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Identity Theft Protection Expert and One You Security: Efforts to Remove Social Security Numbers from Medicare Cards Are Misplaced

According to an industry insider, it's impossible to remove Social Security numbers from the public domain. Consumers instead need protection that renders these universal identifiers useless to the thieves who would otherwise use them to steal financial identities.

/24-7PressRelease/ - SARASOTA, FL, July 15, 2008 - Earlier this week, an announcement attributed to the office of U.S. Congressional Representative Paul Hodes (Dem.-NH) called for legislation to remove Social Security numbers from senior citizens' Medicare cards. But according to at least one industry insider, Robert Siciliano -- the widely televised and quoted identity theft protection expert and chief security analyst for One You Security, LLC (<http://www.OneYou.com>) -- the effort is well-meaning yet misplaced. Furthermore, Siciliano said One You Security understands that it's impossible to remove Social Security numbers from the public domain, where they have already been for years, and that consumers instead need protection that renders these universal identifiers useless to the thieves who would otherwise use them to steal financial identities.

"The focus should not be on efforts to hide Social Security numbers," said Siciliano. "It's impossible to do so, and legislators should instead introduce measures to sever any and all connections between citizens' identities and Social Security numbers, which are, unfortunately, already out there for the taking. There is little indicating, however, that these kinds of measures are anywhere on the horizon, and consumers therefore need the services of a company like One You to help block thieves' ability to use Social Security numbers to assume financial identities."

Subscribers to One You Security receive newsletters and special alerts from Siciliano (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLyIU5xflx8>). Through these, they get the latest data on breaches and learn more about identity theft prevention. Chief security analyst for One You Security and a member of the Bank Fraud & IT Security Report's editorial board, Siciliano regularly discusses data security and consumer protection on CNBC, on NBC's "Today Show," FOX News Network, and elsewhere.

On July 7, Rep. Hodes announced that he had introduced the Medicare Card Security Act (H.R. 6399) to debate in the U.S. House of Representatives. According to the associated news release from Hodes' office, in an effort to help protect seniors from becoming the victims of identity theft the bill calls to prohibit the display of Social Security numbers on their Medicare cards.

Meanwhile, other news reports highlighted apparent contradictions in advice that the U.S. Government gives citizens regarding the proper handling of their Social Security numbers. A July 3rd article from The Associated Press, for instance, observed that "[t]he nation's Medicare agency and the Pentagon want at least 52 million Americans to carry their Social Security numbers in their wallets, contrary to warnings by the Federal Trade Commission that people should avoid doing so."

"We see a lot of disagreement and contradictory advice when it comes to Social Security numbers, how they contribute to the spread of identity theft, and what to do about it," said Chris Harris, president and CEO of One You Security. "But few of the so-called experts are really getting it right: Making Social Security numbers private isn't the answer. In fact, it's a measure that's impossible to implement. For good or ill, Social Security numbers already proliferate the public domain, and the way to stop identity theft has very little to do, in any practical sense, with the privacy of these numbers. The best way, rather, to protect any consumer's financial identity is to make Social Security numbers useless to the thieves who already have them."

Consumers who choose One You Security do so in part because the company strives to transform their Social Security numbers into meaningless strings of numbers of no use to thieves. The firm backs all its offerings with a 100 percent service guarantee.

YouTube video shows Siciliano on FOX News Network, where he explains how thieves were able to crack the computers of Hannaford Bros., a grocery chain that operates 165 stores in the Northeast, to obtain the credit card and debit card numbers of millions of customers:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKol07bj_H8

A collection of videos at VideoJug features Siciliano sharing advice on how consumers can protect themselves from identity theft and fraud:

<http://www.videojug.com/search?keywords=siciliano>

About One You Security, LLC

Sarasota, Fla.-based One You Security's mission is to eliminate the threat and consequences of identity theft. For just \$10 per month, anyone can sign up for One You Security's identity theft protection service, a proactive, preventative approach whereby the company activates and manages its customers' fraud alerts with major credit bureaus. Subscribers also receive full access to ongoing education from identity theft protection expert Robert Siciliano, chief security analyst for One You Security (<http://www.OneYou.com>), which backs up its promise to protect clients' financial identities with a 100 percent service guarantee. To sign up for One You Security, dial 1-800-434-2010.

About IDTheftSecurity.com

Identity theft affects us all, and Robert Siciliano, CEO of IDTheftSecurity.com (<http://www.IDTheftSecurity.com>), chief security analyst for One You Security, and member of the Bank Fraud & IT Security Report's editorial board, makes it his mission to provide consumer education solutions on identity theft to Fortune 500 companies and their clients. Author of "The Safety Minute: 01" and leader of personal safety and security seminars nationwide, Siciliano has been featured on "The Today Show," CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, "FOX News," "The Suze Orman Show," "The Montel Williams Show," "Maury Povich," "Sally Jesse Raphael," "The Howard Stern Show," and "Inside Edition." Numerous magazines, print news outlets, and wire services have turned to him, as well, for expert commentary on personal security and identity theft protection. These include Forbes, USA Today, Entrepreneur, Woman's Day, Mademoiselle, Good Housekeeping, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Times, The Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, United Press International, Reuters, and others. For more information, visit Siciliano's Web site (<http://www.idtheftsecurity.com/>), blog (<http://www.realtysecurity.com/blog>), and YouTube page (<http://www.youtube.com/stungundotcom>).

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