The Most Cynical Identity Theft Protection Law We've Ever Seen

November 9, 2016 - In yesterday's election, voters in the State of Washington passed a new law that was marketed as a way to protect the elderly and other vulnerable citizens from identity theft. No doubt, most voters cast their ballots with the best of intentions. After all, who wouldn't vote to help the elderly protect themselves from ID thieves? There is only one problem. The new law was being pushed by union special interests that had virtually no desire to help anyone but themselves.

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I-1501 passed with 71% support from Washington voters. The law changes the state's public records laws to prevent disclosures about home care givers and the clients they serve. Backers took the position that releasing this information to the public would allow anyone to develop a list of vulnerable people that could be targeted for identity theft.

But the initiative was actually being backed by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The union has 30,000 home care givers in the state that are members.

Those SEIU members are being targeted by another organization; the Freedom Foundation. The foundation has been notifying SEIU members that a recent court ruling allows them to stop paying their union dues. The ruling states that mandatory union dues violate the free speech rights of members who are forced to join but who disagree with union policies. Washington isn't a right-to-work state so unions are free to negotiate agreements that require union membership in order to work. But with the court decision you may be forced to join the union, but you don't have to pay union dues if don't want to. That really doesn't do the union any good.

While the law may provide a minimal level of ID theft protection to some people, it is fairly clear that its real purpose is to protect the union by changing the state's public record laws. For this reason, we have to say that it is the most cynical law enacted in the name of preventing identity theft that we've ever seen.
byJim Malmberg
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