

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

September 8, 2017

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Conyers:

Thank you for your leadership on the House Judiciary Committee. You may recall my July 12th letter to this Committee regarding the Verizon data exposure, an incident during which the personal information of at least 14 million users was exposed due to a misconfigured server. It has recently come to my attention that Equifax, a large consumer credit reporting agency, suffered a massive data breach – an intentional and malicious act – that may have exposed the data of up to 143 million American users. As of now, it is an open question as to whose data was stolen, including whether some of these users were employees of the federal government.

Given the troubling privacy and consumer protection implications of this hack, I request an immediate Judiciary Committee hearing to investigate how and why this event occurred, to parse out its implications, and to identify how firms can prevent such incidents in the future.

According to reports, hackers penetrated a Web-based application for Equifax and subsequently obtained credit card numbers for 209,000 consumers and credit dispute documents for 182,000 users. It appears that Social Security numbers, birthdates, and home addresses may have been compromised as well. Disturbingly, Equifax waited six weeks to inform users that their most sensitive information had been stolen; reports indicate the initial breach occurred in May 2017. This is not the first time the American people have been forced to grapple with firms that are less than forthcoming when their information is placed at risk.

In light of recent events, I request the Committee call upon representatives from the “Big Three” credit reporting agencies – Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax – to testify not only on the breach that occurred in May 2017, but also to identify how each company is taking proactive, defensive steps to prevent such breaches in the future. Ultimately, consumer credit agencies should be one

of our lines of defense against cyberattacks, and it is deeply disturbing whenever a firm that holds such valuable information gets breached. Congress has a strong role to play in preventing such attacks on our financial and IT infrastructure, and must hold those entrusted with our most sensitive data to account.

I appreciate your attention to this critical matter and stand ready to assist the Committee in its work. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact my office at (202) 225-3976.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted W. Lieu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress