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H.593

Introduced by Representatives Marcotte of Coventry and Botzow of Pownal
Referred to Committee on
Date:
Subject: Commerce and trade; consumer protection
Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to adopt
miscellaneous consumer protection provisions.

An act relating to miscellaneous consumer protection provisions

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

* * * Automatic Renewal Provisions in Consumer Contracts * * *

Sec. 1. 9 V.S.A. § 2454a is added to read:

§ 2454a. CONSUMER CONTRACTS; AUTOMATIC RENEWAL

(a) A contract between a consumer and a seller or a lessor with an initial term of one year or longer that renews for a subsequent term that is longer than one month shall not renew automatically unless:

- (1) the contract states clearly and conspicuously the terms of the automatic renewal provision in plain, unambiguous language in bold-face type;
- (2) in addition to accepting the contract, the consumer takes an affirmative action to opt in to the automatic renewal provision; and

1 (3) if the consumer opts in to the automatic renewal provision, the seller
2 or lessor provides a written or electronic notice to the consumer:

3 (A) not less than 30 days and not more than 60 days before the
4 earliest of:

5 (i) the automatic renewal date;

6 (ii) the termination date; or

7 (iii) the date by which the consumer must provide notice to cancel
8 the contract; and

9 (B) that includes:

10 (i) the date the contract will terminate and a clear statement that
11 the contract will renew automatically unless the consumer cancels the contract
12 on or before the termination date;

13 (ii) the length and any additional terms of the renewal period;

14 (iii) one or more methods by which the consumer can cancel the
15 contract; and

16 (iv) contact information for the seller or lessor.

17 (b) A person who violates a provision of subsection (a) of this section
18 commits an unfair and deceptive act in commerce in violation of section 2453
19 of this title.

20 (c) The provisions of this section do not apply to:

1 (1) a contract between a consumer and a financial institution, as defined
2 in 8 V.S.A. § 11101; or

3 (2) a contract for insurance, as defined in 8 V.S.A. § 3301a.

4 Sec. 2. AUTOMATIC RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS; APPLICABILITY TO
5 EXISTING CONTRACTS

6 (a) A contract between a consumer and a seller or lessor in effect on
7 January 1, 2019 with an initial term of one year or longer that renews for a
8 subsequent term that is longer than one month shall not renew automatically
9 unless the seller or lessor sends written or electronic notice to the consumer
10 with the information required in 9 V.S.A. § 2454a(a)(3)(B):

11 (1) not less than 30 days and not more than 60 days before the
12 earliest of:

13 (A) the automatic renewal date;

14 (B) the termination date; or

15 (C) the date by which the consumer must provide notice to cancel the
16 contract; or

17 (2) if the contract will automatically renew on or before January 31,
18 2019, then as soon as is commercially reasonable after this section takes effect.

19 (b) The Attorney General shall have the same authority to enforce this
20 section as set forth in 9 V.S.A. § 2454a.

21 (c) The provisions of this section do not apply to:

1 (1) a contract between a consumer and a financial institution, as defined
2 in 8 V.S.A. § 11101; or

3 (2) a contract for insurance, as defined in 8 V.S.A. § 3301a.

4 * * * Retainage of Payment for Construction Materials * * *

5 Sec. 3. 9 V.S.A. § 4005 is amended to read:

6 § 4005. RETAINAGE

7 (a) If payments under a construction contract are subject to retainage, any
8 amounts ~~which~~ that have been retained during the performance of the contract
9 and ~~which~~ that are due to be released to the contractor upon final completion
10 shall be paid within 30 days after final acceptance of the work.

11 (b) If an owner is not withholding retainage, a contractor or subcontractor
12 may withhold retainage from its subcontractor in accordance with their
13 agreement. The retainage shall be paid within 30 days after final acceptance of
14 the work.

15 (c) Notwithstanding any contrary agreement, a contractor shall pay to its
16 subcontractors, and each subcontractor shall in turn pay to its subcontractors,
17 within seven days after receipt of the retainage, the full amount due to each
18 such subcontractor.

19 (d) If an owner, contractor, or subcontractor unreasonably withholds
20 acceptance of the work or fails to pay retainage as required by this section, the

1 owner, contractor, or subcontractor shall be subject to the interest, penalty, and
2 attorney's fees provisions of sections 4002, 4003, and 4007 of this title.

3 (e) Notwithstanding any provision of this section or an agreement to the
4 contrary, except in the case of a contractor or subcontractor who is both a
5 materialman who delivers materials and is contracted to perform work using
6 those materials, a contractor or subcontractor shall not hold retainage for
7 contracted materials that:

8 (1) have been delivered by a materialman and accepted by the contractor
9 at the site or off site; and

10 (2) are covered by a manufacturer's warranty or graded to meet industry
11 standards, or both.

12 * * * Credit Protection for Vulnerable Persons * * *

13 Sec. 4. 9 V.S.A. § 2480a is amended to read:

14 § 2480a. DEFINITIONS

15 ~~For purposes of~~ As used in this subchapter and subchapter 9 of this chapter:

16 (1) "Consumer" means a natural person ~~residing in this State~~ other than
17 a protected consumer.

18 (2) "Credit report" means ~~any written, oral, or other communication of~~
19 ~~any information by a credit reporting agency bearing on a consumer's credit~~
20 ~~worthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation,~~

1 ~~personal characteristics, or mode of living, including an investigative credit~~
2 ~~report. The term does not include:~~

3 ~~(A) a report containing information solely as to transactions or~~
4 ~~experiences between the consumer and the person making the report; or~~

5 ~~(B) an authorization or approval of a specific extension of credit~~
6 ~~directly or indirectly by the issuer of a credit card or similar device a consumer~~
7 ~~report, as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1681a, that is used or collected in whole or in~~
8 ~~part for the purpose of serving as a factor in establishing a consumer's~~
9 ~~eligibility for credit for personal, family, or household purposes.~~

10 (3) "Credit reporting agency" or "agency" means ~~any person which, for~~
11 ~~monetary fees, dues, or on a cooperative nonprofit basis, regularly engages in~~
12 ~~whole or in part in the practice of assembling or evaluating consumer credit~~
13 ~~information or other information on consumers for the purpose of reporting to~~
14 ~~third parties on the credit rating or creditworthiness of any consumer a person~~
15 ~~who, for fees, dues, or on a cooperative basis, regularly engages in whole or in~~
16 ~~part in the practice of assembling or evaluating information concerning a~~
17 ~~consumer's credit or other information for the purpose of furnishing a credit~~
18 ~~report to another person.~~

19 (4) "Identity theft" means the unauthorized use of another person's
20 personal identifying information to obtain credit, goods, services, money, or
21 property.

1 (5) “Investigative credit report” means a report in which information on
2 a consumer’s character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of
3 living is obtained through personal interviews with neighbors, friends, or
4 associates of the consumer reported on or with others with whom the consumer
5 is acquainted or who may have knowledge concerning any such items of
6 information. The term does not include reports of specific factual information
7 on a consumer’s credit record obtained directly from a creditor of the
8 consumer or from a credit reporting agency when such information was
9 obtained directly from a creditor of the consumer or from the consumer.

10 (6) “Proper identification;” ~~as used in this subchapter, means that~~
11 ~~information generally deemed sufficient to identify a person shall have the~~
12 same meaning as in 15 U.S.C. § 1681h(a)(1), and includes:

13 (A) the consumer’s full name, including first, last, and middle names
14 and any suffix;

15 (B) any name the consumer previously used;

16 (C) the consumer’s current and recent full addresses, including street
17 address, any apartment number, city, state, and zip code;

18 (D) the consumer’s Social Security number; and

19 (E) the consumer’s date of birth.

20 (7) “Security freeze” means a notice placed in a credit report, at the
21 request of the consumer, pursuant to section 2480h of this title.

1 (8) “Consumer who is subject to a protected consumer security freeze”

2 means a natural person:

3 (A) for whom a credit reporting agency placed a security freeze

4 under section 2480h of this title; and

5 (B) who, on the day on which a request for the removal of the

6 security freeze is submitted under section 2480h of this title, is not a protected

7 consumer.

8 (9) “File” shall have the same meaning as in 15 U.S.C. § 1681a.

9 (10) “Incapacitated person” shall have the same meaning as in

10 14 V.S.A. § 3152.

11 (11)(A) “Personal information” means personally identifiable financial

12 information:

13 (i) provided by a consumer to another person;

14 (ii) resulting from any transaction with the consumer or any

15 service performed for the consumer; or

16 (iii) otherwise obtained by another person.

17 (B) “Personal information” does not include:

18 (i) publicly available information, as that term is defined by the

19 regulations prescribed under 15 U.S.C. § 6804; or

1 (ii) any list, description, or other grouping of consumers and
2 publicly available information pertaining to the consumers that is derived
3 without using any nonpublic personal information.

4 (C) Notwithstanding subdivision (B) of this subdivision (11),
5 “personal information” includes any list, description, or other grouping of
6 consumers and publicly available information pertaining to the consumers that
7 is derived using any nonpublic personal information other than publicly
8 available information.

9 (12) “Protected consumer” means a natural person who at the time a
10 request for a security freeze is made is:

11 (A) under 18 years of age, unless emancipated under 12 V.S.A.
12 chapter 217;

13 (B) an incapacitated person; or

14 (C) a protected person.

15 (13) “Protected person” shall have the same meaning as in 14 V.S.A.
16 § 3152.

17 (14) “Record” means a compilation of information that:

18 (A) identifies a protected consumer;

19 (B) is created by a consumer reporting agency solely for the purpose
20 of complying with this section; and

1 (C) may not be created or used to consider the protected consumer's
2 credit worthiness, credit standing, credit capacity, character, general reputation,
3 personal characteristics, or mode of living.

4 (15) "Representative" means a person who provides to a consumer
5 reporting agency sufficient proof of authority to act on behalf of a protected
6 consumer.

7 (16) "Sufficient proof of authority" means documentation that shows
8 that a person has authority to act on behalf of a protected consumer, including:

9 (A) a court order;

10 (B) a lawfully executed power of attorney; or

11 (C) a written, notarized statement signed by the person that expressly
12 describes the person's authority to act on behalf of the protected consumer.

13 (17) "Sufficient proof of identification" means information or
14 documentation that identifies a protected consumer or a representative,
15 including:

16 (A) a Social Security number or a copy of a Social Security card
17 issued by the U.S. Social Security Administration;

18 (B) a certified or official copy of a birth certificate; or

19 (C) a copy of a government-issued driver's license or
20 identification card.

1 Sec. 5. 9 V.S.A. chapter 63, subchapter 9 is added to read:

2 Subchapter 9. Credit Report Protection for Minors

3 § 2483. DEFINITIONS

4 As used in this subchapter:

5 (1) “Proper authority” means:

6 (A) in the case that it is required of a protected consumer’s

7 representative:

8 (i) sufficient proof of identification of the protected consumer;

9 (ii) sufficient proof of identification of the protected consumer’s

10 representative; and

11 (iii) sufficient proof of authority to act on behalf of the protected

12 consumer; and

13 (B) in the case that it is required of a consumer who is subject to a

14 protected consumer security freeze:

15 (i) sufficient proof of identification of the consumer who is subject

16 to a protected consumer security freeze; and

17 (ii) proof that the consumer who is subject to a protected

18 consumer security freeze is not a protected consumer.

19 (2) “Protected consumer security freeze” means:

20 (A) if a consumer reporting agency does not have a file that pertains

21 to a protected consumer, a restriction that:

1 (i) is placed on the protected consumer's record in accordance
2 with this subchapter; and

3 (ii) except as otherwise provided in this subchapter, prohibits the
4 consumer reporting agency from releasing the protected consumer's record; or

5 (B) if a consumer reporting agency has a file that pertains to the
6 protected consumer, a restriction that:

7 (i) is placed on the protected consumer's credit report in accordance
8 with this subchapter; and

9 (ii) except as otherwise provided in this subchapter, prohibits the
10 consumer reporting agency from releasing the protected consumer's credit
11 report or any information derived from the protected consumer's credit report.

12 § 2483a. APPLICABILITY

13 This subchapter does not apply to the use of a protected consumer's credit
14 report or record by:

15 (1) a person administering a credit file monitoring subscription service
16 to which:

17 (A) the protected consumer has subscribed; or

18 (B) the protected consumer's representative has subscribed on the
19 protected consumer's behalf;

20 (2) a person who, upon request from the protected consumer or the
21 protected consumer's representative, provides the protected consumer or the

1 protected consumer's representative with a copy of the protected consumer's
2 credit report;

3 (3) a check services or fraud prevention services company that issues:

4 (A) reports on incidents of fraud; or

5 (B) authorization for the purpose of approving or processing

6 negotiable instruments, electronic funds transfers, or similar payment methods;

7 (4) a deposit account information service company that issues reports

8 regarding account closures due to fraud, substantial overdrafts, automated

9 teller machine abuse, or similar information regarding an individual to

10 inquiring banks or other financial institutions for use only in reviewing an

11 individual's request for a deposit account at the inquiring bank or financial

12 institution;

13 (5) an insurance company for the purpose of conducting the insurance

14 company's ordinary business;

15 (6) a consumer reporting agency that:

16 (A) only resells credit information by assembling and merging

17 information contained in a database of another consumer reporting agency or

18 multiple consumer reporting agencies; and

19 (B) does not maintain a permanent database of credit information

20 from which new credit reports are produced; or

1 (7) a consumer reporting agency's database or file that consists of
2 information that:

3 (A) concerns and is used for:

4 (i) criminal record information;

5 (ii) fraud prevention or detection;

6 (iii) personal loss history information; or

7 (iv) employment, tenant, or individual background screening; and

8 (B) is not used for credit granting purposes.

9 § 2483b. SECURITY FREEZE FOR PROTECTED CONSUMER; TIME IN
10 EFFECT

11 (a) A consumer reporting agency shall place a security freeze for a
12 protected consumer if:

13 (1) the consumer reporting agency receives a request from the protected
14 consumer's representative for the placement of the security freeze; and

15 (2) the protected consumer's representative:

16 (A) submits the request described in subdivision (1) of this
17 subsection (a):

18 (i) to the address or other point of contact provided by the
19 consumer reporting agency; and

20 (ii) in the manner specified by the consumer reporting agency;

1 (B) demonstrates proper authority to the consumer reporting
2 agency; and

3 (C) if applicable, pays the consumer reporting agency a fee described
4 in section 2483c of this title.

5 (b) If a consumer reporting agency does not have a file that pertains to a
6 protected consumer when the consumer reporting agency receives a request
7 described in subsection (a) of this section, the consumer reporting agency shall
8 create a record for the protected consumer.

9 (c) The credit reporting agency shall:

10 (1) place a security freeze not later than 30 days after the date the
11 agency receives a request pursuant to subsection (a) of this section; and

12 (2) not later than 10 business days after placing the freeze:

13 (A) send a written confirmation of the security freeze to the protected
14 consumer or the protected consumer's representative; and

15 (B) provide a unique personal identification number or password,
16 other than a Social Security number, to be used to authorize the release of the
17 protected consumer's credit for a specific party, parties, or period of time.

18 (d) If the protected consumer or protected consumer's representative
19 wishes to allow the protected consumer's credit report to be accessed by a
20 specific party or parties, or for a specific period of time while a freeze is in
21 place, he or she shall:

1 (1) contact the credit reporting agency;

2 (2) request that the freeze be lifted temporarily; and

3 (3) provide:

4 (A) proper authority;

5 (B) the unique personal identification number or password provided
6 by the credit reporting agency pursuant to subsection (c) of this section; and

7 (C) the proper information regarding the third party, parties, or time
8 period for which the report shall be available to users of the credit report.

9 (e) A credit reporting agency may develop procedures involving the use of
10 telephone, fax, the Internet, or other electronic media to receive and process a
11 request from a consumer to lift temporarily a freeze on a credit report pursuant
12 to subsection (d) of this section in an expedited manner.

13 (f) A credit reporting agency that receives a request from a consumer to lift
14 temporarily a freeze on a credit report pursuant to subsection (e) of this section
15 shall comply with the request not later than three business days after receiving
16 the request.

17 (g) A credit reporting agency shall remove or lift temporarily a freeze
18 placed on a protected consumer's credit report only in the following cases:

19 (1) Upon request, pursuant to subsection (d) or (j) of this section.

20 (2) If the protected consumer's credit report was frozen due to a material
21 misrepresentation of fact by the consumer. If a credit reporting agency intends

1 to remove a freeze upon a protected consumer's credit report pursuant to this
2 subdivision, the credit reporting agency shall notify the protected consumer
3 and his or her representative in writing prior to removing the freeze on the
4 consumer's credit report.

5 (h) If a third party requests access to a credit report on which a protected
6 consumer security freeze is in effect and this request is in connection with an
7 application for credit or any other use and neither the consumer subject to the
8 protected consumer security freeze nor the protected consumer's representative
9 allows the credit report to be accessed for that specific party or period of time,
10 the third party may treat the application as incomplete.

11 (i) If a protected consumer's representative requests a security freeze
12 pursuant to this section, the credit reporting agency shall disclose to the
13 protected consumer's representative the process of placing and lifting
14 temporarily a security freeze and the process for allowing access to
15 information from the protected consumer's credit report for a specific party,
16 parties, or period of time while the protected consumer security freeze is in
17 place.

18 (j)(1) A protected consumer security freeze shall remain in place until the
19 consumer subject to the protected consumer security freeze or the protected
20 consumer's representative requests that the security freeze be removed.

1 (2) A credit reporting agency shall remove a protected consumer
2 security freeze within three business days after receiving a proper request for
3 removal.

4 (3) The protected consumer's representative or the consumer who is
5 subject to a protected consumer security freeze shall submit to the consumer
6 reporting agency a proper request for removal:

7 (A) at the address or other point of contact provided by the consumer
8 reporting agency; and

9 (B) in the manner specified by the consumer reporting agency.

10 (4) When submitting a proper request for removal, a protected
11 consumer's representative or a consumer who is subject to a protected
12 consumer security freeze shall:

13 (A) provide proper authority; and

14 (B) provide the unique personal identification number or password
15 provided by the credit reporting agency pursuant to subsection (c) of this
16 section.

17 (k) A credit reporting agency shall require proper identification of the
18 person making a request to place or remove a protected consumer security
19 freeze.

20 (l) The provisions of this section, including the protected consumer security
21 freeze, do not apply to the use of a consumer report by the following:

1 (1) A person, or the person’s subsidiary, affiliate, agent, or assignee with
2 which the protected consumer has or, prior to assignment, had an account,
3 contract, or debtor-creditor relationship for the purposes of reviewing the
4 account or collecting the financial obligation owing for the account, contract,
5 or debt, or extending credit to a consumer with a prior or existing account,
6 contract, or debtor-creditor relationship, subject to the requirements of section
7 2480e of this title. As used in this subdivision, “reviewing the account”
8 includes activities related to account maintenance, monitoring, credit line
9 increases, and account upgrades and enhancements.

10 (2) A subsidiary, affiliate, agent, assignee, or prospective assignee of a
11 person to whom access has been granted under subsection (d) of this section
12 for purposes of facilitating the extension of credit or other permissible use.

13 (3) Any person acting pursuant to a court order, warrant, or subpoena.

14 (4) The Office of Child Support when investigating a child support case
15 pursuant to Title IV-D of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 651–669b) and
16 33 V.S.A. § 4102.

17 (5) The Economic Services Division of the Department for Children and
18 Families or the Department of Vermont Health Access or its agents or
19 assignees acting to investigate welfare or Medicaid fraud.

20 (6) The Department of Taxes, municipal taxing authorities, or the
21 Department of Motor Vehicles or any of their agents or assignees acting to

1 investigate or collect delinquent taxes or assessments, including interest and
2 penalties or unpaid court orders, or to fulfill any of their other statutory or
3 charter responsibilities.

4 (7) A person's use of credit information for the purposes of prescreening
5 as provided by the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act.

6 (8) Any person for the sole purpose of providing a credit file monitoring
7 subscription service to which the consumer has subscribed.

8 (9) A credit reporting agency for the sole purpose of providing a
9 consumer with a copy of his or her credit report upon the consumer's request.

10 (10) Any property and casualty insurance company for use in setting or
11 adjusting a rate or underwriting for property and casualty insurance purposes.

12 § 2483c. FEES

13 A consumer reporting agency may not charge a fee for any service
14 performed under this subchapter.

15 * * * Use of Credit Information for Personal Insurance * * *

16 Sec. 6. 8 V.S.A. § 4727 is added to read:

17 § 4727. PERSONAL INSURANCE; USE OF CREDIT INFORMATION

18 (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to regulate the use of credit
19 information for personal insurance so that consumers are afforded certain
20 protections with respect to the use of such information.

1 (b) Scope. This section applies to personal insurance and not to
2 commercial insurance. As used in this section, “personal insurance” means
3 private passenger automobile, homeowners, motorcycle, mobile home owners,
4 and noncommercial dwelling fire insurance policies. Such policies must be
5 underwritten for personal, family, or household use. No other types of
6 insurance shall be included as personal insurance for the purpose of this
7 section.

8 (c) Definitions. As used in this section:

9 (1) “Adverse action” means a denial or cancellation of, an increase in
10 any charge for, or a reduction or other adverse or unfavorable change in the
11 terms of coverage or amount of, any insurance, existing or applied for, in
12 connection with the underwriting of personal insurance.

13 (2) “Affiliate” means any company that controls, is controlled by, or is
14 under common control with another company.

15 (3) “Applicant” means an individual who has applied to be covered by a
16 personal insurance policy with an insurer.

17 (4) “Consumer” means an insured whose credit information is used or
18 whose insurance score is calculated in the underwriting or rating of a personal
19 insurance policy or an applicant for such a policy.

20 (5) “Consumer reporting agency” means any person who, for monetary
21 fees, dues, or on a cooperative nonprofit basis, regularly engages in whole or in

1 part in the practice of assembling or evaluating consumer credit information or
2 other information on consumers for the purpose of furnishing consumer reports
3 to third parties.

4 (6) "Credit information" means any credit-related information derived
5 from a credit report, found on a credit report itself, or provided on an
6 application for personal insurance. Information that is not credit-related shall
7 not be considered "credit information," regardless of whether it is contained in
8 a credit report or in an application or is used to calculate an insurance score.

9 (7) "Credit report" means any written, oral, or other communication of
10 information by a consumer reporting agency bearing on a consumer's credit
11 worthiness, credit standing, or credit capacity that is used or expected to be
12 used or collected in whole or in part for the purpose of serving as a factor to
13 determine personal insurance premiums, eligibility for coverage, or tier
14 placement.

15 (8) "Insurance score" means a number or rating that is derived from an
16 algorithm, computer application, model, or other process that is based in whole
17 or in part on credit information for the purposes of predicting the future
18 insurance loss exposure of an individual applicant or insured.

19 (d) Use of credit information. An insurer authorized to do business in this
20 State that uses credit information to underwrite or rate risks shall not:

1 (1) Use an insurance score that is calculated using income, gender,
2 address, zip code, ethnic group, religion, marital status, or nationality of the
3 consumer as a factor.

4 (2) Deny, cancel, or nonrenew a policy of personal insurance solely on
5 the basis of credit information without consideration of any other applicable
6 underwriting factor independent of credit information and not expressly
7 prohibited by subdivision (1) of this subsection.

8 (3) Base an insured's renewal rates for personal insurance solely upon
9 credit information without consideration of any other applicable factor
10 independent of credit information.

11 (4) Take an adverse action against a consumer solely because he or she
12 does not have a credit card account without consideration of any other
13 applicable factor independent of credit information.

14 (5) Consider an absence of credit information or an inability to calculate
15 an insurance score in underwriting or rating personal insurance unless the
16 insurer does one of the following:

17 (A) treats the consumer as otherwise approved by the Commissioner
18 if the insurer presents information that such an absence or inability relates to
19 the risk for the insurer;

20 (B) treats the consumer as if the applicant or insured had neutral
21 credit information, as defined by the insurer; or

1 (C) excludes the use of credit information as a factor and uses only
2 other underwriting criteria.

3 (6) Take an adverse action against a consumer based on credit
4 information unless an insurer obtains and uses a credit report issued or an
5 insurance score calculated within 90 days from the date the policy is first
6 written or renewal is issued.

7 (7) Use credit information unless not later than every 36 months
8 following the last time that the insurer obtained current credit information for
9 the insured, the insurer recalculates the insurance score or obtains an updated
10 credit report. Regardless of the requirements of this subsection:

11 (A) At annual renewal, upon the request of a consumer or the
12 consumer's agent, the insurer shall reunderwrite and rerate the policy based
13 upon a current credit report or insurance score. An insurer need not recalculate
14 the insurance score or obtain the updated credit report of a consumer more
15 frequently than once in a 12-month period.

16 (B) The insurer shall have the discretion to obtain current credit
17 information upon any renewal before the 36 months if consistent with its
18 underwriting guidelines.

19 (C) No insurer need obtain current credit information for an insured,
20 despite the requirements of subdivision (A) of this subdivision (7), if one of the
21 following applies:

1 (i) The insurer is treating the consumer as otherwise approved by
2 the Commissioner.

3 (ii) The insured is in the most favorably priced tier of the insurer
4 within a group of affiliated insurers. However, the insurer shall have the
5 discretion to order such report if consistent with its underwriting guidelines.

6 (iii) Credit was not used for underwriting or rating such insured
7 when the policy was initially written. However, the insurer shall have the
8 discretion to use credit for underwriting or rating such insured upon renewal if
9 consistent with its underwriting guidelines.

10 (iv) The insurer reevaluates the insured beginning not later than
11 36 months after inception and thereafter based upon other underwriting or
12 rating factors, excluding credit information.

13 (8) Use the following as a negative factor in any insurance scoring
14 methodology or in reviewing credit information for the purpose of
15 underwriting or rating a policy of personal insurance:

16 (A) credit inquiries not initiated by the consumer or inquiries
17 requested by the consumer for his or her own credit information;

18 (B) inquiries relating to insurance coverage, if so identified on a
19 consumer's credit report;

20 (C) collection accounts with a medical industry code, if so identified
21 on the consumer's credit report;

1 (D) multiple lender inquiries if coded by the consumer reporting
2 agency on the consumer's credit report as being from the home mortgage
3 industry and made within 30 days of one another unless only one inquiry is
4 considered; and

5 (E) multiple lender inquiries if coded by the consumer reporting
6 agency on the consumer's credit report as being from the automobile lending
7 industry and made within 30 days of one another unless only one inquiry is
8 considered.

9 (e)(1) Extraordinary life circumstances. Notwithstanding any other law or
10 rule to the contrary, an insurer that uses credit information shall, on written
11 request from an applicant for insurance coverage or an insured, provide
12 reasonable exceptions to the insurer's rates, rating classifications, company or
13 tier placement, or underwriting rules or guidelines for a consumer who has
14 experienced and whose credit information has been directly influenced by any
15 of the following events:

16 (A) a catastrophic event, as declared by the federal or State
17 government;

18 (B) a serious illness or injury or a serious illness or injury to an
19 immediate family member;

20 (C) the death of a spouse, child, or parent;

1 (D) divorce or involuntary interruption of legally owed alimony or
2 support payments;

3 (E) identity theft;

4 (F) the temporary loss of employment for a period of three months or
5 more if it results from involuntary termination;

6 (G) military deployment overseas; or

7 (H) other events as determined by the insurer.

8 (2) If an applicant or insured submits a request for an exception as set
9 forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection, an insurer may, in its sole discretion,
10 but is not mandated to:

11 (A) require the consumer to provide reasonable written and
12 independently verifiable documentation of the event;

13 (B) require the consumer to demonstrate that the event had direct and
14 meaningful impact on the consumer's credit information;

15 (C) require such request be made not more than 60 days from the
16 date of the application for insurance or the policy renewal;

17 (D) grant an exception despite the consumer not providing the initial
18 request for an exception in writing; or

19 (E) grant an exception where the consumer asks for consideration of
20 repeated events or the insurer has considered this event previously.

1 (3) An insurer is not out of compliance with any law or rule relating to
2 underwriting, rating, or rate filing as a result of granting an exception under
3 this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed to provide a consumer
4 or other insured with a cause of action that does not exist in the absence of this
5 section.

6 (4) The insurer shall provide notice to consumers that reasonable
7 exceptions are available and information about how the consumer may inquire
8 further.

9 (5) Within 30 days following the insurer's receipt of sufficient
10 documentation of an event described in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the
11 insurer shall inform the consumer of the outcome of the request for a
12 reasonable exception. Such communication shall be in writing or provided to
13 an applicant in the same medium as the request.

14 (f) Dispute resolution and error correction. If it is determined through the
15 dispute resolution process set forth in the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act,
16 15 U.S.C. § 1681i(a)(5), that the credit information of a current insured was
17 incorrect or incomplete and if the insurer receives notice of such determination
18 from either the consumer reporting agency or from the insured, the insurer
19 shall reunderwrite and rerate the consumer within 30 days following receiving
20 the notice. After reunderwriting or rerating the insured, the insurer shall make
21 any adjustments necessary, consistent with its underwriting and rating

1 guidelines. If an insurer determines that the insured has overpaid the premium,
2 the insurer shall refund to the insured the amount of overpayment calculated
3 back to the shorter of either the last 12 months of coverage or the actual policy
4 period.

5 (g)(1) Initial notification. If an insurer writing personal insurance uses
6 credit information in underwriting or rating a consumer, the insurer or its agent
7 shall disclose, either on the insurance application or at the time the insurance
8 application is taken, that it may obtain credit information in connection with
9 such application. Such disclosure shall be either written or provided to an
10 applicant in the same medium as the application for insurance. The insurer
11 need not provide the disclosure statement required under this section to any
12 insured on a renewal policy if such consumer has previously been provided a
13 disclosure statement.

14 (2) Use of the following example disclosure statement constitutes
15 compliance with this section: “In connection with this application for
16 insurance, we may review your credit report or obtain or use a credit-based
17 insurance score based on the information contained in that credit report. We
18 may use a third party in connection with the development of your insurance
19 score.”

1 (h) Adverse action notification. If an insurer takes an adverse action based
2 upon credit information, the insurer must meet the notice requirements of this
3 subsection. Such insurer shall:

4 (1) Provide notification to the consumer that an adverse action has been
5 taken, in accordance with the requirements of the federal Fair Credit Reporting
6 Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1681m(a).

7 (2) Provide notification to the consumer explaining the reason for the
8 adverse action. The reasons must be provided in sufficiently clear and specific
9 language so that a person can identify the basis for the insurer's decision to
10 take an adverse action. Such notification shall include a description of up to
11 four factors that were the primary influences of the adverse action. The use of
12 generalized terms such as "poor credit history," "poor credit rating," or "poor
13 insurance score" does not meet the explanation requirements of this subsection.
14 Standardized credit explanations provided by consumer reporting agencies or
15 other third-party vendors are deemed to comply with this section.

16 (i) Filing. Insurers that use insurance scores to underwrite and rate risks
17 must file their scoring models, or other scoring processes, with the Department
18 of Financial Regulation. A third party may file scoring models on behalf of
19 insurers. A filing that includes insurance scoring may include loss experience
20 justifying the use of credit information. Any filing relating to credit

1 information is considered a trade secret and is not subject to disclosure under
2 Vermont's Public Records Act.

3 (j) Indemnification. An insurer shall indemnify, defend, and hold agents
4 harmless from and against all liability, fees, and costs arising out of or relating
5 to the actions, errors, or omissions of a producer who obtains or uses credit
6 information or insurance scores, or both, for an insurer, provided the producer
7 follows the instructions of or procedures established by the insurer and
8 complies with any applicable law or rule. Nothing in this section shall be
9 construed to provide a consumer or other insured with a cause of action that
10 does not exist in the absence of this section.

11 (k) Sale of policy term information by consumer reporting agency. A
12 consumer reporting agency shall not provide or sell data or lists that include
13 any information that in whole or in part was submitted in conjunction with an
14 insurance inquiry about a consumer's credit information or a request for a
15 credit report or insurance score. Such information includes the expiration
16 dates of an insurance policy or any other information that may identify time
17 periods during which a consumer's insurance may expire and the terms and
18 conditions of the consumer's insurance coverage. The restrictions provided in
19 this subsection do not apply to data or lists the consumer reporting agency
20 supplies to the insurance producer from whom information was received, the
21 insurer on whose behalf such producer acted, or such insurer's affiliates or

1 holding companies. Nothing in this section shall be construed to restrict any
2 insurer from being able to obtain a claims history report or a motor vehicle
3 report.

4 * * * Effective Dates * * *

5 Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATES

6 (a) This section shall take effect on passage.

7 (b) Sec. 6 (credit information for personal insurance) shall take effect on
8 passage and apply to personal insurance policies either written to be effective
9 or renewed on or after nine months from the effective date of the act.

10 (c) Secs. 1–2 (automatic renewal provisions) and Secs. 4–5 (credit
11 protection for vulnerable persons) shall take effect on January 1, 2019.

12 (d) Sec. 3 (retainage for construction materials) shall take effect on
13 July 1, 2018.