



# NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

March 14, 2017

## Consumer Protection Week

Did you know that last week was Consumer Protection Week across the nation and in our great state of Wisconsin? The Federal Trade Commission has declared the first week of March as Consumer Protection Week since 1998. The coordinated consumer education campaign is in its 12<sup>th</sup> year. The goal of the annual campaign is to encourage individuals across the country to take full advantage of their consumer rights.

Even though the education campaign was formally recognized last week, I wanted to take the opportunity to make sure that you and your family members, friends, and neighbors are aware of some common issues that individuals run into and the excellent resources we have here in Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, the state agency authorized to oversee issues relating to consumer protection is the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Their mission specifically related to consumer protection is to promote a fair marketplace. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is the state's primary consumer protection agency and the Bureau of Consumer Protection has broad authority to regulate unfair business practices.

Last week, our Bureau of Consumer Protection released the 'Top 10' complaints filed by consumers in Wisconsin for the calendar year 2016.

They were (in order, most complaints filed to least complaints filed): Telemarketing, Landlord/Tenant, Telecommunications, Identity Theft, Home Improvement, Gas Pump Accuracy, Motor Vehicle Repair, Motor Vehicle Sales (Used and New), Computer & Equipment, and Warranties.

Hopefully you don't have to deal with any consumer protection issues, but if you're having issues, my office is more than happy to help. We're able to work with a wide variety of inquiries including consumer protection issues. Examples of inquiries we've run across recently include: problems with phone/internet providers and coverage, auto-subscription renewal inquiries, and questions about the 'Do Not Call' list. Many times, we'll help to facilitate a conversation with a representative from the Bureau of Consumer protection in order to obtain facts of the situation, record complaints or issues if applicable, and to offer potential solutions. In some instances, it will be necessary to refer an inquiry to our Federal Bureau of Consumer Protection/The Federal Trade Commission.

We're fortunate to have an outstanding and responsive team at our state Bureau of Consumer Protection. If you'd like to contact them directly, you can easily reach them via phone or email.

Wisconsin's Consumer Protection Hotline phone number is: 1-800-422-7128



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Wisconsin's Consumer Protection email address is: [DATCPHotline@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPHotline@Wisconsin.gov)

The homepage for Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is:  
<https://datcp.wi.gov>

You can sign-up to receive consumer reports via email or text on the Bureau of Consumer Protection website. Additionally, the bureau publishes "Wisconsin's Guide for Landlords and Tenants" which answers commonly asked questions about landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities in simple language.

The "Ready Reference Guide," also published by the Wisconsin Bureau of Consumer Protection, includes more than 200 pages of useful consumer contacts. Examples of contacts included are local, state, and federal agencies, Wisconsin district attorneys, and Better Business Bureau offices.

Another useful publication from the Wisconsin Bureau of Consumer Protection is the "Senior Guide." This publication has long been a trusted source of information on consumer issues and scams that the state's elderly residents face. The Senior Guide contains more than 50 pages of information to help Wisconsin seniors through difficult consumer issues or to help them identify scams. These publications are available for free download on the bureau's website and hard copies of the "Senior Guide" are available by request through the Consumer Protection Hotline.

As a consumer, a business owner, and a member of the Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection, I understand that recognition of consumer rights and the integrity of businesses and service providers are valuable pieces of a vibrant economy. It's important to know what your rights are, and what resources are available to you.