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Our File No.: 111579

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

Danielle Pennzello, individually and on behalf of all
others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Diversified Consultants Inc.,

Defendant.

Docket No:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

BARSHAY | SANDERS PLLC
100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530

Danielle Pennzello, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated (hereinafter referred to as “*Plaintiff*”), by and through the undersigned counsel, complains, states and alleges against Diversified Consultants Inc. (hereinafter referred to as “*Defendant*”), as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks to recover for violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, *et seq.*, (“FDCPA”).

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has federal subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d).

3. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this Judicial District.

4. At all relevant times, Defendant conducted business within the State of New York.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff Danielle Pennzello is an individual who is a citizen of the State of New York residing in Suffolk County, New York.

6. Plaintiff is a “consumer” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

7. On information and belief, Defendant Diversified Consultants Inc., is a Florida Corporation with a principal place of business in Duval County, Florida.

8. Defendant is regularly engaged, for profit, in the collection of debts allegedly owed by consumers.

9. Defendant is a “debt collector” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

ALLEGATIONS

10. Defendant alleges Plaintiff owes a debt (“the Debt”).

11. The Debt was primarily for personal, family or household purposes and is therefore a “debt” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

12. Sometime after the incurrence of the Debt, Plaintiff fell behind on payments owed.

13. Thereafter, at an exact time known only to Defendant, the Debt was assigned or otherwise transferred to Defendant for collection.

14. In its efforts to collect the debt, Defendant contacted Plaintiff by letter (“the Letter”) dated June 3, 2016. (“Exhibit 1.”)

15. The Letter was the initial communication Plaintiff received from Defendant.

16. The Letter is a “communication” as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

17. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g provides that within five days after the initial communication with a consumer in connection with the collection of any debt, a debt collector shall, unless the information is contained in the initial communication or the consumer has paid the debt, send the consumer a written notice containing certain enumerated information.

18. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1) requires the written notice provide “the amount of the debt.”

19. The question of whether a written notice adequately provides “the amount of the debt” is determined from the perspective of the “least sophisticated consumer.”

20. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must convey the

amount of the debt clearly from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

21. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must convey the amount of the debt accurately from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

22. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must convey the amount of the debt without ambiguity from the perspective of the least sophisticated consumer.

23. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine the minimum amount she owes at the time of the notice.

24. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must allow the least sophisticated consumer to determine what she will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

25. The written notice, to comply with 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1), must contain an explanation, understandable by the least sophisticated consumer, of any fees or interest that may cause the balance to increase at any time in the future.

26. The failure to include the foregoing information renders an otherwise accurate statement of the “amount of the debt,” violative of 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1).

27. Even if a debt collector accurately conveys the foregoing information, the written notice nevertheless violates 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1) if the least sophisticated consumer could inaccurately interpret the message.

28. The Letter sets forth “Total Non-Interest Charges or Fees Since Charge-Off: \$16.37.”

29. The Letter fails to disclose whether the amount stated may increase due to additional late fees.

30. The Letter fails to indicate whether payment of the amount stated would satisfy the debt.

31. The Letter fails to indicate whether payment of the amount stated by any date certain would satisfy the debt.

32. The Letter fails to indicate the minimum amount Plaintiff owed at the time of the Letter.

33. The Letter fails to provide any information that would allow Plaintiff to determine what Plaintiff will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

34. The Letter fails to include any “safe harbor” language concerning the accrual of

fees.

35. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the minimum amount owed at the time of the Letter.

36. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine what she will need to pay to resolve the debt at any given moment in the future.

37. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the amount of his or her debt.

38. The Letter, because of the aforementioned failures, would render the least sophisticated consumer unable to determine the amount of her debt because the consumer would not know whether fees would continue to accrue, or whether the amount of the debt was static.

39. The least sophisticated consumer, because of the aforementioned failures, could reasonably believe that the debt could be satisfied by remitting the amount stated at any time after receipt of the Letter.

40. The least sophisticated consumer, because of the aforementioned failures, could also reasonably believe that the amount stated was accurate only on the date of the Letter because of the continued accumulation of fees.

41. If fees are continuing to accrue, the least sophisticated consumer would not know how to satisfy the debt because the Letter fails to indicate the amount of fees.

42. If fees are continuing to accrue, the least sophisticated consumer would not know how to satisfy the debt because the Letter fails to indicate the date such fees will be added.

43. If fees are continuing to accrue, the least sophisticated consumer would not know how to satisfy the debt because the Letter fails to provide the amount of fees during any measurable period.

44. If fees are continuing to accrue, the least sophisticated consumer would not know how to satisfy the debt because the Letter fails to provide any information that would enable the consumer to determine what she will need to pay to resolve on any date after the date of the Letter.

45. If fees are continuing to accrue, the least sophisticated consumer would not know how to satisfy the debt because the Letter fails to provide any information that would enable the consumer to determine what she will need to pay to resolve the debt in the future.

46. The failure to include the foregoing information could lead the least sophisticated consumer to inaccurately interpret the message.

47. The failure to include the foregoing information renders the Letter's statement of the amount of the debt, even if otherwise accurate, incomplete.

48. The failure to include the foregoing information renders the Letter susceptible to an inaccurate reading by the least sophisticated consumer.

49. The failure to include the foregoing information allows the Letter to be read by the least sophisticated consumer to have two or more meanings, one of which is inaccurate.

50. The failure to include the foregoing information renders the Letter's statement of the amount of the debt, even if otherwise accurate, insufficient.

51. The failure to include the foregoing information renders the Letter's statement of the amount of the debt, even if otherwise accurate, deceptive under 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

52. For these reasons, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

53. The failure to include the foregoing information could lead the least sophisticated consumer to inaccurately interpret the message.

54. The failure to include the foregoing information renders the Letter's statement of the amount of the debt, even if otherwise accurate, violative of 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1).

55. For these reasons, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(1).

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

56. Plaintiff brings this action individually and as a class action on behalf of all persons similarly situated in the State of New York from whom Defendant attempted to collect a consumer debt without disclosing in their collection letter whether fees were continuing to accrue, from one year before the date of this Complaint to the present.

57. This action seeks a finding that Defendant's conduct violates the FDCPA, and asks that the Court award damages as authorized by 15 U.S.C. § 1692k.

58. Defendant regularly engages in debt collection.

59. The Class consists of more than 35 persons from whom Defendant attempted to collect delinquent consumer debts without disclosing in their collection letter whether fees were continuing to accrue.

60. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the Class. Common questions of law

or fact raised by this class action complaint affect all members of the Class and predominate over any individual issues. Common relief is therefore sought on behalf of all members of the Class. This class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy.

61. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would create a risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to the individual members of the Class, and a risk that any adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class would, as a practical matter, either be dispositive of the interests of other members of the Class not party to the adjudication, or substantially impair or impede their ability to protect their interests. Defendant has acted in a manner applicable to the Class as a whole such that declaratory relief is warranted.

62. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect and represent the interests of the Class. The management of the class action proposed is not extraordinarily difficult, and the factual and legal issues raised by this class action complaint will not require extended contact with the members of the Class, because Defendant's conduct was perpetrated on all members of the Class and will be established by common proof. Moreover, Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in actions brought under consumer protection laws.

JURY DEMAND

63. Plaintiff hereby demands a trial of this action by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment as follows:

- a. Certify this action as a class action; and
- b. Appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative of the Class, and Plaintiff's attorneys as Class Counsel; and
- c. Find that Defendant's actions violate the FDCPA; and
- d. Grant damages against Defendant pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and
- e. Grant Plaintiff's attorneys' fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k; and

- f. Grant Plaintiff's costs; together with
- g. Such other relief that the Court determines is just and proper.

DATED: June 4, 2017

BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC

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Our File No.: 111579

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We are required under state law to notify consumers of the following rights. This list does not contain a complete list of the rights consumers have under state and federal law.

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs License Number: 1202819

We are required by regulation of the New York State Department of Financial Services to notify you of the following information. This information is NOT legal advice. Debt collectors, in accordance with the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et seq., are prohibited from engaging in abusive, deceptive, and unfair debt collection efforts, including but not limited to:

- (i) the use or threat of violence;
- (ii) the use of obscene or profane language; and
- (iii) repeated phone calls made with the intent to annoy, abuse, or harass.

If a creditor or debt collector receives a money judgment against you in court, state and federal laws may prevent the following types of income from being taken to pay the debt:

1. Supplemental security income, (SSI);
2. Social security;
3. Public assistance (welfare);
4. Spousal support, maintenance (alimony) or child support;
5. Unemployment benefits;
6. Disability benefits;
7. Workers' compensation benefits;
8. Public or private pensions;
9. Veterans' benefits;
10. Federal student loans, federal student grants, and federal work study funds; and
11. Ninety percent of your wages or salary earned in the last sixty days.

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Danielle Pennzello, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated)	
_____)	
<i>Plaintiff(s)</i>)	
)	Civil Action No.
v.)	
)	
Diversified Consultants Inc.)	
_____)	
<i>Defendant(s)</i>)	

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)*
Diversified Consultants Inc.
10550 Deerwood Park Blvd #309
Jacksonville, Florida 32256

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) – or 60 days if you are the United States, or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) – you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff’s attorney, whose name and address are:

BARSHAY SANDERS PLLC
100 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, SUITE 500
GARDEN CITY, NY 11530

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

CIVIL COVER SHEET

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.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS DANIELLE PENNZELLO
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff SUFFOLK
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) BARSHAY SANDERS, PLLC
DEFENDANTS DIVERSIFIED CONSULTANTS INC.
County of Residence of First Listed Defendant DUVAL
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.
Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)
O 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
O 2 U.S. Government Defendant
O 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
O 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)
Citizen of This State
Citizen of Another State
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country
PTF DEF
O 1 O 1
O 2 O 2
O 3 O 3
PIF DEF
O 4 O 4
O 5 O 5
O 6 O 6

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
CONTRACT
REAL PROPERTY
PERSONAL INJURY
CIVIL RIGHTS
PRISONER PETITIONS
FORFEITURE/PENALTY
LABOR
IMMIGRATION
BANKRUPTCY
SOCIAL SECURITY
FEDERAL TAX SUITS
OTHER STATUTES

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
O 1 Original Proceeding
O 2 Removed from State Court
O 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
O 4 Reinstated or Reopened
O 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
O 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer
O 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION
Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity): 15 USC §1692
Brief description of cause: 15 USC §1692 Fair Debt Collection Practices Act Violation

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:
CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$
CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: Yes O No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY
(See Instructions) JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER

DATE June 5, 2017 SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD /s Craig B. Sanders

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
RECEIPT # AMOUNT APPLYING IFF JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

CERTIFICATION OF ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

Local Arbitration Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a certification to the contrary is filed.

I, Craig B. Sanders, counsel for Plaintiff, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

- monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,
- the complaint seeks injunctive relief,
- the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more of its stocks:

RELATED CASE STATEMENT (Section VIII on the Front of this Form)

Please list all cases that are arguably related pursuant to Division of Business Rule 50.3.1 in Section VIII on the front of this form. Rule 50.3.1 (a) provides that "A civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or because the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the same judge and magistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that " A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the court."

NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)

1. Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County? NO
2. If you answered "no" above:
 - a) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk County? YES
 - b) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? YES

If your answer to question 2 (b) is "No," does the defendant (or a majority of the defendants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County? _____

(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).

BAR ADMISSION

I am currently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court.
 Yes No

Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court?
 Yes (If yes, please explain) No

I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Signature: /s Craig B. Sanders

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [Diversified Consultants Hit with FDCA Lawsuit](#)
