including consumer information remedies) as it determines to be reasonably related to Settling Defendants' practices alleged in the Complaint. Any funds not used for such equitable relief shall be deposited to the United States Treasury as disgorgement. Settling Defendants shall have no right to challenge the Commission's choice of remedies under this Section, and shall have no right to contest the manner of distribution chosen by the Commission. This judgment for equitable monetary relief is solely remedial in nature and is not a fine, penalty, punitive assessment, or forfeiture;

D. In the event of any default on an Individual Settling Defendant's obligation to make payment under this Section, interest, computed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1961, as amended, shall accrue from the date of default to the date of payment, and shall immediately become due and payable by such defaulting Individual Settling Defendant;

E. Settling Defendants relinquish all dominion, control, and title to the funds paid to the fullest extent permitted by law. Settling Defendants shall make no claim to or demand return of the funds, directly or indirectly, through counsel or otherwise;

F. Settling Defendants agree that the facts as alleged in the Complaint filed in this action shall be taken as true without further proof in any bankruptcy case or subsequent civil litigation pursued by the Commission to enforce its rights to any payment or money judgment

pursuant to this Order, including, but not limited to, a nondischargeability complaint in any bankruptcy case. For settlement purposes only, Settling Defendants further stipulate and agree that the facts alleged in the Complaint establish all elements necessary to sustain an action pursuant to, and that this Order shall have collateral estoppel effect for purposes of, Section 523(a)(2)(A) of the Bankruptcy Code, 11 U.S.C. § 523(a)(2)(A). Plaintiff and Settling Defendants agree to the foregoing nondischargeability for the purposes of this settlement only. Except as noted above: (i) the Settling Defendants' agreement to the facts as stated in Section VI.F shall not constitute an admission of wrongdoing for any other purpose including, but not limited to, any applications for licenses, employment or otherwise; and (ii) the Settling Defendants deny any liability and specifically deny committing any fraud;

G. In accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 7701, Settling Defendants are hereby required, unless they already have done so, to furnish to the Commission taxpayer identifying numbers (social security numbers or employer identification numbers), which shall be used for purposes of collecting and reporting on any delinquent amount arising out of their relationship with the government. Settling Defendants are further required, unless they already have done so, to provide the Commission with clear, legible and full-size photocopies of all valid driver's licenses that they possess, which will be used for reporting and compliance purposes; and

H. Proceedings instituted under this Section are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other civil or criminal remedies that may be provided by law, including any other proceedings the Commission may initiate to enforce this Order.

VII. RIGHT TO REOPEN

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

A. Within ten (10) business days after the date of entry of this Order by the Court, each Settling Defendant shall submit to the Commission a truthful sworn statement (in the form shown on Attachment A of this Order), that shall reaffirm and attest to the truthfulness, accuracy, and completeness of their own sworn financial statements previously provided to the Commission, consisting of the sworn financial statement executed by Defendant Ace Group, Inc. on December 17, 2008, with attachments; the sworn financial statement executed by Defendant Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc. on December 15, 2008, with attachments; the sworn financial statement executed by Defendant Gerald Roth on December 5, 2008, with attachments; the sworn financial statement executed by Defendant Michael Singer on December 5, 2008, with attachments; the federal income tax returns, real estate documentation, trust documentation, bank signature cards, and other financial statements, along with their attachments and written explanations, produced by Settling Defendants on January 12 and 27, and February 9 and 13, 2009 (collectively, the "Financial Statements"). Plaintiff's agreement to this Order is expressly premised upon the truthfulness, accuracy, and completeness of Settling Defendants' financial condition, as represented in the Financial Statements referenced above, which contain material information upon which Plaintiff relied in negotiating and agreeing to the terms of this Order;

B. If, upon motion by the Commission to the Court, the Court finds that a Settling Defendant failed to disclose any material asset, materially misrepresented the value of any asset, or made any other material misrepresentation or omission in Settling Defendants' Financial Statements, the suspension of the monetary judgment will be terminated and the entire judgment

amount of Twenty Million, Six Hundred Forty-five Thousand, Seven Hundred Fifty-four Dollars (\$20,645,754), less the sum of transfers made pursuant to the Section titled "Monetary Judgment," shall become immediately due and payable by such Settling Defendant, and interest computed at the rate prescribed under 28 U.S.C. § 1961, as amended, shall begin immediately to accrue on the unpaid balance; and

C. Proceedings instituted under this Section are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other civil or criminal remedies that may be provided by law, including any other proceedings the Commission may initiate to enforce this Order.

VIII. COMPLIANCE MONITORING

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, for the purpose of (i) monitoring and investigating compliance with any provision of this Order, and (ii) investigating the accuracy of any Settling Defendant's Financial Statements upon which the Commission's agreement to this Order is expressly premised:

A. Within ten (10) days of receipt of written notice from a representative of the Commission, Settling Defendants each shall submit additional written reports, which are true and accurate and sworn to under penalty of perjury; produce documents for inspection and copying; appear for deposition; and provide entry during normal business hours to any business location in each Settling Defendant's possession or direct or indirect control to inspect the business operation;

B. In addition, the Commission is authorized to use all other lawful means, including but not limited to:

1. obtaining discovery from any person, without further leave of court,

using the procedures prescribed by Fed. R. Civ. P. 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 45, and 69;

2. posing as consumers and suppliers to Settling Defendants, their employees, or any other entity managed or controlled in whole or in part by any Settling Defendant, without the necessity of identification or prior notice; and

C. Settling Defendants each shall permit representatives of the Commission to interview any employer, consultant, independent contractor, representative, agent, or employee who has agreed to such an interview, relating in any way to any conduct subject to this Order. The person interviewed may have counsel present.

Provided, however, that nothing in this Order shall limit the Commission's lawful use of compulsory process, pursuant to Sections 9 and 20 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 49, 57b-1, to obtain any documentary material, tangible things, testimony, or information relevant to unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce (within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. § 45(a)(1)).

IX. COMPLIANCE REPORTING

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, in order that compliance with the provisions of this Order may be monitored:

- A. For a period of four (4) years from the date of entry of this Order,
 1. Each Individual Settling Defendant shall notify the Commission of the following:
 - a. any changes in such Defendant's residence, mailing addresses, and

telephone numbers, within ten (10) days of the date of such change;

- b. any changes in such Defendant's employment status (including self-employment), and any change in such Defendant's ownership in any business entity, within ten (10) days of the date of such change. Such notice shall include the name and address of each business that such Defendant is affiliated with, employed by, creates or forms, or performs services for; a detailed description of the nature of the business; and a detailed description of such Defendant's duties and responsibilities in connection with the business or employment; and
 - c. any changes in such Defendant's name or use of any aliases or fictitious names;
2. Settling Defendants shall notify the Commission of any changes in structure of any Corporate Settling Defendant or any business entity that any Settling Defendant directly or indirectly controls, or has an ownership interest in, that may affect compliance obligations arising under this Order, including but not limited to: incorporation or other organization; a dissolution, assignment, sale, merger, or other action; the creation or dissolution of a subsidiary, parent, or affiliate that engages in any acts or practices subject to this Order; or a change in the business name or address, at least thirty (30) days prior to such change, *provided* that, with

respect to any proposed change in the business entity about which a Settling Defendant learns less than thirty (30) days prior to the date such action is to take place, such Defendant shall notify the Commission as soon as is practicable after obtaining such knowledge.

B. One hundred eighty (180) days after the date of entry of this Order and annually thereafter for a period of five (5) years, Settling Defendants each shall provide a written report to the Commission, which is true and accurate and sworn to under penalty of perjury, setting forth in detail the manner and form in which they have complied and are complying with this Order.

This report shall include, but not be limited to:

1. For each Individual Settling Defendant:
 - a. such Defendant's then-current residence address, mailing addresses, and telephone numbers;
 - b. such Defendant's then-current employment status (including self-employment), including the name, addresses, and telephone numbers of each business that such Defendant is affiliated with, employed by, or performs services for; a detailed description of the nature of the business; and a detailed description of such Defendant's duties and responsibilities in connection with the business or employment; and
 - c. any other changes required to be reported under Subsection A of this Section.

2. For all Settling Defendants:
 - a. a copy of each acknowledgment of receipt of this Order, obtained pursuant to the Section titled "Distribution of Order;" and
 - b. any other changes required to be reported under Subsection A of this Section.

C. Each Settling Defendant shall notify the Commission of the filing of a bankruptcy petition by such Settling Defendant within fifteen (15) days of filing.

D. For the purposes of this Order, Settling Defendants shall, unless otherwise directed by the Commission's authorized representatives, send by overnight courier all reports and notifications required by this Order to the Commission to the following address:

Associate Director for Enforcement
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Room NJ-2122
Washington, D.C. 20580
RE: *FTC v. The Ace Group, et al.*
Civil Action 08-61686

Provided, that, in lieu of overnight courier, Settling Defendants may send such reports or notifications by first-class mail, but only if Settling Defendants contemporaneously send an electronic version of such report or notification to the Commission at: DEBrief@ftc.gov.

E. For purposes of the compliance reporting and monitoring required by this Order, the Commission is authorized to communicate directly with each Settling Defendant. *Provided however*, nothing in this provision shall limit the Commission's authority to pose as a consumer or supplier pursuant to Subsection B.2 of the Section titled "Compliance Monitoring."

X. RECORD KEEPING PROVISIONS

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, for a period of seven (7) years from the date of entry of this Order, Settling Defendants, and any business in which an Individual Settling Defendant is the majority owner of the business or directly or indirectly manages or controls the business, and their agents, employees, officers, corporations, and those persons in active concert or participation with them who receive actual notice of this Order by personal service or otherwise, are hereby restrained and enjoined from failing to create and retain the following records:

- A. Accounting records that reflect the cost of goods or services sold, revenues generated, and the disbursement of such revenues;
- B. Personnel records accurately reflecting: the name, address, and telephone number of each person employed in any capacity by such business, including as an independent contractor; that person's job title or position; the date upon which the person commenced work; and the date and reason for the person's termination, if applicable;
- C. Customer files containing the names, addresses, phone numbers, dollar amounts paid, quantity of items or services purchased, and description of items or services purchased, to the extent such information is obtained in the ordinary course of business;
- D. Complaints and refund requests (whether received directly, indirectly, or through any third party) and any responses to those complaints or requests;
- E. Copies of all sales scripts, training materials, advertisements, direct mail solicitations, contracts sent to consumers, or other marketing materials; and
- F. All records and documents necessary to demonstrate full compliance with each provision of this Order, including but not limited to, copies of acknowledgments of receipt of

this Order required by the Sections titled "Distribution of Order" and "Acknowledgment of Receipt of Order" and all reports submitted to the FTC pursuant to the Section titled "Compliance Reporting."

XI. DISTRIBUTION OF ORDER

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, for a period of four (4) years from the date of entry of this Order, Settling Defendants shall deliver copies of this Order as directed below:

A. Corporate Settling Defendant: Each Corporate Settling Defendant must deliver a copy of this Order to (1) all of its principals, officers, directors, and managers; (2) all of its employees, agents, and representatives who engage in conduct related to the subject matter of the Order; and (3) any business entity resulting from any change in structure set forth in Subsection A.2 of the Section titled "Compliance Reporting." For current personnel, delivery shall be within five (5) days of service of this Order upon such Settling Defendant. For new personnel, delivery shall occur prior to them assuming their responsibilities. For any business entity resulting from any change in structure set forth in Subsection A.2 of the Section titled "Compliance Reporting," delivery shall be at least ten (10) days prior to the change in structure.

B. Individual Settling Defendant as Control Person: For any business that an Individual Settling Defendant controls, directly or indirectly, or in which such Individual Settling Defendant has a majority ownership interest, such Defendant must deliver a copy of this Order to (1) all principals, officers, directors, and managers of that business; (2) all employees, agents, and representatives of that business who engage in conduct related to the subject matter of the Order; and (3) any business entity resulting from any change in structure set forth in Subsection A.2 of the Section titled "Compliance Reporting." For current personnel, delivery

shall be within five (5) days of service of this Order upon such Defendant. For new personnel, delivery shall occur prior to them assuming their responsibilities. For any business entity resulting from any change in structure set forth in Subsection A.2 of the Section titled "Compliance Reporting," delivery shall be at least ten (10) days prior to the change in structure.

C. Individual Settling Defendant as employee or non-control person: For any business where an Individual Settling Defendant is not a controlling person of a business but otherwise engages in conduct related to the subject matter of this Order, such Defendant must deliver a copy of this Order to all principals and managers of such business before engaging in such conduct.

D. Settling Defendants must secure a signed and dated statement acknowledging receipt of the Order, within thirty (30) days of delivery, from all persons receiving a copy of the Order pursuant to this Section.

XII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF ORDER

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that each Settling Defendant, within five (5) business days of receipt of this Order as entered by the Court, must submit to the Commission a truthful sworn statement acknowledging receipt of this Order.

XIII. RETENTION OF JURISDICTION

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Court shall retain jurisdiction of this matter for purposes of construction, modification, and enforcement of this Order.

XIV. COOPERATION WITH FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Settling Defendants shall, in connection with this action or any subsequent investigations related to or associated with the transactions or the

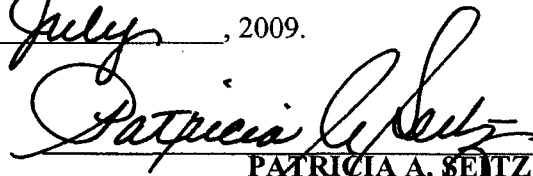
occurrences that are the subject of the FTC's Complaint, cooperate in good faith with the FTC, and appear or cause their officers, members, employees, representatives, or agents to appear at such places and times as the FTC shall reasonably request, after written notice, for interviews, conferences, pretrial discovery, review of documents, and for such other matters as may be reasonably requested by the FTC. If requested in writing by the FTC, the Settling Defendants shall appear or cause their officers, members, employees, representatives, or agents to appear and provide truthful testimony in any trial, deposition, or other proceeding related to or associated with the transactions or the occurrences that are the subject of the Complaint, without the service of a subpoena.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 54(b), that there is no just reason for delay and the Clerk of the Court shall immediately enter this Order as a final order.

JUDGMENT IS THEREFORE ENTERED in favor of Plaintiff and against Defendants Ace Group, Inc., also d/b/a American Credit Experts, Inc., The Ace Group, Inc., The Ace Group, and ACE; Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc., also d/b/a LCRC; Gerald Roth, and Michael Singer, pursuant to all the terms and conditions recited above.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED this 29th day of July, 2009.



PATRICIA A. SELTZ
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

SO STIPULATED AND AGREED:

FOR PLAINTIFF FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION:

Michele Stolls

Date: 5/27/09

MICHELE STOLLS (A5501233)
ROBIN E. EICHEN (A5501247)
Attorneys for Plaintiff
1 Bowling Green, Suite 318
New York, NY 10004
(212) 607-2829
mstolls@ftc.gov; reichen@ftc.gov

**FOR DEFENDANTS ACE GROUP, INC.,
LEGAL CREDIT REPAIR CENTER,
GERALD ROTH, AND MICHAEL SINGER:**

Reed B. McClosky

Date: 4/3/09

REED B. McCLOSKY (297534)
FREEDMAN & McCLOSKY
Attorneys for Defendants
1 East Broward Boulevard, Suite 700
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301
(954) 764-3800
rbm@fmflorida.com

Gerald Roth

Date: 4/3/09

GERALD ROTH
Individually, and as owner and officer of
The Ace Group, Inc. and
Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc.
701 Carrotwood Terrace
Plantation, FL 33324

Michael Singer

Date: 4/3/09

MICHAEL SINGER
Individually, and as owner and officer of
The Ace Group, Inc. and
Legal Credit Repair Center, Inc.
23380 Mirabella Circle South
Boca Raton, FL 33433

ATTACHMENT A

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

Case No. 08-civ-61686 (Seitz/O'Sullivan)

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION,

Plaintiff,

v.

ACE GROUP, INC., a Delaware corporation, d/b/a
AMERICAN CREDIT EXPERTS, INC., THE ACE
GROUP, INC., THE ACE GROUP, and ACE,

LEGAL CREDIT REPAIR CENTER, INC., a
Florida corporation, d/b/a LCRC,

MICHAEL SINGER,

MELVIN KESSLER, and

GERALD ROTH,

Defendants.

_____ /

**AFFIDAVIT OF DEFENDANT _____
ATTESTING TO TRUTHFULNESS OF INDIVIDUAL
AND CORPORATE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

I, _____, hereby state that the information contained in the
Financial Statement of Defendant _____ dated _____ was to the
best of my information, knowledge, and belief, true, accurate, and complete at such time.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing

is true and correct. Executed on _____ [date], at _____

[city and state].

[Signature of Defendant]

[Print Full Name]

State of _____, City of _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this _____ day of _____, 200 ____.

Notary Public
My Commission Expires:

subjected to garnishment for any one indebtedness.

(b) Penalties

Whoever willfully violates subsection (a) of this section shall be fined not more than \$1,000, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both. (Pub. L. 90-321, title III, §304, May 29, 1968, 82 Stat. 163.)

§ 1675. Exemption for State-regulated garnishments

The Secretary of Labor may by regulation exempt from the provisions of section 1673(a) and (b)(2) of this title garnishments issued under the laws of any State if he determines that the laws of that State provide restrictions on garnishment which are substantially similar to those provided in section 1673(a) and (b)(2) of this title.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title III, §305, May 29, 1968, 82 Stat. 164; Pub. L. 95-30, title V, §501(e)(4), May 23, 1977, 91 Stat. 162.)

AMENDMENTS

1977—Pub. L. 95-30 substituted "section 1673(a) and (b)(2) of this title" for "section 1673(a) of this title" in two places.

§ 1676. Enforcement by Secretary of Labor

The Secretary of Labor, acting through the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor, shall enforce the provisions of this subchapter.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title III, §306, May 29, 1968, 82 Stat. 164.)

§ 1677. Effect on State laws

This subchapter does not annul, alter, or affect, or exempt any person from complying with, the laws of any State

- (1) prohibiting garnishments or providing for more limited garnishment than are allowed under this subchapter, or
- (2) prohibiting the discharge of any employee by reason of the fact that his earnings have been subjected to garnishment for more than one indebtedness.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title III, §307, May 29, 1968, 82 Stat. 164.)

SUBCHAPTER II-A—CREDIT REPAIR ORGANIZATIONS

§ 1679. Findings and purposes

(a) Findings

The Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) Consumers have a vital interest in establishing and maintaining their credit worthiness¹ and credit standing in order to obtain and use credit. As a result, consumers who have experienced credit problems may seek assistance from credit repair organizations which offer to improve the credit standing of such consumers.
- (2) Certain advertising and business practices of some companies engaged in the busi-

ness of credit repair services have worked a financial hardship upon consumers, particularly those of limited economic means and who are inexperienced in credit matters.

(b) Purposes

The purposes of this subchapter are—

(1) to ensure that prospective buyers of the services of credit repair organizations are provided with the information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the purchase of such services; and

(2) to protect the public from unfair or deceptive advertising and business practices by credit repair organizations.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §402, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-455.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior title IV of Pub. L. 90-321, May 29, 1968, 82 Stat. 164, as amended by Pub. L. 91-344, July 20, 1970, 84 Stat. 440; Pub. L. 92-321, June 30, 1972, 86 Stat. 382, which was set out as a note under section 1601 of this title, established a bipartisan National Commission on Consumer Finance to study the functioning and structure of the consumer finance industry as well as consumer credit transactions generally. The Commission was to submit a final report by Dec. 31, 1972, and was to cease to exist thereafter.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF SUBCHAPTER

Section 413 of title IV of Pub. L. 90-321, as added by Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-462, provided that: "This title [enacting this subchapter] shall apply after the end of the 6-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Credit Repair Organizations Act [Sept. 30, 1996], except with respect to contracts entered into by a credit repair organization before the end of such period."

§ 1679a. Definitions

For purposes of this subchapter, the following definitions apply:

(1) Consumer

The term "consumer" means an individual.

(2) Consumer credit transaction

The term "consumer credit transaction" means any transaction in which credit is offered or extended to an individual for personal, family, or household purposes.

(3) Credit repair organization

The term "credit repair organization"—

(A) means any person who uses any instrumentality of interstate commerce or the mails to sell, provide, or perform (or represent that such person can or will sell, provide, or perform) any service, in return for the payment of money or other valuable consideration, for the express or implied purpose of—

- (i) improving any consumer's credit record, credit history, or credit rating; or
- (ii) providing advice or assistance to any consumer with regard to any activity or service described in clause (i); and

(B) does not include—

- (i) any nonprofit organization which is exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of title 26;

¹So in original. Probably should be "creditworthiness".

(ii) any creditor (as defined in section 1602 of this title), with respect to any consumer, to the extent the creditor is assisting the consumer to restructure any debt owed by the consumer to the creditor; or

(iii) any depository institution (as that term is defined in section 1813 of title 12) or any Federal or State credit union (as those terms are defined in section 1752 of title 12), or any affiliate or subsidiary of such a depository institution or credit union.

(4) Credit

The term "credit" has the meaning given to such term in section 1602(e) of this title.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §403, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-455.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

For a prior section 403 of Pub. L. 90-321, see note set out under section 1679 of this title.

§ 1679b. Prohibited practices

(a) In general

No person may—

(1) make any statement, or counsel or advise any consumer to make any statement, which is untrue or misleading (or which, upon the exercise of reasonable care, should be known by the credit repair organization, officer, employee, agent, or other person to be untrue or misleading) with respect to any consumer's credit worthiness,¹ credit standing, or credit capacity to—

(A) any consumer reporting agency (as defined in section 1681a(f) of this title); or

(B) any person—

(i) who has extended credit to the consumer; or

(ii) to whom the consumer has applied or is applying for an extension of credit;

(2) make any statement, or counsel or advise any consumer to make any statement, the intended effect of which is to alter the consumer's identification to prevent the display of the consumer's credit record, history, or rating for the purpose of concealing adverse information that is accurate and not obsolete to—

(A) any consumer reporting agency;

(B) any person—

(i) who has extended credit to the consumer; or

(ii) to whom the consumer has applied or is applying for an extension of credit;

(3) make or use any untrue or misleading representation of the services of the credit repair organization; or

(4) engage, directly or indirectly, in any act, practice, or course of business that constitutes or results in the commission of, or an attempt to commit, a fraud or deception on any person in connection with the offer or sale of the services of the credit repair organization.

(b) Payment in advance

No credit repair organization may charge or receive any money or other valuable consider-

ation for the performance of any service which the credit repair organization has agreed to perform for any consumer before such service is fully performed.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §404, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-456.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

For a prior section 404 of Pub. L. 90-321, see note set out under section 1679 of this title.

§ 1679c. Disclosures

(a) Disclosure required

Any credit repair organization shall provide any consumer with the following written statement before any contract or agreement between the consumer and the credit repair organization is executed:

"Consumer Credit File Rights Under State and Federal Law

"You have a right to dispute inaccurate information in your credit report by contacting the credit bureau directly. However, neither you nor any 'credit repair' company or credit repair organization has the right to have accurate, current, and verifiable information removed from your credit report. The credit bureau must remove accurate, negative information from your report only if it is over 7 years old. Bankruptcy information can be reported for 10 years.

"You have a right to obtain a copy of your credit report from a credit bureau. You may be charged a reasonable fee. There is no fee, however, if you have been turned down for credit, employment, insurance, or a rental dwelling because of information in your credit report within the preceding 60 days. The credit bureau must provide someone to help you interpret the information in your credit file. You are entitled to receive a free copy of your credit report if you are unemployed and intend to apply for employment in the next 60 days, if you are a recipient of public welfare assistance, or if you have reason to believe that there is inaccurate information in your credit report due to fraud.

"You have a right to sue a credit repair organization that violates the Credit Repair Organization Act. This law prohibits deceptive practices by credit repair organizations.

"You have the right to cancel your contract with any credit repair organization for any reason within 3 business days from the date you signed it.

"Credit bureaus are required to follow reasonable procedures to ensure that the information they report is accurate. However, mistakes may occur.

"You may, on your own, notify a credit bureau in writing that you dispute the accuracy of information in your credit file. The credit bureau must then reinvestigate and modify or remove inaccurate or incomplete information. The credit bureau may not charge any fee for this service. Any pertinent information and copies of all documents you have concerning an error should be given to the credit bureau.

"If the credit bureau's reinvestigation does not resolve the dispute to your satisfaction, you

¹So in original. Probably should be "creditworthiness."

may send a brief statement to the credit bureau, to be kept in your file, explaining why you think the record is inaccurate. The credit bureau must include a summary of your statement about disputed information with any report it issues about you.

“The Federal Trade Commission regulates credit bureaus and credit repair organizations. For more information contact:

“The Public Reference Branch
“Federal Trade Commission
“Washington, D.C. 20580”.

(b) Separate statement requirement

The written statement required under this section shall be provided as a document which is separate from any written contract or other agreement between the credit repair organization and the consumer or any other written material provided to the consumer.

(c) Retention of compliance records

(1) In general

The credit repair organization shall maintain a copy of the statement signed by the consumer acknowledging receipt of the statement.

(2) Maintenance for 2 years

The copy of any consumer's statement shall be maintained in the organization's files for 2 years after the date on which the statement is signed by the consumer.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §405, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-457.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Credit Repair Organization Act, referred to in subsec. (a), probably means the Credit Repair Organizations Act, Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-454, which is classified generally to this subchapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1601 of this title and Tables.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

For a prior section 405 of Pub. L. 90-321, see note set out under section 1679 of this title.

§ 1679d. Credit repair organizations contracts

(a) Written contracts required

No services may be provided by any credit repair organization for any consumer—

(1) unless a written and dated contract (for the purchase of such services) which meets the requirements of subsection (b) of this section has been signed by the consumer; or

(2) before the end of the 3-business-day period beginning on the date the contract is signed.

(b) Terms and conditions of contract

No contract referred to in subsection (a) of this section meets the requirements of this subsection unless such contract includes (in writing)—

(1) the terms and conditions of payment, including the total amount of all payments to be made by the consumer to the credit repair organization or to any other person;

(2) a full and detailed description of the services to be performed by the credit repair organization for the consumer, including—

(A) all guarantees of performance; and
(B) an estimate of—

(i) the date by which the performance of the services (to be performed by the credit repair organization or any other person) will be complete; or

(ii) the length of the period necessary to perform such services;

(3) the credit repair organization's name and principal business address; and

(4) a conspicuous statement in bold face type, in immediate proximity to the space reserved for the consumer's signature on the contract, which reads as follows: “You may cancel this contract without penalty or obligation at any time before midnight of the 3rd business day after the date on which you signed the contract. See the attached notice of cancellation form for an explanation of this right.”.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §406, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-458.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

For a prior section 406 of Pub. L. 90-321, see note set out under section 1679 of this title.

§ 1679e. Right to cancel contract

(a) In general

Any consumer may cancel any contract with any credit repair organization without penalty or obligation by notifying the credit repair organization of the consumer's intention to do so at any time before midnight of the 3rd business day which begins after the date on which the contract or agreement between the consumer and the credit repair organization is executed or would, but for this subsection, become enforceable against the parties.

(b) Cancellation form and other information

Each contract shall be accompanied by a form, in duplicate, which has the heading “Notice of Cancellation” and contains in bold face type the following statement:

“You may cancel this contract, without any penalty or obligation, at any time before midnight of the 3rd day which begins after the date the contract is signed by you.

“To cancel this contract, mail or deliver a signed, dated copy of this cancellation notice, or any other written notice to [name of credit repair organization] at [address of credit repair organization] before midnight on [date]

“I hereby cancel this transaction,

[date]

[purchaser's signature].”.

(c) Consumer copy of contract required

Any consumer who enters into any contract with any credit repair organization shall be given, by the organization—

(1) a copy of the completed contract and the disclosure statement required under section 1679c of this title; and

(2) a copy of any other document the credit repair organization requires the consumer to sign,

at the time the contract or the other document is signed.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §407, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-459.)

PRIOR PROVISIONS

For a prior section 407 of Pub. L. 90-321, see note set out under section 1679 of this title.

§ 1679f. Noncompliance with this subchapter

(a) Consumer waivers invalid

Any waiver by any consumer of any protection provided by or any right of the consumer under this subchapter—

- (1) shall be treated as void; and
- (2) may not be enforced by any Federal or State court or any other person.

(b) Attempt to obtain waiver

Any attempt by any person to obtain a waiver from any consumer of any protection provided by or any right of the consumer under this subchapter shall be treated as a violation of this subchapter.

(c) Contracts not in compliance

Any contract for services which does not comply with the applicable provisions of this subchapter—

- (1) shall be treated as void; and
- (2) may not be enforced by any Federal or State court or any other person.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §408, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-459.)

§ 1679g. Civil liability

(a) Liability established

Any person who fails to comply with any provision of this subchapter with respect to any other person shall be liable to such person in an amount equal to the sum of the amounts determined under each of the following paragraphs:

(1) Actual damages

The greater of—

- (A) the amount of any actual damage sustained by such person as a result of such failure; or
- (B) any amount paid by the person to the credit repair organization.

(2) Punitive damages

(A) Individual actions

In the case of any action by an individual, such additional amount as the court may allow.

(B) Class actions

In the case of a class action, the sum of—

- (i) the aggregate of the amount which the court may allow for each named plaintiff; and

- (ii) the aggregate of the amount which the court may allow for each other class member, without regard to any minimum individual recovery.

(3) Attorneys' fees

In the case of any successful action to enforce any liability under paragraph (1) or (2),

the costs of the action, together with reasonable attorneys' fees.

(b) Factors to be considered in awarding punitive damages

In determining the amount of any liability of any credit repair organization under subsection (a)(2) of this section, the court shall consider, among other relevant factors—

- (1) the frequency and persistence of noncompliance by the credit repair organization;
- (2) the nature of the noncompliance;
- (3) the extent to which such noncompliance was intentional; and
- (4) in the case of any class action, the number of consumers adversely affected.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §409, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-459.)

§ 1679h. Administrative enforcement

(a) In general

Compliance with the requirements imposed under this subchapter with respect to credit repair organizations shall be enforced under the Federal Trade Commission Act [15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.] by the Federal Trade Commission.

(b) Violations of this subchapter treated as violations of Federal Trade Commission Act

(1) In general

For the purpose of the exercise by the Federal Trade Commission of the Commission's functions and powers under the Federal Trade Commission Act [15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.], any violation of any requirement or prohibition imposed under this subchapter with respect to credit repair organizations shall constitute an unfair or deceptive act or practice in commerce in violation of section 5(a) of the Federal Trade Commission Act [15 U.S.C. 45(a)].

(2) Enforcement authority under other law

All functions and powers of the Federal Trade Commission under the Federal Trade Commission Act shall be available to the Commission to enforce compliance with this subchapter by any person subject to enforcement by the Federal Trade Commission pursuant to this subsection, including the power to enforce the provisions of this subchapter in the same manner as if the violation had been a violation of any Federal Trade Commission trade regulation rule, without regard to whether the credit repair organization—

- (A) is engaged in commerce; or
- (B) meets any other jurisdictional tests in the Federal Trade Commission Act.

(c) State action for violations

(1) Authority of States

In addition to such other remedies as are provided under State law, whenever the chief law enforcement officer of a State, or an official or agency designated by a State, has reason to believe that any person has violated or is violating this subchapter, the State—

- (A) may bring an action to enjoin such violation;
- (B) may bring an action on behalf of its residents to recover damages for which the

person is liable to such residents under section 1679g of this title as a result of the violation; and

(C) in the case of any successful action under subparagraph (A) or (B), shall be awarded the costs of the action and reasonable attorney fees as determined by the court.

(2) Rights of Commission

(A) Notice to Commission

The State shall serve prior written notice of any civil action under paragraph (1) upon the Federal Trade Commission and provide the Commission with a copy of its complaint, except in any case where such prior notice is not feasible, in which case the State shall serve such notice immediately upon instituting such action.

(B) Intervention

The Commission shall have the right—

(1) to intervene in any action referred to in subparagraph (A);

(i) upon so intervening, to be heard on all matters arising in the action; and

(iii) to file petitions for appeal.

(3) Investigatory powers

For purposes of bringing any action under this subsection, nothing in this subsection shall prevent the chief law enforcement officer, or an official or agency designated by a State, from exercising the powers conferred on the chief law enforcement officer or such official by the laws of such State to conduct investigations or to administer oaths or affirmations or to compel the attendance of witnesses or the production of documentary and other evidence.

(4) Limitation

Whenever the Federal Trade Commission has instituted a civil action for violation of this subchapter, no State may, during the pendency of such action, bring an action under this section against any defendant named in the complaint of the Commission for any violation of this subchapter that is alleged in that complaint.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §410, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-460.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Trade Commission Act, referred to in subsecs. (a) and (b), is act Sept. 26, 1914, ch. 311, 38 Stat. 717, as amended, which is classified generally to subchapter I (§41 et seq.) of chapter 2 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 58 of this title and Tables.

§ 1679i. Statute of limitations

Any action to enforce any liability under this subchapter may be brought before the later of—

(1) the end of the 5-year period beginning on the date of the occurrence of the violation involved; or

(2) in any case in which any credit repair organization has materially and willfully misrepresented any information which—

(A) the credit repair organization is required, by any provision of this subchapter, to disclose to any consumer; and

(B) is material to the establishment of the credit repair organization's liability to the consumer under this subchapter,

the end of the 5-year period beginning on the date of the discovery by the consumer of the misrepresentation.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §411, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-461.)

§ 1679j. Relation to State law

This subchapter shall not annul, alter, affect, or exempt any person subject to the provisions of this subchapter from complying with any law of any State except to the extent that such law is inconsistent with any provision of this subchapter, and then only to the extent of the inconsistency.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title IV, §412, as added Pub. L. 104-208, div. A, title II, §2451, Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009-462.)

SUBCHAPTER III—CREDIT REPORTING AGENCIES

§ 1681. Congressional findings and statement of purpose

(a) Accuracy and fairness of credit reporting

The Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The banking system is dependent upon fair and accurate credit reporting. Inaccurate credit reports directly impair the efficiency of the banking system, and unfair credit reporting methods undermine the public confidence which is essential to the continued functioning of the banking system.

(2) An elaborate mechanism has been developed for investigating and evaluating the credit worthiness,¹ credit standing, credit capacity, character, and general reputation of consumers.

(3) Consumer reporting agencies have assumed a vital role in assembling and evaluating consumer credit and other information on consumers.

(4) There is a need to insure that consumer reporting agencies exercise their grave responsibilities with fairness, impartiality, and a respect for the consumer's right to privacy.

(b) Reasonable procedures

It is the purpose of this subchapter to require that consumer reporting agencies adopt reasonable procedures for meeting the needs of commerce for consumer credit, personnel, insurance, and other information in a manner which is fair and equitable to the consumer, with regard to the confidentiality, accuracy, relevancy, and proper utilization of such information in accordance with the requirements of this subchapter.

(Pub. L. 90-321, title VI, §602, as added Pub. L. 91-508, title VI, §601, Oct. 26, 1970, 84 Stat. 1128.)

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2003 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 108-159, §3, Dec. 4, 2003, 117 Stat. 1953, provided that: "Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Act [see Short Title of 2003 Amendment note set out under section 1601 of this title] and the amendments made by this Act—

¹So in original. Probably should be "creditworthiness."