

(February 10, 2006) 2006 National Consumer Protection Week

2006 National Consumer Protection Week

WASHINGTON, DC - This week, February 5th - February 11th, marks the eighth annual National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW). NCPW focuses primarily on consumer education and information as a means for protection against unfair or deceptive fraudulent activities, like identity theft and telemarketing scams.

The development of new technologies provides consumers with convenience, opportunity, and access to limitless information about products and services. Despite these apparent benefits, this same technology is sometimes manipulated and used against consumers, resulting in infringement of consumer privacy and identity theft. Accordingly, consumers today must be vigilant against scams and frauds. Additionally, lawmakers must take measures to ensure consumer protection.

I am supportive of additional ways that lawmakers can work to enhance consumer protection and privacy. On January 31, 2006, I introduced H.R. 4657, the Secure Telephone Operations (STOP) Act of 2006, which would make the sale of telephone records illegal. If enacted into law, this legislation would stop the gross invasion of privacy of consumers and their phone records, thereby increasing the safety of all citizens.

With increased knowledge and heightened awareness, individuals can reduce their susceptibility to deception. Consumers can find relevant information concerning: credit, identity theft, safe computing, telemarketing, and health related issues via the Internet at <http://www.consumer.gov/ncpw/consumer.htm> or <http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm>. These websites offer invaluable tips for spotting scams and further dispels common myths about many consumer products. Furthermore, these websites explain ways that you as the consumer can protect yourself from fraudulent activities.

During the National Consumer Protection Week, we are reminded of the importance of consumer awareness and education in prevention of identity theft and other frauds. We are also reminded of the necessity of privacy, ensured by lawmakers like ourselves, which protects consumers. Together, educated consumers and dedicated lawmakers provide a firm safeguard against fraudulent activities and scams.