

From: Derek Mousessian
Subject: Electronic Fund Transfers

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I recently read the "Consumers need to be vigilant to ward off overdrafts, bank fees" article on USA Today online, 3/23/09, and I wanted to comment.

I want the "OPT-IN" rule! Here is an example of the Cruel and Unusual punishment the banks dish out on unsuspecting consumers.

Not so long ago, my father, who is on social security and has no other income, went to withdraw money from a National City ATM around the time his SS check was to have been deposited. Apparently he was too early and was immediately charged an overdraft of \$35. Of course, he didn't know he was hit with an overdraft fee until he got his statement in the mail, so in the meantime he just kept withdrawing money, each time getting hit with the fee until his SS money was deposited. He did go into the bank office to discuss it and they removed all but 2 of the fees. My complaint is that not so long ago, if you went to withdraw money that wasn't there, your request would be denied and you would get a receipt with the message "insufficient funds". BUT, nowadays, the bank will let you withdraw the money just so they can hit you with the overdraft fees. I urge the FED or Congress or whomever the appropriate parties are, to require banks to reinstitute the policy of denying withdrawals when there are insufficient funds. This practice of "loaning" money only to charge higher than loan-shark fees, is extremely detrimental to the financial well-being of our senior citizens who do not and cannot understand the newer technologies in the banking industry. Plus the fact that this overdraft policy is just a way for banks to profit off of those who are impoverished and living check to check.

The reasoning the banks use for this overdraft policy is that the consumers have the ability to manage their finances easier by going online or calling in. However, senior citizens like my father are too set in their ways and old fashioned to learn how to use ATM's and personal computers, so I had to teach him how to use the ATM to withdraw money, and he does not have the mental capacity to verbalize his situation on a phone call. That being said, he is not tech-savvy enough to learn for himself how to check his balance, he has no computer and could not learn how to use one anyway as his education level is very low (he graduated HS in 1954). Please force change in the banking industry! If they give you grief over the cost of switching how they process the transactions, tell them "Tough!", they had to change it from how they did it before (without telling anyone) so it's their own fault.

Thank you,

A concerned citizen,
Derek Mousessian