

From: Randy Burge, Albuquerque, NM
Subject: Electronic Fund Transfers

Comments:

Jan 27, 2009

Federal Reserve Board Email comments

Dear Email comments,

I have been banking for more than 40 years. Over those times I have encountered times when my checking balances were low. On occasion I have had an overdraft or two and paid a reasonable fee. However, in the past year, I have encountered an alarming habit by my bank to allow me to continue using my debit card, even when I didn't have funds in the bank - without any immediate notice that I had exceeded my balance. (The notices would show up three to four days later in the mail.)

On those occasions I could have transferred money from my savings account to replenish my account if I had been notified/given the choice. I would be dinged for \$35 per un-notified "overdraft" by my bank. Often this fee was charged for a \$3 cup of coffee at Starbucks.

I bear responsibility for spending the money that I have. The banks should bear the responsibility for prohibiting me from spending money that I don't have, or at least notify me at the point of transaction that if I go through with the transaction, a OD charge will be incurred.

In times past, this unfortunate circumstance would trigger the clerk to notify me the transaction was declined. I would not make the purchase because I didn't have the money. I went to the bank and asked them to please stop this OD "protection" as it was costing me hundreds of dollars unnecessarily. They said they would and then proceeded to leave it as it was.

When I go to my bank with my money, I do not expect to get "held-up" by my own bank. The banks are ripping off thousands upon thousands of people every day with these nefarious and fraudulent practices, all to manage MY money that I have, not the money I don't have. It is criminal on the bank's part. (And all too common in the wild west days of lax banking regulations).

I have never seen anything like it. I am told that is just the way it is. That IS not the WAY IT WAS for much of my banking life. The banks should have to absorb the OD experience/costs if they are going to promote the stealing of funds in this manner.

I have tried to Opt-out of this theft but my bank reps look at me over their desks and say they can't do anything about it, it is bank policy.

Let's force the banks to be fair and honest with their customers! No money in your account, no purchases. That is the way it has worked for generations. There is no excuse because with the debit cards, all transactions are cleared electronically by my bank before the transaction can take place. The bank knows and can easily notify me that my purchase will not be allowed, if it manages its IT and decision making process fairly.

Why is it different now? Lax regulations strongly favoring banks at the expense of their customers.

Please allow me the chance to opt-in to overdraft services. This is the only way that I will truly feel protected.

Sincerely,

Mr. Randy Burge
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