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119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4096

To require covered companies to allow consenting cohabitating adults to open joint accounts, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 24, 2025

Mr. CASTEN (for himself, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia, and Mrs. BEATTY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Education and Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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A BILL

To require covered companies to allow consenting cohabitating adults to open joint accounts, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Financial Empowerment and Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. COVERED COMPANY JOINT ACCOUNTS OF CONSENTING COHABITATING ADULTS.

(a) REQUIREMENTS FOR COVERED COMPANY JOINT ACCOUNTS OF CONSENTING COHABITATING ADULTS.—

(1) JOINT ACCOUNTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each covered company shall allow consenting cohabitating adults who are or will be customers of the covered company to open a joint account with the covered company for purposes of managing—

(i) the services provided by the covered company; and

(ii) bills for such services.

(B) AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—A joint account may not be opened pursuant to this paragraph unless each of the consenting cohabitating adults agree to open the joint account.

(2) NAMES.—Each joint account opened pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be in the name of each of the consenting cohabitating adults who opened the joint account.

(3) REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.—With respect to a joint account opened pursuant to paragraph (1), each covered company shall, upon request by any of the consenting cohabitating adults that

opened the joint account, provide to such consenting cohabitating adults—

(A) information related to the joint account, including—

(i) bills;

(ii) copies of paper and electronic mail; and

(iii) any information about products or services provided; and

(B) access to any online portal for the joint account.

(4) NOTIFICATION REQUIRED.—Each covered company shall provide a notice to each cohabitating adult that opens a joint account with the covered company that explains what information will be shared by the covered company with each of the consenting cohabitating adults.

(5) REGULATION P.—If a covered company is required by Regulation P (part 1016 of title 12, Code of Federal Regulations) to provide certain privacy notices such covered company shall provide such privacy notices to each of the consenting cohabitating adults who opened the joint account.

(6) CIVIL ACTIONS.—Any cohabitating adult who is harmed by a failure of a covered company to

meet a requirement of this subsection may bring a civil action in a Federal or State court against such a covered company for an award of not more than $1,000 for each such failure.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The requirements of this section shall apply to covered companies beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CONSENTING COHABITATING ADULTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term "consenting cohabitating adults" means any adults who consent to cohabitate.

(B) CHILDCARE PROVIDER.—With respect to a covered company that is a childcare provider licensed by a State, the term "consenting cohabitating adults" means the custodial parents of a child who is or will be served by such a covered company.

(2) COVERED COMPANY.—The term "covered company" includes—

(A) an electric utility (as defined in section 3 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2602));

(B) a gas utility (as defined in section 302 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (15 U.S.C. 3202));

(C) a water utility;

(D) an owner or operator of a sanitary landfill (as defined in section 1004 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6903));

(E) a provider of internet access service;

(F) a provider of telephone service;

(G) any person who rents a dwelling that is covered by the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.);

(H) any childcare provider licensed by a State;

(I) any person who originates a residential mortgage loan;

(J) any person who leases a residential dwelling unit;

(K) any person who is a servicer of a residential mortgage loan;

(L) a multichannel video programming distributor (as defined in section 602 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 522)); and

(M) any creditor who offers an open-end credit plan or a closed-end credit plan.

(3) CREDITOR.—The term ‘‘creditor’’ has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Truth in Lending Act.

(4) OPEN-END CREDIT PLAN.—The term ‘‘open-end credit plan’’ has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Truth in Lending Act.

(5) CLOSED-END CREDIT PLAN.—The term ‘‘closed-end credit plan’’ has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Truth in Lending Act.

(6) RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE LOAN.—The term ‘‘residential mortgage loan’’ has the meaning given the term in section 103(d)(d) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1602(d)(d)).

(7) SERVICER.—The term ‘‘servicer’’ has the meaning given the term in section 6(i)(2) of the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 (12 U.S.C. 2605(i)(2)).

(8) TELEPHONE SERVICE.—The term ‘‘telephone service’’ means any of the following:

(A) Voice service (as defined in section 227(e)(8) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 227(e)(8))).

(B) Commercial mobile service (as defined in section 332(d) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d))).

(C) Commercial mobile data service (as defined in section 6001 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1401)).

(9) WATER UTILITY.—The term ''water utility'' means the owner or operator of—

(A) a public water system (as defined in section 1401 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300f)); or

(B) a treatment works (as defined in section 212 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1292)).

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR EARLY LEASE TERMINATION.

Section 41411 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12491) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) PROHIBITION ON THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR EARLY LEASE TERMINATION.—

''(1) VOLUNTARY EXIT.—An applicant for or tenant of housing assisted under a covered housing program may voluntarily exit a lease for housing earlier than the end date of such lease on the basis that the applicant or tenant has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

"(2) FEE PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any lease agreement, an applicant or tenant described in paragraph (1) may not be charged a fee for exiting a lease for housing earlier than the end date of such lease on the basis described in paragraph (1).".

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