



May 7, 2019

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky  
Chairman  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and  
Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Ranking Member  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and  
Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Schakowsky and Ranking Member Rodgers:

On behalf of ACA International, I am writing regarding the hearing, “Oversight of the Federal Trade Commission: Strengthening Protections for Americans’ Privacy and Data Security.” ACA International is the leading trade association for credit and collection professionals representing approximately 3,000 members, including credit grantors, third-party collection agencies, asset buyers, attorneys, and vendor affiliates in an industry that employs more than 230,000 employees worldwide.

Without an effective collection process, the economic viability of businesses and, by extension, the American economy in general, is threatened. Recovering rightfully owed consumer debt enables organizations to survive, helps prevent job losses, keeps credit, goods, and services available, and reduces the need for tax increases to cover governmental budget shortfalls. Furthermore, without the information that ACA members provide to consumers, they cannot make informed decisions that help preserve their ability to access credit, medical care, and a host of other goods and services. ACA members play a key role in helping consumers fulfill their financial goals and responsibilities while facilitating broad access to the credit market.

ACA appreciates that the Subcommittee is exploring ways to develop a federal data privacy standard to protect consumers. We strongly support the goal of protecting the privacy of consumers and their data and are committed to vigorous compliance in furtherance of this pursuit. However, there are many lawful and important reasons why those in the accounts receivable management industry may collect and store consumer data in compliance with existing privacy and consumer protection laws. As Congress continues its work with the Federal Trade Commission and moves forward with its legislative efforts, it is critical that it is diligent in ensuring legitimate businesses are not faced with insurmountable regulatory burdens surrounding data privacy laws, particularly if they stifle innovation.

The current landscape for compliance in this area for the industry is robust including sweeping and complex state legislation such as the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 (CCPA), which also touches many businesses outside of California. Additionally, there are multiple

ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS  
4040 WEST 70TH STREET 55435  
P.O. BOX 390106, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55439-0106  
TEL (952) 926-6547 FAX (952) 926-1624

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS OFFICE  
509 2ND STREET NE, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002  
TEL (202) 547-2670  
FAX (202) 547-2671

federal laws ACA members are already complying with in this area including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), the Gramm Leach Bliley Act, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Notably, the industry is already very restricted in how information can be communicated to consumers under the FDCPA, and Congress should carefully consider these requirements in consultation with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau as it crafts any new legislation in this area. Furthermore, the General Data Protection Regulation went into effect in the European Union in May 2018 and impacts certain ACA members in the United States, as well as international accounts receivable management agencies.

As Congress moves forward with any potential new laws for federal data privacy, we ask that it is cautious not to create any duplicative, conflicting, or overly complex standards for those in the accounts receivable management industry who already work carefully to protect consumer data. ACA and its members have also outlined their concerns specific to the CCPA in hearings and through comments at the state level. We ask that you consider that feedback and those concerns if the Subcommittee looks to different state laws, and as it considers a federal standard.

Lastly, we strongly urge Congress that any law going forward should preempt state requirements so that all Americans receive the same level of privacy protections. Thank you for seeking input on this issue. We look forward to continuing our engagement with the Energy and Commerce Committee and other Congressional Committees and Subcommittees exploring this issue.

Sincerely,



Mark Need  
Chief Executive Officer