

Identity Theft–Fighting Legislation May Also Improve Consumer Perceptions—Identity Theft Expert and Speaker on Personal Security

Date: 03-30-2007 11:49 AM CET

Category: [Business, Economy, Finances, Banking & Insurance](#)

Press release from: IDTheftSecurity.com

Agency: **STETrevisions**

(BOSTON, Mass. – March 30, 2007 - IDTheftSecurity.com) Research into consumer behavior and perceptions has found that consumers are more apt to shop where they perceive data security to be strong. Robert Siciliano, a widely televised and quoted personal security and identity theft expert, said governments themselves may also be at risk of losing the trust of constituencies. According to Siciliano, action from the U.S. Congress and recent identity theft–related legislation in Texas and California may affect trends identified in the study's findings, released in March by a California-based research organization.

"What we see with this and other studies' findings is common sense validated by research," Siciliano said. "Of course consumers are going to shop where they think data security is highest. This is nothing new—nor is the idea that legislation forcing industry to improve data security might change consumer perceptions in ways that belie industry's propensity to resist new rules."

President of IDTheftSecurity.com, Siciliano leads Fortune 500 companies and their clients in workshops that explore consumer education solutions for data security issues. The Privacy Learning Institute has featured Siciliano, a longtime identity theft speaker. Author of "The Safety Minute: 01," He has discussed identity theft and data security on CNBC, on NBC's "Today Show," FOX News, and elsewhere.

The study from Javelin Strategy & Research also revealed that consumers think retailers share an equal responsibility with banks, credit card companies, processors, and cardholders themselves for protecting credit and debit card account information. But this seemed to bear little on shopping decisions. According to Javelin's March 8 news release, only 20 percent of the survey's 1,200 randomly sampled respondents, all credit or debit cardholders, said they would likely continue shopping at a store if they learned it had a data breach that may have compromised their card account information; nearly 78 percent, in fact, would be unlikely to continue to shop there.

Meanwhile, activity from state governments and in the U.S. Congress pointed to new and possible legislation:

- As reported in Insurance Journal on March 23, the Texas House of Representatives passed a bill, HB 887, extending the statute of limitations for identity theft crimes from three years to seven.
- On March 25, an article in the California Progress Report indicated that California's assembly was deliberating a bill, AB 1168, to end the state's practice of selling its own residents' Social Security numbers to data brokerages.
- The New York Times reported that the Senate Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on terrorism, technology, and homeland security held hearings on March 21 to discuss proposed bills. One aims to require all companies to inform consumers when a data breach has occurred; the other endeavors to curtail use of Social Security numbers and make their misuse criminal.

"When you look at consumer perceptions about data security and identity theft," Siciliano concluded, "it's difficult not to conclude that we've reached a tipping point. Perceptions die hard, and we may have reached the point where, in order to retain the business of customers, industry actually needs the legislation it typically resists."

About IDTheftSecurity.com

Identity theft affects us all, which is why Robert Siciliano, president of IDTheftSecurity.com, makes it his mission to provide consumer education solutions on identity theft to Fortune 500 companies and their clients. A leader of personal safety and security seminars nationwide, Siciliano has been featured on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, "The Suze Orman Show," "ABC

News with Sam Donaldson," "The Montel Williams Show," "Maury Povich," "Sally Jesse Raphael," and "The Howard Stern Show."

Visit Siciliano's Web site, www.IDTheftSecurity.com; blog, www.realtysecurity.com/blog; and YouTube page, www.youtube.com/stungundotcom.

The media are encouraged to get in touch with Siciliano directly:

Robert Siciliano
Personal Security Expert
PHONE: 888-SICILIANO (742-4542)
FAX: 877-2-FAX-NOW (232-9669)
Robert@IDTheftSecurity.com
www.idtheftsecurity.com

The media may also contact:

Brent W. Skinner, President
STETrevisions
PHONE: 617-875-4859
FAX: 866-663-6557
BrentSkinner@STETrevisions.biz
www.STETrevisions.biz

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