

**Senate Bill No. 1607**

**CHAPTER 978**

An act to amend Sections 1785.10, 1785.15, and 1785.16 of, and to add Sections 1785.15.1, 1785.15.2, and 1785.20.2 to, the Civil Code, relating to consumer credit.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2000. Filed with Secretary of State September 30, 2000.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1607, Figueroa. Consumer credit reporting agencies.

Existing law governs the collection and disclosure of consumer credit reports. A consumer credit reporting agency must disclose the recipients of any consumer credit report regarding a consumer which the agency has furnished under specified circumstances. A consumer credit reporting agency must also make specified disclosures of, or provide notice regarding, information contained in a consumer credit report upon request of the consumer.

This bill, operative July 1, 2001, would require a consumer credit reporting agency to disclose specified information, including the consumer's credit score and an explanation of the credit score, as defined, and the key factors, as defined, under specified circumstances. This bill would permit a consumer credit reporting agency to charge a reasonable fee for providing credit score information. This bill would also require a person using a credit score in connection with a loan secured by residential real property, as defined, to provide to a consumer a copy of those same disclosures required above along with a specified notice to the loan applicant except as specified. This bill would provide that a person is not obliged to explain the information provided. This bill would further provide that any contractual provisions that prohibit the disclosure of a credit score by a person who makes or arranges loans or a consumer credit reporting agency are void, and that a lender shall not have liability for disclosure of credit scores under any contractual provision. This bill would provide that a person using an automated underwriting system may satisfy its requirements in a specified way. The bill would also make related changes.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 1785.10 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1785.10. (a) Every consumer credit reporting agency shall, upon request and proper identification of any consumer, allow the



consumer to visually inspect all files maintained regarding that consumer at the time of the request.

(b) Every consumer reporting agency, upon contact by a consumer by telephone, mail, or in person regarding information which may be contained in the agency files regarding that consumer, shall promptly advise the consumer of his or her rights under Sections 1785.19 and 1785.19.5, and of the obligation of the agency to provide disclosure of the files in person, by mail, or by telephone pursuant to Section 1785.15, including the obligation of the agency to provide a decoded written version of the file or a written copy of the file with an explanation of any code, including any credit score used, and the key factors, as defined in Section 1785.15.1, if the consumer so requests that copy. The disclosure shall be provided in the manner selected by the consumer, chosen from among any reasonable means available to the consumer credit reporting agency.

The agency shall determine the applicability of subdivision (1) of Section 1785.17 and, where applicable, the agency shall inform the consumer of the rights under that section.

(c) All information on a consumer in the files of a consumer credit reporting agency at the time of a request for inspection under subdivision (a), shall be available for inspection, including the names and addresses of the sources of information.

(d) (1) The consumer credit reporting agency shall also disclose the recipients of any consumer credit report on the consumer which the consumer credit reporting agency has furnished:

(A) For employment purposes within the two-year period preceding the request.

(B) For any other purpose within the 12-month period preceding the request.

(2) Disclosure of recipients of consumer credit reports for purposes of this subdivision shall include the name of the recipient or, if applicable, the fictitious business name under which the recipient does business disclosed in full. If requested by the consumer, the identification shall also include the address of the recipient.

(e) The consumer credit reporting agency shall also disclose a record of all inquiries received by the agency in the 12-month period preceding the request that identified the consumer in connection with a credit transaction which is not initiated by the consumer. This record of inquiries shall include the name of each recipient making an inquiry.

SEC. 2. Section 1785.15 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1785.15. (a) A consumer credit reporting agency shall supply files and information required under Section 1785.10 during normal business hours and on reasonable notice. In addition to the disclosure provided by this chapter and any disclosures received by the



consumer, the consumer has the right to request and receive all of the following:

(1) Either a decoded written version of the file or a written copy of the file, including all information in the file at the time of the request, with an explanation of any code used.

(2) A credit score for the consumer, the key factors, and the related information, as defined in and required by Section 1785.15.1.

(3) A record of all inquiries, by recipient, which result in the provision of information concerning the consumer in connection with a credit transaction that is not initiated by the consumer and which were received by the consumer credit reporting agency in the 12-month period immediately preceding the request for disclosure under this section.

(4) The recipients, including end users specified in Section 1785.22, of any consumer credit report on the consumer which the consumer credit reporting agency has furnished:

(A) For employment purposes within the two-year period preceding the request.

(B) For any other purpose within the 12-month period preceding the request.

Identification for purposes of this paragraph shall include the name of the recipient or, if applicable, the fictitious business name under which the recipient does business disclosed in full. If requested by the consumer, the identification shall also include the address of the recipient.

(b) Files maintained on a consumer shall be disclosed promptly as follows:

(1) In person, at the location where the consumer credit reporting agency maintains the trained personnel required by subdivision (d), if he or she appears in person and furnishes proper identification.

(2) By mail, if the consumer makes a written request with proper identification for a copy of the file or a decoded written version of that file to be sent to the consumer at a specified address. A disclosure pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited in the United States mail, postage prepaid, within five business days after the consumer's written request for the disclosure is received by the consumer credit reporting agency. Consumer credit reporting agencies complying with requests for mailings under this section shall not be liable for disclosures to third parties caused by mishandling of mail after the mailings leave the consumer reporting agencies.

(3) A summary of all information contained in files on a consumer and required to be provided by Section 1785.10 shall be provided by telephone, if the consumer has made a written request, with proper identification for telephone disclosure.

(4) Information in a consumer's file required to be provided in writing under this section may also be disclosed in another form if authorized by the consumer and if available from the consumer



credit reporting agency. For this purpose a consumer may request disclosure in person pursuant to Section 1785.10, by telephone upon disclosure of proper identification by the consumer, by electronic means if available from the consumer credit reporting agency, or by any other reasonable means that is available from the consumer credit reporting agency.

(c) “Proper identification,” as used in subdivision (b) means that information generally deemed sufficient to identify a person. Only if the consumer is unable to reasonably identify himself or herself with the information described above, may a consumer credit reporting agency require additional information concerning the consumer’s employment and personal or family history in order to verify his or her identity.

(d) The consumer credit reporting agency shall provide trained personnel to explain to the consumer any information furnished him or her pursuant to Section 1785.10.

(e) The consumer shall be permitted to be accompanied by one other person of his or her choosing, who shall furnish reasonable identification. A consumer credit reporting agency may require the consumer to furnish a written statement granting permission to the consumer credit reporting agency to discuss the consumer’s file in that person’s presence.

(f) Any written disclosure by a consumer credit reporting agency to any consumer pursuant to this section shall include a written summary of all rights the consumer has under this title and in the case of a consumer credit reporting agency which compiles and maintains consumer credit reports on a nationwide basis, a toll-free telephone number which the consumer can use to communicate with the consumer credit reporting agency. The written summary of rights required under this subdivision is sufficient if in substantially the following form:

“You have a right to obtain a copy of your credit file from a consumer credit reporting agency. You may be charged a reasonable fee not exceeding eight dollars (\$8). There is no fee, however, if you have been turned down for credit, employment, insurance, or a rental dwelling because of information in your credit report within the preceding 60 days. The consumer credit reporting agency must provide someone to help you interpret the information in your credit file.

You have a right to dispute inaccurate information by contacting the consumer credit reporting agency directly. However, neither you nor any credit repair company or credit service organization has the right to have accurate, current, and verifiable information removed from your credit report. Under the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, the consumer credit reporting agency must remove accurate, negative information from your report only if it is over seven years old. Bankruptcy information can be reported for 10 years.



If you have notified a credit reporting agency in writing that you dispute the accuracy of information in your file, the consumer credit reporting agency must then, within 30 business days, reinvestigate and modify or remove inaccurate information. The consumer credit reporting agency may not charge a fee for this service. Any pertinent information and copies of all documents you have concerning an error should be given to the consumer credit reporting agency.

If reinvestigation does not resolve the dispute to your satisfaction, you may send a brief statement to the consumer credit reporting agency to keep in your file, explaining why you think the record is inaccurate. The consumer credit reporting agency must include your statement about disputed information in a report it issues about you.

You have a right to receive a record of all inquiries relating to a credit transaction initiated in 12 months preceding your request. This record shall include the recipients of any consumer credit report.

You may request in writing that the information contained in your file not be provided to a third party for marketing purposes.

You have a right to bring civil action against anyone, including a consumer credit reporting agency, who improperly obtains access to a file, knowingly or willfully misuses file data, or fails to correct inaccurate file data.”

SEC. 3. Section 1785.15.1 is added to the Civil Code, to read:

1785.15.1. (a) Upon the consumer’s request for a credit score, a consumer credit reporting agency shall supply to a consumer a notice which shall include the information described in paragraphs (1) to (5), inclusive, and a statement indicating that the information and credit scoring model may be different than the credit score that may be used by the lender. However, if the consumer requests the credit file and not the credit score, then the consumer shall receive the credit file and a statement that he or she may request and obtain a credit score.

(1) The consumer’s current credit score or the consumer’s most recent credit score that was previously calculated by the credit reporting agency for a purpose related to the extension of credit.

(2) The range of possible credit scores under the model used.

(3) All the key factors that adversely affected the consumer’s credit score in the model used, the total number of which shall not exceed four.

(4) The date the credit score was created.

(5) The name of the person or entity that provided the credit score or credit file upon which the credit score was created.

(b) For purposes of this act, “credit score” means a numerical value or a categorization derived from a statistical tool or modeling system used by a person who makes or arranges a loan to predict the likelihood of certain credit behaviors, including default. The numerical value or the categorization derived from this analysis may also be referred to as a “risk predictor” or “risk score.” “Credit score”



does not include any mortgage score or rating of an automated underwriting system that considers one or more factors in addition to credit information, including, but not limited to, the loan to value ratio, the amount of down payment, or a consumer's financial assets. "Credit score" does not include other elements of the underwriting process or underwriting decision.

(c) For the purposes of this section, "key factors" means all relevant elements or reasons adversely affecting the credit score for the particular individual listed in the order of their importance based on their effect on the credit score.

(d) The information required by this section shall be provided in the same timeframe and manner as the information described in Section 1785.15.

(e) This section shall not be construed to compel a consumer reporting agency to develop or disclose a score if the agency does not (1) distribute scores that are used in connection with residential real property loans, or (2) develop scores that assist credit providers in understanding a consumer's general credit behavior and predicting his or her future credit behavior.

(f) This section shall not be construed to require a consumer credit reporting agency that distributes credit scores developed by another person or entity to provide a further explanation of them, or to process a dispute arising pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 1785.16, except that the consumer credit reporting agency shall provide the consumer with the name and address and website for contacting the person or entity who developed the score or developed the methodology of the score. This subdivision does not apply to a consumer credit reporting agency that develops or modifies scores that are developed by another person or entity.

(g) This section shall not be construed to require a consumer reporting agency to maintain credit scores in its files.

SEC. 4. Section 1785.15.2 is added to the Civil Code, to read:

1785.15.2. (a) In complying with Section 1785.15.1, a consumer credit reporting agency shall supply the consumer with a credit score that is derived from a credit scoring model that is widely distributed to users by that consumer credit reporting agency in connection with residential real property loans or with a credit score that assists the consumer in understanding the credit scoring assessment of his or her credit behavior and predictions about his or her future credit behavior, and a statement indicating that the information and credit scoring model may be different than that used by the lender.

(b) A consumer credit reporting agency may charge a reasonable fee for providing the information required under Section 1785.15.1.

SEC. 5. Section 1785.16 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1785.16. (a) If the completeness or accuracy of any item of information contained in his or her file is disputed by a consumer, and the dispute is conveyed directly to the consumer credit reporting



agency by the consumer or user on behalf of the consumer, the consumer credit reporting agency shall within a reasonable period of time and without charge, reinvestigate and record the current status of the disputed information before the end of the 30-business-day period beginning on the date the agency receives notice of the dispute from the consumer or user, unless the consumer credit reporting agency has reasonable grounds to believe and determines that the dispute by the consumer is frivolous or irrelevant, including by reason of a failure of the consumer to provide sufficient information, as requested by the consumer credit reporting agency, to investigate the dispute. Unless the consumer credit reporting agency determines that the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant, before the end of the five-business-day period beginning on the date the consumer credit reporting agency receives notice of dispute under this section, the agency shall notify any person who provided information in dispute at the address and in the manner specified by the person. A consumer credit reporting agency may require that disputes by consumers be in writing.

(b) In conducting that reinvestigation the consumer credit reporting agency shall review and consider all relevant information submitted by the consumer with respect to the disputed item of information. If the consumer credit reporting agency determines that the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant, it shall notify the consumer by mail or, if authorized by the consumer for that purpose, by any other means available to the consumer credit reporting agency, within five business days after that determination is made that it is terminating its reinvestigation of the item of information. In this notification, the consumer credit reporting agency shall state the specific reasons why it has determined that the consumer's dispute is frivolous or irrelevant. If the disputed item of information is found to be inaccurate, missing, or can no longer be verified by the evidence submitted, the consumer credit reporting agency shall promptly add, correct, or delete that information from the consumer's file.

(c) No information may be reinserted in a consumer's file after having been deleted pursuant to this section unless the person who furnished the information certifies that the information is accurate. If any information deleted from a consumer's file is reinserted in the file, the consumer credit reporting agency shall promptly notify the consumer of the reinsertion in writing or, if authorized by the consumer for that purpose, by any other means available to the consumer credit reporting agency. As part of, or in addition to, this notice the consumer credit reporting agency shall, within five business days of reinserting the information, provide the consumer in writing (1) a statement that the disputed information has been reinserted, (2) a notice that the agency will provide to the consumer, within 15 days following a request, the name, address, and telephone



number of any furnisher of information contacted or which contacted the consumer credit reporting agency in connection with the reinsertion, (3) the toll-free telephone number of the consumer credit reporting agency that the consumer can use to obtain this name, address, and telephone number, and (4) a notice that the consumer has the right to a reinvestigation of the information reinserted by the consumer credit reporting agency and to add a statement to his or her file disputing the accuracy or completeness of the information.

(d) A consumer credit reporting agency shall provide written notice to the consumer of the results of any reinvestigation under this subdivision, within five days of completion of the reinvestigation. The notice shall include (1) a statement that the reinvestigation is completed, (2) a consumer credit report that is based on the consumer's file as that file is revised as a result of the reinvestigation, (3) a description or indication of any changes made in the consumer credit report as a result of those revisions to the consumer's file and a description of any changes made or sought by the consumer that were not made and an explanation why they were not made, (4) a notice that, if requested by the consumer, a description of the procedure used to determine the accuracy and completeness of the information shall be provided to the consumer by the consumer credit reporting agency, including the name, business address, and telephone number of any furnisher of information contacted in connection with that information, (5) a notice that the consumer has the right to add a statement to the consumer's file disputing the accuracy or completeness of the information, (6) a notice that the consumer has the right to request that the consumer credit reporting agency furnish notifications under subdivision (h), (7) a notice that the dispute will remain on file with the agency as long as the credit information is used, and (8) a statement about the details of the dispute will be furnished to any recipient as long as the credit information is retained in the agency's data base. A consumer credit reporting agency shall provide the notice pursuant to this subdivision respecting the procedure used to determine the accuracy and completeness of information, not later than 15 days after receiving a request from the consumer.

(e) The presence of information in the consumer's file that contradicts the contention of the consumer shall not, in and of itself, constitute reasonable grounds for believing the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant.

(f) If the consumer credit reporting agency determines that the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant, or if the reinvestigation does not resolve the dispute, or if the information is reinserted into the consumer's file pursuant to subdivision (c), the consumer may file a brief statement setting forth the nature of the dispute. The consumer credit reporting agency may limit these statements to not more than



100 words if it provides the consumer with assistance in writing a clear summary of the dispute.

(g) Whenever a statement of dispute is filed, the consumer credit reporting agency shall, in any subsequent consumer credit report containing the information in question, clearly note that the information is disputed by the consumer and shall include in the report either the consumer's statement or a clear and accurate summary thereof.

(h) Following the deletion of information from a consumer's file pursuant to this section, or following the filing of a statement of dispute pursuant to subdivision (f), the consumer credit reporting agency, at the request of the consumer, shall furnish notification that the item of information has been deleted or that the item of information is disputed. In the case of disputed information, the notification shall include the statement or summary of the dispute filed pursuant to subdivision (f). This notification shall be furnished to any person designated by the consumer who has, within two years prior to the deletion or the filing of the dispute, received a consumer credit report concerning the consumer for employment purposes, or who has, within 12 months of the deletion or the filing of the dispute, received a consumer credit report concerning the consumer for any other purpose, if these consumer credit reports contained the deleted or disputed information. The consumer credit reporting agency shall clearly and conspicuously disclose to the consumer his or her rights to make a request for this notification. The disclosure shall be made at or prior to the time the information is deleted pursuant to this section or the consumer's statement regarding the disputed information is received pursuant to subdivision (f).

(i) A consumer credit reporting agency shall maintain reasonable procedures to prevent the reappearance in a consumer's file and in consumer credit reports of information that has been deleted pursuant to this section and not reinserted pursuant to subdivision (c).

(j) If the consumer's dispute is resolved by deletion of the disputed information within three business days, beginning with the day the consumer credit reporting agency receives notice of the dispute in accordance with subdivision (a), and provided that verification thereof is provided to the consumer in writing within five business days following the deletion, then the consumer credit reporting agency shall be exempt from requirements for further action under subdivisions (d), (f), and (g).

(k) If a consumer submits to a credit reporting agency a copy of a valid police report filed pursuant to Section 530.5 of the Penal Code, the consumer credit reporting agency shall promptly and permanently block reporting any information that the consumer alleges appears on his or her credit report as a result of a violation of Section 530.5 of the Penal Code so that the information cannot be



reported. The consumer credit reporting agency shall promptly notify the furnisher of the information that the information has been so blocked. Furnishers of information and consumer credit reporting agencies shall ensure that information is unblocked only upon a preponderance of the evidence establishing the facts required under paragraph (1), (2), or (3). The permanently blocked information shall be unblocked only if: (1) the information was blocked due to fraud, or (2) the consumer agrees that the blocked information, or portions of the blocked information, were blocked in error, or (3) the consumer knowingly obtained possession of goods, services, or moneys as a result of the blocked transaction or transactions or the consumer should have known that he or she obtained possession of goods, services, or moneys as a result of the blocked transaction or transactions. If blocked information is unblocked pursuant to this subdivision, the consumer shall be promptly notified in the same manner as consumers are notified of the reinsertion of information pursuant to subdivision (c). The prior presence of the blocked information in the consumer credit reporting agency's file on the consumer is not evidence of whether the consumer knew or should have known that he or she obtained possession of any goods, services, or moneys. For the purposes of this subdivision, fraud may be demonstrated by circumstantial evidence. In unblocking information pursuant to this subdivision, furnishers and consumer credit reporting agencies shall be subject to their respective requirements pursuant to this title regarding the completeness and accuracy of information.

(l) Any provision in a contract that prohibits the disclosure of a credit score by a person who makes or arranges loans or a consumer credit reporting agency is void. A lender shall not have liability under any contractual provision for disclosure of a credit score.

SEC. 6. Section 1785.20.2 is added to the Civil Code, to read:

1785.20.2. Any person who makes or arranges loans and who uses a consumer credit score as defined in Section 1785.15.1 in connection with an application initiated or sought by a consumer for a closed end loan or establishment of an open end loan for a consumer purpose that is secured by one to four units of residential real property shall provide the following to the consumer as soon as reasonably practicable:

(a) A copy of the information identified in subdivision (a) of Section 1785.15.1 that was obtained from a credit reporting agency or was developed and used by the user of the information. In addition to the information provided to it by a third party that provided the credit score or scores, a lender is only required to provide the notice contained in subdivision (d).

(b) If a person who is subject to this section uses an automated underwriting system to underwrite a loan, that person may satisfy the obligation to provide a credit score by disclosing a credit score and



associated key factors supplied by a consumer credit reporting agency. However, if a numerical credit score is generated by an automated underwriting system used by an enterprise, and that score is disclosed to the person, it shall be disclosed to the consumer consistent with subdivision (c). For purposes of this subdivision, the term “enterprise” shall have the meaning provided in paragraph (6) of Section 4502 of Title 12 of the United States Code.

(c) A person subject to the provisions of this section who uses a credit score other than a credit score provided by a consumer reporting agency may satisfy the obligation to provide a credit score by disclosing a credit score and associated key factors supplied by a consumer credit reporting agency.

(d) A copy of the following notice, which shall include the name, address, and telephone number of each credit bureau providing a credit score that was used:

#### NOTICE TO THE HOME LOAN APPLICANT

In connection with your application for a home loan, the lender must disclose to you the score that a credit bureau distributed to users and the lender used in connection with your home loan, and the key factors affecting your credit scores.

The credit score is a computer generated summary calculated at the time of the request and based on information a credit bureau or lender has on file. The scores are based on data about your credit history and payment patterns. Credit scores are important because they are used to assist the lender in determining whether you will obtain a loan. They may also be used to determine what interest rate you may be offered on the mortgage. Credit scores can change over time, depending on your conduct, how your credit history and payment patterns change, and how credit scoring technologies change.

Because the score is based on information in your credit history, it is very important that you review the credit-related information that is being furnished to make sure it is accurate. Credit records may vary from one company to another.

If you have questions about your credit score or the credit information that is furnished to you, contact the credit bureau at the address and telephone number provided with this notice, or contact the lender, if the lender developed or generated the credit score. The credit bureau plays no part in the decision to take any action on the loan application and is unable to provide you with specific reasons for the decision on a loan application.

If you have questions concerning the terms of the loan, contact the lender.

(e) This section shall not require any person to do the following:



(1) Explain the information provided pursuant to Section 1785.15.1.

(2) Disclose any information other than a credit score or key factor, as defined in Section 1785.15.1.

(3) Disclose any credit score or related information obtained by the user after a loan has closed.

(4) Provide more than one disclosure per loan transaction.

(5) Provide the disclosure required by this section when another person has made the disclosure to the consumer for that loan transaction.

(f) Any person's obligation pursuant to this section shall be limited solely to providing a copy of the information that was received from the consumer credit reporting agency. No person has liability under this section for the content of that information or for the omission of any information within the report provided by the consumer credit reporting agency.

(g) As used in this section, the term "person" does not include an "enterprise" as defined in paragraph (6) of Section 4502 of Title 12 of the United States Code.

SEC. 7. This act shall become operative on July 1, 2001.

