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Consumers Sue ICE and Money Transfer Companies for Secretly Collecting and Sharing Millions of Private Financial Records

"This dragnet surveillance program violates the privacy and trust of people who use these services. We're suing to stop this practice immediately."

San Francisco, CA – Today, four community members represented by Just Futures Law (JFL) and Edelson PC filed a proposed class action lawsuit against Western Union, Continental Exchange Services, Inc. dba Ria Financial Services and AFEX Money Express, Viamericas Corporation, and DolEx Dollar Express, Inc. for allegedly sharing the private financial information of millions of people with the federal government in violation of federal and California law. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are also named as defendants for accessing the information without complying with federal legal requirements. The lawsuit was filed in federal court in the Northern District of California.

In March 2022, Sen. Wyden's office (D-OR) first revealed that ICE had issued unlawful customs summonses to gain access to a massive trove of personal financial data from money transfer companies. Public records obtained by Just Futures Law and Edelson PC suggest that the program affected many more people and involved more companies and government agencies than previously known, and that its primary targets are immigrants and communities of color.

"I'm so disturbed by this invasion of privacy. I was never told that information about my family and our finances would be sent to ICE and other government agencies," said **Nelson Sequiera, one of the plaintiffs**. "I'm filing this case to stand up for everyone who was affected, and to stop this from happening."

"It's outrageous that money transfer companies are handing over consumers' sensitive information to law enforcement in this way," said **Daniel Werner, Senior Staff Attorney with Just Futures Law**. "This dragnet surveillance program violates the privacy and trust of people who use these services. We're suing to stop this practice immediately."

According to these records, Western Union, Ria, AFEX, Viamericas, and DolEx, and other money transfer companies provided the federal government access to over 145 million sensitive financial records from plaintiffs' and others' money transfers, including information such as the senders and recipients of money transfers, the amount transferred, social security numbers,

driver license and other identification numbers, addresses, and other personal identifying information. Lawyers argue that the companies did so without observing federal legal protections.

“The government can’t access consumer financial records without following very strict protocols,” said **Yaman Salahi, a Partner at Edelson PC**. “Companies that provide the government with access without following those rules do so at their own risk. We are taking them to court to make sure they respect their customers’ privacy.”

The named plaintiffs seek to represent millions of affected consumers, and are asking for a stop to the sharing of consumer financial information with the federal government, purging of any unlawfully collected data, statutory and punitive damages for the proposed class, and reimbursement of service fees for California consumers whose personal financial information was shared with the government without following proper legal procedures.

“Our immigrant communities rely on being able to send money to their loved ones overseas. This breach of trust can put our family members at risk of raids and deportation,” said **Dinesh McCoy, Staff Attorney at Just Futures Law**. “It’s beyond disturbing that ICE has access to and has contributed to the maintenance of this mass financial surveillance program.”

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), which is part of ICE, helped operate a surveillance program that swept up hundreds of millions of financial records of those in Arizona, New Mexico, California, Texas, and Mexico who used money transfer companies Western Union, Continental Exchange Services, Inc. dba Ria Financial Services and AFEX Money Express, and others. ICE has access to these transactions through a financial surveillance platform called Transaction Record Analysis Center (TRAC) set up by the Arizona Attorney General’s office with federal government support.

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About Just Futures Law: *Just Futures Law is a transformative legal organization that defends and builds the power of immigrants’ rights and criminal justice organizers and base-building community groups working to disrupt and dismantle our deportation and mass incarceration systems. Follow us @JustFuturesLaw.*

About Edelson PC: *[Edelson PC](#) is one of the nation’s leading high-stakes plaintiffs’ firms, focusing on class and mass actions to public client investigations and prosecutions. Edelson’s cases have contributed to settlements and verdicts collectively topping \$45 billion. It holds the record for the largest consumer privacy settlement (\$650m) and the largest consumer privacy trial verdict (\$925m) in our nation’s history. It has been repeatedly recognized as the top plaintiff’s privacy firm in the country.*

Demandan a Compañías de Envío de Dinero y Inmigración Por Colección de Datos Personales

“Este programa de vigilancia masiva viola la privacidad y la confianza de la gente que usa estos servicios. Estamos demandando para terminar esta práctica inmediatamente.”

San Francisco, CA – Cuatro individuos demandaron a las compañías Western Union, Continental Exchange Services, Inc dba Ria Financial Services and AFEX Money Express, Viamerica Corporation, and DolEx Dollar Express, Inc. junto al Departamento de Seguridad Interior (DHS) y el Servicio de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE) por su operación de vigilancia y compartición de datos. Representados por los abogados de Just Futures Law y Edelson PC, los demandantes acusan a las compañías y a las agencias nombradas de compartir información financiera privada de millones de consumidores que usaron estos servicios de envíos de dinero. La demanda colectiva alega que esta operación facilitó la divulgación de información financiera y violó los derechos de privacidad de millones de consumidores. Presentaron la demanda en la corte federal de los Estados Unidos para el distrito del Norte de California.

En marzo de este año, la oficina del Senador Wyden reveló que ICE usó órdenes ilegales para obtener acceso a los datos personales de millones de consumidores que usaron los servicios de estas compañías para mandar dinero desde en el suroeste de los Estados Unidos a otros países y estados. Western Union, Ria, y varias otras compañías dieron acceso al gobierno a más de 145 millones de registros financieros que incluyen información sobre los remitentes y recipientes, números de seguro social, números identificantes, direcciones, y otra información personal. Incluso, los registros públicos obtenidos por los abogados sugieren que el programa afectó a muchas más personas e involucró a muchas más empresas y agencias gubernamentales de lo que se sabía anteriormente, y que estas agencias se enfocaron en inmigrantes y comunidades minoritarias.

“Estoy perturbado por esta invasión de privacidad. Nunca me dijeron que la información de mi familia y nuestras finanzas serán compartidas con ICE y otras agencias gubernamentales,” explicó **Nelson Sequiera, demandante en el caso.** “Soy parte de esta demanda para representar a todos los que fueron afectados y para evitar que siga pasando esto.”

“Es indignante que las compañías de envío de dinero hayan entregado la información de sus clientes a la policía y inmigración,” dijo **Daniel Werner, abogado con Just Futures Law.** “Este programa de vigilancia masiva viola la privacidad y la confianza de la gente que usa estos servicios. Estamos demandando para terminar esta práctica inmediatamente.”

Los demandantes buscan representar a los millones de consumidores afectados, y piden que paran el intercambio ilegal de los datos financieros de los consumidores entre estas compañías y el gobierno federal, tal como una purga de los datos ya recolectados y intercambiados, daños monetarios y punitivos para todas las personas afectadas, y el reembolso de todos los cargos

cobrados por las compañías en cuanto a las transacciones desde California cuyas datos fueron compartidos sin cumplir con los requisitos de la ley.

“El gobierno no puede acceder registros financieros de los consumidores sin cumplir con un protocolo muy estricto,” dijo **Yaman Salahi, un socio del bufete de abogados Edelson PC**. “Las compañías que proveen acceso al gobierno a los datos financieros personales sin cumplir los requisitos de la ley corren riesgos serios. Las vamos a llevar a corte para asegurar que respeten la privacidad de sus clientes.”

“Nuestras comunidades inmigrantes dependen de la habilidad de mandar dinero a sus seres queridos. Esta brecha de confianza puede poner a nuestras familias en peligro de deportación y redadas,” explicó **Dinesh McCoy, abogado con Just Futures Law**. “Es perturbador que agentes de inmigración tengan acceso a esta información.”

El Departamento de Investigaciones de Seguridad Interior, (HSI), que es parte de ICE, ayudó a operar este programa de vigilancia que recogió millones de registros financieros de los consumidores de compañías como Western Union, y Continental Exchange Services, Inc. dba Ria, entre otras, para mandar dinero en Arizona, Nuevo México, California, Texas, y México. ICE obtuvo acceso a estas transacciones usando la plataforma conocida como “TRAC,” Centro de Análisis de Registros Transaccionales, establecido por la Oficina del Procurador de Arizona.

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