

§ 2707. Civil action

(a) CAUSE OF ACTION.—Except as provided in section 2703(e), any provider of electronic communication service, subscriber, or other person aggrieved by any violation of this chapter in which the conduct constituting the violation is engaged in with a knowing or intentional state of mind may, in a civil action, recover from the person or entity, other than the United States, which engaged in that violation such relief as may be appropriate.

(b) RELIEF.—In a civil action under this section, appropriate relief includes—

- (1) such preliminary and other equitable or declaratory relief as may be appropriate;
- (2) damages under subsection (c); and
- (3) a reasonable attorney's fee and other litigation costs reasonably incurred.

(c) DAMAGES.—The court may assess as damages in a civil action under this section the sum of the actual damages suffered by the plaintiff and any profits made by the violator as a result of the violation, but in no case shall a person entitled to recover receive less than the sum of \$1,000. If the violation is willful or intentional, the court may assess punitive damages. In the case of a successful action to enforce liability under this section, the court may assess the costs of the action, together with reasonable attorney fees determined by the court.

(d) ADMINISTRATIVE DISCIPLINE.—If a court or appropriate department or agency determines that the United States or any of its departments or agencies has violated any provision of this chapter, and the court or appropriate department or agency finds that the circumstances surrounding the violation raise serious questions about whether or not an officer or employee of the United States acted willfully or intentionally with respect to the violation, the department or agency shall, upon receipt of a true and correct copy of the decision and findings of the court or appropriate department or agency promptly initiate a proceeding to determine whether disciplinary action against the officer or employee is warranted. If the head of the department or agency involved determines that disciplinary action is not warranted, he or she shall notify the Inspector General with jurisdiction over the department or agency concerned and shall provide the Inspector General with the reasons for such determination.

(e) DEFENSE.—A good faith reliance on—

(1) a court warrant or order, a grand jury subpoena, a legislative authorization, or a statutory authorization (including a request of a governmental entity under section 2703(f) of this title);

(2) a request of an investigative or law enforcement officer under section 2518(7) of this title; or

(3) a good faith determination that section 2511(3) of this title permitted the conduct complained of;

is a complete defense to any civil or criminal action brought under this chapter or any other law.

(f) LIMITATION.—A civil action under this section may not be commenced later than two years after the date upon which the claimant

first discovered or had a reasonable opportunity to discover the violation.

(g) IMPROPER DISCLOSURE.—Any willful disclosure of a "record", as that term is defined in section 552a(a) of title 5, United States Code, obtained by an investigative or law enforcement officer, or a governmental entity, pursuant to section 2703 of this title, or from a device installed pursuant to section 3123 or 3125 of this title, that is not a disclosure made in the proper performance of the official functions of the officer or governmental entity making the disclosure, is a violation of this chapter. This provision shall not apply to information previously lawfully disclosed (prior to the commencement of any civil or administrative proceeding under this chapter) to the public by a Federal, State, or local governmental entity or by the plaintiff in a civil action under this chapter.

(Added Pub. L. 99-508, title II, §201[(a)], Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1866; amended Pub. L. 104-293, title VI, §601(c), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3469; Pub. L. 107-56, title II, §§223(b), title VIII, §815, Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 293, 384; Pub. L. 107-273, div. B, title IV, §4005(f)(2), Nov. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 1813.)

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (e)(1). Pub. L. 107-273 made technical correction to directory language of Pub. L. 107-56, §815. See 2001 Amendment note below.

2001—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 107-56, §223(b)(1), inserted "other than the United States," after "person or entity".

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 107-56, §223(b)(2), added subsec. (d) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (d). Text read as follows: "If a court determines that any agency or department of the United States has violated this chapter and the court finds that the circumstances surrounding the violation raise the question whether or not an officer or employee of the agency or department acted willfully or intentionally with respect to the violation, the agency or department concerned shall promptly initiate a proceeding to determine whether or not disciplinary action is warranted against the officer or employee."

Subsec. (e)(1). Pub. L. 107-56, §815, as amended by Pub. L. 107-273, inserted "(including a request of a governmental entity under section 2703(f) of this title)" after "or a statutory authorization".

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 107-56, §223(b)(3), added subsec. (g).

1996—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 104-293, §601(c)(1), substituted "other person" for "customer".

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-293, §601(c)(2), inserted at end "If the violation is willful or intentional, the court may assess punitive damages. In the case of a successful action to enforce liability under this section, the court may assess the costs of the action, together with reasonable attorney fees determined by the court."

Subsecs. (d) to (f). Pub. L. 104-293, §601(c)(3), (4), added subsec. (d) and redesignated former subsecs. (d) and (e) as (e) and (f), respectively.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 107-273, div. B, title IV, §4005(f)(2), Nov. 2, 2002, 116 Stat. 1813, provided that the amendment made by section 4005(f)(2) is effective Oct. 26, 2001.

§ 2708. Exclusivity of remedies

The remedies and sanctions described in this chapter are the only judicial remedies and sanctions for nonconstitutional violations of this chapter.

(Added Pub. L. 99-508, title II, §201[(a)], Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1867.)

§ 2709. Counterintelligence access to telephone toll and transactional records

(a) **DUTY TO PROVIDE.**—A wire or electronic communication service provider shall comply with a request for subscriber information and toll billing records information, or electronic communication transactional records in its custody or possession made by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation under subsection (b) of this section.

(b) **REQUIRED CERTIFICATION.**—The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or his designee in a position not lower than Deputy Assistant Director at Bureau headquarters or a Special Agent in Charge in a Bureau field office designated by the Director, may—

(1) request the name, address, length of service, and local and long distance toll billing records of a person or entity if the Director (or his designee) certifies in writing to the wire or electronic communication service provider to which the request is made that the name, address, length of service, and toll billing records sought are relevant to an authorized investigation to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities, provided that such an investigation of a United States person is not conducted solely on the basis of activities protected by the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States; and

(2) request the name, address, and length of service of a person or entity if the Director (or his designee) certifies in writing to the wire or electronic communication service provider to which the request is made that the information sought is relevant to an authorized investigation to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities, provided that such an investigation of a United States person is not conducted solely upon the basis of activities protected by the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

(c) **PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN DISCLOSURE.**—

(1) If the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or his designee in a position not lower than Deputy Assistant Director at Bureau headquarters or a Special Agent in Charge in a Bureau field office designated by the Director, certifies that otherwise there may result a danger to the national security of the United States, interference with a criminal, counterterrorism, or counterintelligence investigation, interference with diplomatic relations, or danger to the life or physical safety of any person, no wire or electronic communications service provider, or officer, employee, or agent thereof, shall disclose to any person (other than those to whom such disclosure is necessary to comply with the request or an attorney to obtain legal advice or legal assistance with respect to the request) that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has sought or obtained access to information or records under this section.

(2) The request shall notify the person or entity to whom the request is directed of the nondisclosure requirement under paragraph (1).

(3) Any recipient disclosing to those persons necessary to comply with the request or to an attorney to obtain legal advice or legal assistance with respect to the request shall inform such person of any applicable nondisclosure requirement. Any person who receives a disclosure under this subsection shall be subject to the same prohibitions on disclosure under paragraph (1).

(4) At the request of the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the designee of the Director, any person making or intending to make a disclosure under this section shall identify to the Director or such designee the person to whom such disclosure will be made or to whom such disclosure was made prior to the request, except that nothing in this section shall require a person to inform the Director or such designee of the identity of an attorney to whom disclosure was made or will be made to obtain legal advice or legal assistance with respect to the request under subsection (a).

(d) **DISSEMINATION BY BUREAU.**—The Federal Bureau of Investigation may disseminate information and records obtained under this section only as provided in guidelines approved by the Attorney General for foreign intelligence collection and foreign counterintelligence investigations conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and, with respect to dissemination to an agency of the United States, only if such information is clearly relevant to the authorized responsibilities of such agency.

(e) **REQUIREMENT THAT CERTAIN CONGRESSIONAL BODIES BE INFORMED.**—On a semiannual basis the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shall fully inform the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, concerning all requests made under subsection (b) of this section.

(f) **LIBRARIES.**—A library (as that term is defined in section 213(1) of the Library Services and Technology Act (20 U.S.C. 9122(1)), the services of which include access to the Internet, books, journals, magazines, newspapers, or other similar forms of communication in print or digitally by patrons for their use, review, examination, or circulation, is not a wire or electronic communication service provider for purposes of this section, unless the library is providing the services defined in section 2510(15) (“electronic communication service”) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 99-508, title II, §201[(a)], Oct. 21, 1986, 100 Stat. 1867; amended Pub. L. 103-142, Nov. 17, 1993, 107 Stat. 1491; Pub. L. 104-293, title VI, §601(a), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3469; Pub. L. 107-56, title V, §505(a), Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 365; Pub. L. 109-177, title I, §116(a), Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 213; Pub. L. 109-178, §§4(b), 5, Mar. 9, 2006, 120 Stat. 280, 281.)

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 109-177 reenacted heading without change and amended text generally. Prior to