UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA NORFOLK DIVISION

TAMIKA HARRELL-WARREN, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

C.A. No: 2:18cv55

-V.-

NEWSOME LAW OFFICE, PLLC and

John Does 1-25,

Defendants.

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff Tamika Harrell-Warren (hereinafter, "Plaintiff"), a Virginia resident, brings this Class Action Complaint by and through her attorneys, Meridian Law, LLC, against Defendant Newsome Law Office, PLLC (hereinafter "Defendant" or "Newsome"), individually and on behalf of a class of all others similarly situated, pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, based upon information and belief of Plaintiff's counsel, except for allegations

INTRODUCTION

specifically pertaining to Plaintiff, which are based upon Plaintiff's personal knowledge.

1. Congress enacted the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act ("FDCPA") in 1977 in response to the "abundant evidence of the use of abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection practices by many debt collectors." 15 U.S.C. §1692(a). At that time, Congress was concerned that "abusive debt collection practices contribute to the number of personal bankruptcies, to

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material instability, to the loss of jobs, and to invasions of individual privacy." *Id.* Congress concluded that "existing laws...[we]re inadequate to protect consumers," and that "the effective collection of debts" does not require "misrepresentation or other abusive debt collection practices." 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692(b) & (c).

2. Congress explained that the purpose of the FDCPA was not only to eliminate abusive debt collection practices, but also to "insure that those debt collectors who refrain from using abusive debt collection practices are not competitively disadvantaged." Id. § 1692(e). After determining that the existing consumer protection laws were inadequate, Congress created a private cause of action to provide consumers with a remedy against debt collectors who fail to comply with the FDCPA. Id. § 1692k.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 3. The Court has jurisdiction over this class action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, as well as 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et. seq. The Court also has pendent jurisdiction over any state law claims in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).
- 4. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) as this is where a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred.
- 5. Venue is also proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) as this is where the Defendant's primary business is located.

NATURE OF THE ACTION

- 6. Plaintiff brings this class action on behalf of a class of Virginia consumers under § 1692 et seq. of Title 15 of the United States Code, commonly referred to as the Fair Debt Collections Practices Act ("FDCPA"), and
 - 7. Plaintiff is seeking damages and declaratory and injunctive relief.

PARTIES

- 8. Plaintiff is a resident of the State of Virginia, County of Accomack, residing at 1030 Clay Street, Franklin, VA 23851.
- 9. Defendant Newsome Law Office, PLLC is a "debt collector" as the phrase is defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692(a)(6) and used in the FDCPA with an address at 324 South Main Street, Emporia, VA 23847.
- 10. Upon information and belief, Defendant is a company that uses the mail, telephone, and facsimile and regularly engages in business the principal purpose of which is to attempt to collect debts alleged to be due another.
- 11. Defendant is a "debt collector", as defined under the FDCPA under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).
- 12. John Does 1-25, are fictitious names of individuals and businesses alleged for the purpose of substituting names of Defendants whose identities will be disclosed in discovery and should be made parties to this action.

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

- 13. Plaintiffs bring this claim on behalf of the following case, pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a) and 23(b)(3).
 - 14. The Class consists of:
 - a. all individuals with addresses in the State of Virginia;
 - to whom Newsome Law Office, PLLC sent a collection letter attempting to collect a consumer debt;
 - c. regarding collection of a debt;

- d. that overshadowed the consumers' rights as required by 15 U.S.C. § 1692g (known as the "G Notice");
- e. by giving the false impression that a lawsuit to collect the debt in question currently existed,
- f. which letter was sent on or after a date one (1) year prior to the filing of this action and on or before a date twenty-one (2l) days after the filing of this action.
- 15. The identities of all class members are readily ascertainable from the records of Defendants and those companies and entities on whose behalf they attempt to collect and/or have purchased debts.
- 16. Excluded from the Plaintiff Classes are the Defendants and all officer, members, partners, managers, directors and employees of the Defendants and their respective immediate families, and legal counsel for all parties to this action, and all members of their immediate families.
- 17. There are questions of law and fact common to the Plaintiff Classes, which common issues predominate over any issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue is whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms attached as Exhibits A, violate 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692e, 1692f and 1692g.
- 18. The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the class members, as all are based upon the same facts and legal theories. The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Plaintiff Classes defined in this complaint. The Plaintiff has retained counsel with experience in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions, and neither the Plaintiff nor her attorneys have any interests, which might cause them not to vigorously pursue this action.

- 19. This action has been brought, and may properly be maintained, as a class action pursuant to the provisions of Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because there is a well-defined community interest in the litigation:
 - a. <u>Numerosity:</u> The Plaintiff is informed and believe, and on that basis alleged, that the Plaintiff Classes defined above are so numerous that joinder of all members would be impractical.
 - b. <u>Common Questions Predominate:</u> Common questions of law and fact exist as to all members of the Plaintiff Classes and those questions predominance over any questions or issues involving only individual class members. The principal issue is whether the Defendants' written communications to consumers, in the forms **attached as Exhibit A** violate 15 § 1692e and § 1692f and § 1692g.
 - c. **Typicality:** The Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the class members. The Plaintiff and all members of the Plaintiff Classes have claims arising out of the Defendants' common uniform course of conduct complained of herein.
 - d. Adequacy: The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class members insofar as Plaintiff has no interests that are adverse to the absent class members. The Plaintiff is committed to vigorously litigating this matter. Plaintiff has also retained counsel experienced in handling consumer lawsuits, complex legal issues, and class actions. Neither the Plaintiff nor her counsel has any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue the instant class action lawsuit.

- e. <u>Superiority:</u> A class action is superior to the other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy because individual joinder of all members would be impracticable. Class action treatment will permit a large number of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum efficiently and without unnecessary duplication of effort and expense that individual actions would engender.
- 20. Certification of a class under Rule 23(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is also appropriate in that the questions of law and fact common to members of the Plaintiff Classes predominate over any questions affecting an individual member, and a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.
- 21. Depending on the outcome of further investigation and discovery, Plaintiff may, at the time of class certification motion, seek to certify a class(es) only as to particular issues pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(4).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 22. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs numbered above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 23. Some time prior to January 30, 2017, an obligation was allegedly incurred by Plaintiff.
- 24. The alleged obligation arose out of a transaction involving a medical debt allegedly incurred by Plaintiff with Southampton Memorial Hospital in which money, property, insurance or services, which are the subject of the transaction, are primarily for personal, family or household purposes.

- 25. The alleged obligation is a "debt" as defined by 15 U.S.C.\(\) 1692a(5).
- 26. The owner of the alleged obligation is a "creditor" as defined by 15 U.S.C.§ 1692a(4).
 - 27. The owner of the obligation contracted the Defendant to collect the alleged debt.
- 28. Defendant collects and attempts to collect debts incurred or alleged to have been incurred for personal, family or household purposes on behalf of creditors using the United States Postal Services, telephone and internet.

Violation I – January 30, 2017 Collection Letter

- 29. On or about January 30, 2017, Defendant sent the Plaintiff an initial dunning letter (the "Letter") seeking to collect an alleged debt. See January 30, 2017 Collection Letter Attached hereto as Exhibit A.
- 30. When a debt collector solicits payment from a consumer, it must, within five days of an initial communication, provide the consumer with a written validation notice which must include the following information:
 - (1) the amount of the debt;
 - (2) the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed;
 - (3) a statement that unless the consumer, within thirty days after receipt of the notice, disputes the validity of the debt, or any portion thereof, the debt will be assumed to be valid by the debt collector;
 - (4) a statement that if the consumer notifies the debt collector in writing within the thirty-day period that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed, the debt collector will obtain verification of the debt or a copy of the judgment against the consumer and a copy of such verification or judgment will be mailed to the consumer by the debt collector; and

- (5) a statement that, upon the consumer's written request within the thirty-day period, the debt collector will provide the consumer with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a).
- 31. The FDCPA further provides that if the consumer notifies the debt collector in writing within the thirty day period ... that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed ... the debt collector shall cease collection ... until the debt collector obtains verification of the debt ... and a copy of such verification is mailed to the consumer by the debt collector. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(b).
- 32. This letter contains the "G-Notice" but it is completely overshadowed by earlier statements in the letter.
- 33. Although a collection letter may track the statutory language, "the collector nonetheless violates the Act if it conveys that information in a confusing or contradictory fashion so as to cloud the required message with uncertainty." *Russell v. EQUIFAX A.R.S.*, 74 F. 3d 30, 35 (2d Cir. 1996) ("It is not enough for a debt collection agency simply to include the proper debt validation notice in a mailing to a consumer Congress intended that such notice be clearly conveyed.") Put differently, a notice containing "language that 'overshadows or contradicts' other language informing a consumer of her rights ... violates the Act." *Russell*, 74 F. 3d at 34.
- 34. The caption of the Letter states: RE: Franklin Hospital Corporation dba Southampton V. Tamika M. Harrell-Warren.
- 35. The use of the "V" implies that there is current litigation in this matter when, in fact, no such litigation exists.

- 36. The threat of current litigation overshadows the "G-Notice" and coerces the consumer not to exert her rights under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.
- 37. These threats only serve to coerce Plaintiff into paying immediately to avoid the threat of legal action in lieu of exercising her right to validate or dispute the debt provided her under the "G-Notice.
- 38. Furthermore the letter in the second paragraph states it has not been reviewed by attorney, but an attorney signs the letter, furthering the belief that a current lawsuit exists.
- 39. This overshadowing subjected Plaintiff to an informational injury as she was provided with false information and was, therefore, unable to take advantage of her 30-day right to validate or dispute the debt for fear of imminent legal action.
- 40. As a result of Defendant's deceptive misleading and false debt collection practices, Plaintiff has been damaged.

COUNT I VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692e et seq.

- 41. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 42. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.
- 43. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692e, a debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt.
 - 44. Defendant violated said section
 - a. by making a false and misleading representation in violation of §1692e(10);

- b. by falsely representing the character, amount of legal status of the debt in violation of §1692e(2)(A);
- c. by making the threat to take any action that cannot legally be taken or that is not intended to be taken in violation of §1692e(5).
- 45. By reason thereof, Defendant is liable to Plaintiff for judgment that Defendant's conduct violated Section 1692e et seq. of the FDCPA, actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

COUNT II VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. \$1692f et seq.

- 46. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 47. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692f.
- 48. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692f, a debt collector may not use any unfair or unconscionable means in connection with the collection of any debt.
- 49. Defendant violated this section by overshadowing Plaintiff's rights to validate or dispute the debt provided him under the FDCPA.
- 50. By reason thereof, Defendant is liable to Plaintiff for judgment that Defendant's conduct violated Section 1692f et seq. of the FDCPA, actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

COUNT III VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692g et seq.

- 51. Plaintiff repeats, reiterates and incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs above herein with the same force and effect as if the same were set forth at length herein.
- 52. Defendant's debt collection efforts attempted and/or directed towards the Plaintiff violated various provisions of the FDCPA, including but not limited to 15 U.S.C. § 1692g.
- 53. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692g(b), the language in a debt collector's letter cannot overshadow a plaintiff's right to validate or dispute the debt afforded him by § 1692g.
 - 54. The threat of legal action served to overshadow Plaintiff's rights under the FDCPA.
- 55. By reason thereof, Defendant is liable to Plaintiff for judgment that Defendant's conduct violated Section 1692g et seq. of the FDCPA, actual damages, statutory damages, costs and attorneys' fees.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

56. Pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby requests a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Tamika Harrell-Warren, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated demands judgment from Defendant Newsome Law Office, PLLC as follows:

- 1. Declaring that this action is properly maintainable as a Class Action and certifying Plaintiff as Class representative, and Aryeh E. Stein, Esq. as Class Counsel;
 - 2. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class statutory damages;
 - 3. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class actual damages;

- 4. Awarding Plaintiff costs of this Action, including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses;
 - 5. Awarding pre-judgment interest and post-judgment interest; and
- 6. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: January 30, 2018 Respectfully Submitted,

MERIDIAN LAW, LLC

/s/ Aryeh E. Stein
Aryeh E. Stein, Esq.
VA Bar No. 45895
600 Reisterstown Rd., Ste 700
Baltimore, MD 21208
astein@meridianlawfirm.com
Attorneys For Plaintiff

RC LAW GROUP, PLLC

Yaakov Saks, Esq. NJ Bar No. 021132010 285 Passaic Street Hackensack, NJ 07601 ysaks@rclawgroup.com Pro hac vice admission to be submitted Attorneys for Plaintiff

EXHIBIT A

NEWSOME LAW OFFICE, PLLC

ATTORNEY AT LAW WILLIAM S. NEWSOME

324 SOUTH MAIN STREET EMPORIA, VIRGINIA 23847 TEL: (434) 634-2291 FAX: (434) 634-2441

THIS IS A DEBT COLLECTION LAW FIRM January 30, 2017

Tamika M Harrell-Warren

RE: Franklin Hospital Corporation dba Southampton Memorial Hospital V.

Tamika M Harrell-Warren

File No: 6.001

Total Amount Due: \$ 1524.06

Dear Sir/Madam:

Previous attempts by Franklin Hospital Corporation dba Southampton Memorial Hospital to collect this account have been unsuccessful and It has now been turned over to this law firm for collection.

The only information available to us at this time is the data sent to us by the creditor. Prior to having this account reviewed by one of our attorneys, we want to afford you an opportunity to provide us with any information you may have concerning this account. You may do that by writing us at the address above or calling us at (434) 634-2291. If you agree that you owe the amount set out herein but are simply having difficulty paying you may contact us so we can work out an appropriate payment plan. If we do not hear from you within thirty days of the receipt of this notice, this debt collection law firm will assume the information provided to us by the creditor is correct.

All communications and payments regarding this account should be made to this office only. Communicating directly with the creditor may result in our not knowing of your efforts commencing further collection action.

Sincerely.

William S. Newsome

WSN/ts

Unless you dispute the validity of this debt, or any portion thereof, within 30 days of the receipt of this notice, it will be assumed by this debt collection law firm the debt is valid. If you notify us in writing within 30 days of receipt of this notice that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed, we will obtain verification of the debt and send you a copy, or if the original creditor is different from the one listed on this notice the name and address of the original creditor will also be provided.

$_{ m JS~44~(Rev.~06/1)}$ Case 2:18-cv-00055-HCM-RJK Pacument 12 SFIEL 01/30/18 Page 1 of 2 PageID# 15

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

| L (a) PLAINTIFFS Tamika Harrell-Warren, i situated | | | , | DEFENDANTS Newsome Law Office, PLLC and John Does 1-25 | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| (b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Accomack (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES) | | | County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED. | | | |
| (c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Meridian Law, LLC 600 Reisterstown Rd, St. 443-326-6011 | • | | Attorneys (If Known) | | | |
| II. BASIS OF JURISDI | ICTION (Place an "X" in C | One Box Only) | I. CITIZENSHIP OF P | PRINCIPAL PARTIES | (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif | |
| ☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff | ■ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party) | | | TF DEF 1 1 | | |
| ☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant | | | Citizen of Another State | 1 2 | | |
| | | | Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | 1 3 | □ 6 □ 6 | |
| IV. NATURE OF SUIT | Γ (Place an "X" in One Box Or | nly) | Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions. | | | |
| CONTRACT | | ORTS | FORFEITURE/PENALTY | BANKRUPTCY | OTHER STATUTES | |
| □ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment ∞ Enforcement of Judgment □ 151 Medicare Act □ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) □ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits □ 160 Stockholders' Suits □ 190 Other Contract □ 195 Contract Product Liability □ 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY □ 210 Land Condemnation □ 220 Foreclosure □ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment □ 240 Torts to Land □ 245 Tort Product Liability □ 290 All Other Real Property | PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle 755 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Chylic Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education | PERSONAL INJURY 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury - Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Fraud Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITIONS Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement | ☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 ☐ 690 Other LABOR ☐ 710 Fair Labor Standards Act ☐ 720 Labor/Management Relations ☐ 740 Railway Labor Act ☐ 751 Family and Medical Leave Act ☐ 790 Other Labor Litigation ☐ 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION ☐ 462 Naturalization Application ☐ 465 Other Immigration Actions | □ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 □ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS □ 820 Copyrights □ 830 Patent □ 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application □ 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY □ 861 HIA (1395ff) □ 862 Black Lung (923) □ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) □ 864 SSID Title XVI □ 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS □ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) □ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609 | □ 375 False Claims Act □ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC □ 3729(a)) □ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and □ Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ □ Exchange □ \$890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Acts □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 895 Freedom of Information □ Act □ 896 Arbitration □ 899 Administrative Procedure □ Act/Review or Appeal of □ Agency Decision □ 950 Constitutionality of □ State Statutes | |
| | moved from | Appellate Court | Reopened Anothe (specify | , | | |
| VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO | DN 15 USC Sect. 16 | 92 et seq. Fair Debt 0 | iling (Do not cite jurisdictional sta Collection Practices Act on letter | tutes unless diversity): | | |
| VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: | | IS A CLASS ACTION | DEMAND \$ | CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND | if demanded in complaint: ∴ Yes □ No | |
| VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY | E(S) (See instructions): | JUDGE | | DOCKET NUMBER | | |
| DATE 01/30/2018 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY | | SIGNATURE OF ATTOR Aryeh E. Stein | RNEY OF RECORD | | | |
| | MOUNT | APPLYING IFP | JUDGE | MAG. JUI | DGE | |

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- **I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- **II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.
 - United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here. United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.
 - Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.
 - Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- **III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.
- **V. Origin.** Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.
 - Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.
 - Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.
 - Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.
 - Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date. Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.
 - Multidistrict Litigation Transfer. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407
 - Multidistrict Litigation Direct File. (8) Check this box when a multidistrict case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NOT AN ORIGIN CODE 7.** Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statue.
- VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.

 Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction.

 Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Class Action Questions Whether Newsome Law Office Letters Overshadowed Consumers' FDCPA Rights</u>