

## AkPIRG Testimony on SB 222 – Protection of Personal Information

### Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 222. It is encouraging to see the Legislature working together to protect Alaskan consumers from Identity Theft.

It's been a year since the Choicepoint Inc. data breach that began a deluge of dangerous releases of consumers' personal, financial information. More than 52 million people have been put in danger of identity theft because of security breaches since that time, according to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse.

Alaska topped the nation in fraud complaints last year: 249 per 100,000 people, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Identity theft topped the list of nationwide complaints for the sixth year in a row, according to the FTC's annual report. Alaskans lost an average of \$1,062. According to [the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse](#), the average consumer spends 175 hours clearing their name after an identity theft.

The two most important measures of SB 222 will mandate that consumers be notified after a security breach and will allow consumers to freeze their credit reports.

Twenty-seven states have filed security freeze bills, including California and Texas which have filed bills to strengthen their existing security freeze laws. There are now a total of twelve states with laws allowing consumers to restrict access to their credit reports, with more states taking this necessary step to protect consumers.

Security breach notification legislation was introduced in at least 35 states. As of January 2006, at least 23 states have passed security breach notification laws.

It is time for Alaska to take these steps to better protect Alaskan consumers. Other provisions in SB 226 will further shield consumers from identity thieves by protecting private information and assuring that victims of identity theft will be treated fairly in their attempts to clear their name.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for doing what you can to pass Identity Theft protection legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Steve Cleary  
AkPIRG Director

## AkPIRG Testimony on SB 222 – Protection of Personal Information

### Senate Judiciary Committee

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