

STATE OF NEW YORK

737--A

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sens. BIAGGI, PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Consumer Protection -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to requiring debt collectors to inform debtors that written communications are available in large print format

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Section 600 of the general business law is amended by
2 adding three new subdivisions 5, 6 and 7 to read as follows:

3 5. "Communication" shall mean the conveying of information regarding a
4 debt directly or indirectly to any person through any medium.

5 6. "Debt" means any obligation or alleged obligation of a consumer to
6 pay money arising out of a transaction in which the money, property,
7 insurance, or services which are the subject of the transaction are
8 primarily for personal, family, or household purposes, whether or not
9 such obligation has been reduced to judgment.

10 7. "Debt collector" means an individual who, as part of his or her
11 job, regularly collects or attempts to collect debts: (a) owed or due or
12 asserted to be owed or due to another; or (b) obtained by, or assigned
13 to, such person, firm or corporation, that are in default when obtained
14 or acquired by such person, firm or corporation.

15 § 2. The general business law is amended by adding a new section 601-b
16 to read as follows:

17 § 601-b. Large print notices. 1. Each and every principal creditor or
18 debt collector shall, in each initial communication, clearly and
19 conspicuously disclose to the debtor that each communication can be
20 provided in an alternative, reasonably accommodatable, format. Such
21 disclosure shall substantively contain the following:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (a) A statement that the consumer may request the letter in an alter-
2 native, reasonably accommodatable format selected by the principal cred-
3 itor or debt collector such as large print, braille, audio compact disc,
4 or other means; and

5 (b) A business phone number that the consumer may call to make such a
6 request.

7 2. For the purposes of this section, a principal creditor or debt
8 collector providing reasonable accommodation in compliance with the
9 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 shall not be deemed to have
10 violated any provision herein.

11 § 3. Subdivision 1 of section 602 of the general business law, as
12 added by chapter 753 of the laws of 1973, is amended to read as follows:

13 1. Except as otherwise provided by law, any person who [~~shall violate~~]
14 violates the terms of section six hundred one of this article [~~shall be~~]
15 is guilty of a misdemeanor, and each such violation shall be deemed a
16 separate offense. A violation by any person of section six hundred
17 one-a of this article, if such violation constitutes the first such
18 offense by such person, is punishable by a civil penalty not to exceed
19 two hundred fifty dollars. The second offense and any offense committed
20 thereafter is punishable by a civil penalty not to exceed five hundred
21 dollars.

22 § 4. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall
23 have become a law.