



Rob McKenna

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF WASHINGTON

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May 25, 2006

The Honorable James R. Nicholson, Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

RE: Department of Veterans Affairs Data Security Breach

Dear Secretary Nicholson:

I have followed the press coverage of the recent major security breach in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with considerable unease. I understand that the VA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other law enforcement agencies are investigating the incident. I am confident that the VA will take all of the necessary steps to notify the affected veterans and their families of the security breach and provide them with information regarding how they can protect themselves from misuse of their personal information.

As you may know, Washington law allows individuals whose personal information is compromised due to a security breach to request the credit reporting agencies to place a security freeze on their credit reports, which will prevent the credit reporting agencies from releasing information without the individual's permission. *See* RCW 19.182.170. A credit freeze is an effective tool in preventing identity theft. However, in order to request a security freeze, the individual must submit a valid police report to the credit reporting agencies.

The Washington Attorney General's Office requests that the VA provide affected Washington veterans or their families with a copy of the law enforcement agency report regarding this incident. With this information, they will be able to secure their right to a credit freeze.

I also request that you provide my office with the number of Washington residents affected by the security breach. This information will help us use our best efforts to protect affected Washington residents from the risk of identity theft precipitated by the loss of their personal information.

The state of Washington is proud to be the home of thousands of veterans. We appreciate your cooperation in our efforts to assist them in reducing the threat of identity theft as a result of the security breach incident.

Sincerely,

ROB MCKENNA
Attorney General

Enclosure

