

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

March 9, 2020

COMMITTEES:  
FINANCE

BANKING, HOUSING, AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS

BUDGET

INTELLIGENCE

RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mark W. Begor  
Chief Executive Officer  
Equifax, Inc.  
1150 Peachtree Street NW  
Atlanta, GA 30309

Craig Boundy  
Chief Executive Officer  
Experian North America  
475 Anton Boulevard  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Christopher A. Cartwright  
President and CEO  
TransUnion  
555 West Adams Street  
Chicago, IL 60661

Dear Messrs. Begor, Boundy, and Cartwright:

As the United States mobilizes to respond to the recent outbreak and spread of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, I write to urge you to work with consumers, lenders and the broader data furnishing community, to mitigate any negative impact on consumers' creditworthiness.

As you may well know, the novel coronavirus has sickened more than 108,000 people around the world, and killed more than 3,500 people to date. While this situation is rapidly evolving in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said the potential public health threat posed by COVID-19 is very high and the spread of the disease in other countries shines a light on the need for a whole-of-society response.<sup>1</sup> Much of the U.S. response has been appropriately focused on access to testing and medical care, with Congress poised to allocate substantial resources to fighting this virus. The Federal Reserve has also recently made a decision to cut interest rates in an effort to address any macroeconomic impacts. It is now vital that the broader financial system follow suit by assuring consumers that their economic circumstances – and in particular their credit scores - will not be negatively impacted by this crisis.

On March 3, 2020, the CDC issued an interim guidance recommending that specific community actions be taken to limit exposure to the virus,<sup>2</sup> on top of previously recommended community-based interventions in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak such as school dismissals, event cancellations, social distancing, and creating employee plans to work remotely.<sup>3</sup> While the spread of COVID-19 is likely to affect different individuals, families, and communities differently, it is increasingly likely that a significant number of Americans will need to practice

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fpreparing-individuals-communities.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fpreparing-individuals-communities.html)

social distancing in some way. No one should be penalized financially or suffer financial duress for following CDC guidance.

As Americans seek to comply with CDC guidance and protect the well-being of their families, many consumers may face shocks to household finances, including challenges with paying their day-to-day bills, credit cards, small business loans and mortgage payments, among other financial obligations. Accordingly, I urge you to work with lenders, data furnishers, and consumers to ensure that adverse information that arises due to the financial shock of the coronavirus isn't used in a manner that hurts consumers' creditworthiness. You should also work closely with any company that furnishes consumer credit account data to provide updates on how they can work with consumers on coronavirus related financial problems. Moreover, all furnishers should be reminded of their duties under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) to correct and update consumer credit history information.

I look forward to hearing swiftly from you about what steps the credit reporting agencies will take to support consumers and help limit transmission of the coronavirus without fear of negative economic consequences. Ensuring appropriate containment of COVID-19 is a community effort, and it is imperative that you prioritize the financial, mental and physical well-being of consumers.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. I am anxious to hear your response.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator