

# HOUSE BILL 777

I2  
HB 1647/18 – ECM

9lr0814  
CF SB 694

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By: **Delegates Howard, Beitzel, Branch, Buckel, Carey, Charkoudian, Chisholm, Ciliberti, Corderman, Fennell, Hill, Lisanti, Malone, McComas, McKay, Qi, Rose, Saab, Valderrama, ~~and Wilson~~ Wilson, Boteler, and R. Lewis**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2019  
Assigned to: Economic Matters

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments  
House action: Adopted  
Read second time: March 11, 2019

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Commercial Law – Credit Card Processors – ~~Service~~ Merchant Processing**  
3 **Agreements**

4 FOR the purpose of ~~requiring prohibiting~~ a credit card processor ~~to send a summary of a~~  
5 ~~certain services agreement to certain businesses; requiring a business to~~  
6 ~~acknowledge a certain services agreement by signing, dating, and returning a copy~~  
7 ~~of the summary of the services agreement to a certain credit card processor before~~  
8 ~~entering into a services agreement with the credit card processor~~ from assessing or  
9 charging certain fees under certain circumstances; requiring the summary a  
10 merchant processing agreement to include certain information; requiring a credit  
11 card processor to provide a certain notice regarding a services agreement renewal  
12 before a certain date; requiring the notice to disclose certain information that certain  
13 information be provided in a certain manner in the merchant processing agreement;  
14 authorizing the Commissioner of Financial Regulation to take certain actions;  
15 ~~establishing certain civil penalties for a violation of this Act; providing for the~~  
16 ~~application of this Act; defining certain terms; and generally relating to credit card~~  
17 ~~processors and service merchant processing agreements.~~

18 BY adding to

19 Article – Commercial Law

20 Section 12–1401 through ~~12–1405~~ 12–1404 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 14.

21 Credit Card Processors”

22 Annotated Code of Maryland

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



(2013 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Commercial Law**

**SUBTITLE 14. CREDIT CARD PROCESSORS.**

**12-1401.**

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) (1) “CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR” MEANS A PERSON THAT PROCESSES CREDIT CARD OR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE TRANSACTIONS ON BEHALF OF A BUSINESS ENTITY FOR A FEE.

(2) “CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR” INCLUDES:

(I) A MERCHANT SERVICES PROVIDER;

(II) A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION;

(III) AN INDEPENDENT SALES ORGANIZATION; AND

(IV) ANY SUBSIDIARY OR AFFILIATE OF AN ENTITY LISTED IN ITEMS (I) THROUGH (III) OF THIS PARAGRAPH.

(C) “~~SERVICES~~ MERCHANT PROCESSING AGREEMENT” MEANS A CONTRACT BETWEEN A CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR AND A BUSINESS ENTITY UNDER WHICH THE BUSINESS ENTITY AGREES TO PAY THE CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR FOR PROCESSING CREDIT CARD OR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE TRANSACTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE BUSINESS ENTITY.

**12-1402.**

THIS SUBTITLE DOES NOT APPLY TO A ~~SERVICES~~ MERCHANT PROCESSING AGREEMENT BETWEEN A CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR AND A BUSINESS ENTITY ~~THAT~~:

(1) THAT MAY BE TERMINATED WITHOUT ASSESSMENT OF FEES, FINES, PENALTIES, OR LIQUIDATED DAMAGES; OR

(2) IF AT THE TIME OF ENTRY INTO THE MERCHANT PROCESSING AGREEMENT, THE BUSINESS ENTITY EMPLOYS 50 OR MORE EMPLOYEES OR

1 REASONABLY ESTIMATES THAT IT WILL GENERATE MORE THAN \$2,000,000 IN  
2 CREDIT CARD OR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE TRANSACTIONS EACH YEAR.

3 12-1403.

4 (A) ~~(1) A CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR SHALL SEND TO EACH BUSINESS~~  
5 ~~WITH WHOM IT HAS, OR INTENDS TO HAVE, A SERVICES AGREEMENT A SUMMARY OF~~  
6 ~~THE SERVICES AGREEMENT.~~

7 ~~(2) BEFORE ENTERING INTO A SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH A CREDIT~~  
8 ~~CARD PROCESSOR, THE BUSINESS SHALL ACKNOWLEDGE THE SERVICES~~  
9 ~~AGREEMENT BY SIGNING, DATING, AND RETURNING A COPY OF THE SUMMARY OF~~  
10 ~~THE SERVICES AGREEMENT TO THE CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR~~ IF A BUSINESS  
11 ENTITY CANCELS A MERCHANT PROCESSING AGREEMENT BEFORE THE EXPIRATION  
12 OF THE INITIAL TERM AGREED ON BY THE CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR AND THE  
13 BUSINESS ENTITY, THE CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR MAY NOT ASSESS OR CHARGE A  
14 FEE, FINE, OR PENALTY THAT EXCEEDS \$500.

15 (B) ~~THE SUMMARY REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION~~  
16 ~~SHALL INCLUDE:~~

17 ~~(1) THE INTEREST RATE AUTHORIZED UNDER THE SERVICES~~  
18 ~~AGREEMENT;~~

19 ~~(2) THE AMOUNT AND PURPOSE OF EACH FEE, FINE, OR PENALTY~~  
20 ~~THAT THE CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR MAY CHARGE OR ASSESS UNDER THE SERVICES~~  
21 ~~AGREEMENT;~~

22 ~~(3) THE EXPIRATION DATE OF THE SERVICES AGREEMENT;~~

23 ~~(4) THE SERVICES AGREEMENT RENEWAL DATE; AND~~

24 ~~(5) THE NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER, MAILING ADDRESS, AND~~  
25 ~~E-MAIL ADDRESS OF AN AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CREDIT CARD~~  
26 ~~PROCESSOR~~ IF A BUSINESS ENTITY TERMINATES THE MERCHANT PROCESSING  
27 AGREEMENT AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF THE INITIAL TERM AGREED ON BY A CREDIT  
28 CARD PROCESSOR AND A BUSINESS ENTITY, THE CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR MAY NOT  
29 ASSESS A FEE, FINE, OR PENALTY, UNLESS A CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR AND A  
30 BUSINESS ENTITY HAVE ENTERED INTO A SEPARATE RENEWAL MERCHANT  
31 PROCESSING AGREEMENT.

32 (C) ~~(1) AT LEAST 90 DAYS BEFORE A BUSINESS ENTITY MUST CANCEL A~~  
33 ~~SERVICES AGREEMENT TO PREVENT AUTOMATIC RENEWAL OF THE AGREEMENT, A~~

~~1 CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR SHALL PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE BUSINESS  
2 ENTITY THAT THE SERVICES AGREEMENT WILL AUTOMATICALLY RENEW.~~

~~3 (2) THE REQUIRED NOTICE UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS  
4 SUBSECTION SHALL DISCLOSE:~~

~~5 (I) THAT THE SERVICES AGREEMENT WILL AUTOMATICALLY  
6 RENEW UNLESS THE BUSINESS ENTITY CANCELS THE AGREEMENT;~~

~~7 (II) THE DATE BY WHICH THE BUSINESS ENTITY MUST CANCEL  
8 THE SERVICES AGREEMENT TO PREVENT THE AGREEMENT FROM RENEWING;~~

~~9 (III) PROCEDURES FOR CANCELING THE SERVICES AGREEMENT;  
10 AND~~

~~11 (IV) THAT THE SERVICES AGREEMENT HAS CHANGED, IF  
12 APPLICABLE SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, A MERCHANT  
13 PROCESSING AGREEMENT SHALL DISCLOSE CLEARLY AND CONSPICUOUSLY IN  
14 BOLD, 12 POINT FONT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:~~

~~15 (1) THE AMOUNT OF ANY EARLY TERMINATION FEE, FINE, PENALTY,  
16 OR LIQUIDATED DAMAGES THAT MAY BE ASSESSED BY THE CREDIT CARD  
17 PROCESSOR FOR TERMINATION OF A MERCHANT PROCESSING AGREEMENT BEFORE  
18 THE EXPIRATION OF THE INITIAL TERM;~~

~~19 (2) THE EXPIRATION DATE OF THE MERCHANT PROCESSING  
20 AGREEMENT;~~

~~21 (3) THE RENEWAL DATE OF THE MERCHANT PROCESSING  
22 AGREEMENT; AND~~

~~23 (4) THE CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTACT INFORMATION OF THE CREDIT  
24 CARD PROCESSOR, INCLUDING TELEPHONE NUMBER, MAILING ADDRESS, AND  
25 E-MAIL ADDRESS.~~

~~26 (D) THE INFORMATION REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS  
27 SECTION SHALL BE:~~

~~28 (1) PROVIDED ON THE SIGNATURE PAGE OF A MERCHANT SERVICES  
29 AGREEMENT; AND~~

~~30 (2) INITIALED SEPARATELY BY THE BUSINESS ENTITY.~~

1           **(E) THE CREDIT CARD PROCESSOR SHALL PROVIDE A COPY OF THE**  
2 **MERCHANT PROCESSING AGREEMENT IN ELECTRONIC OR PAPER FORM TO THE**  
3 **BUSINESS ENTITY AT THE TIME THE BUSINESS ENTITY SIGNS THE MERCHANT**  
4 **PROCESSING AGREEMENT.**

5 12-1404.

6           **IF A COMPLAINT ABOUT A VIOLATION OF § 12-1403 OF THIS SUBTITLE IS**  
7 **FILED WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF FINANCIAL REGULATION, THE COMMISSIONER**  
8 **MAY INVESTIGATE THE COMPLAINT AND USE ANY OF THE INVESTIGATIVE AND**  
9 **ENFORCEMENT POWERS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE 2, SUBTITLE 1 OF THE FINANCIAL**  
10 **INSTITUTIONS ARTICLE.**

11 ~~12-1405.~~

12           ~~**(A) A PERSON THAT VIOLATES § 12-1403 OF THIS SUBTITLE IS SUBJECT TO**~~  
13 ~~**A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$100 FOR EACH VIOLATION.**~~

14           ~~**(B) A PERSON THAT HAS BEEN FOUND TO HAVE VIOLATED THIS SUBTITLE**~~  
15 ~~**AND THAT SUBSEQUENTLY REPEATS THE SAME VIOLATION IS SUBJECT TO A FINE OF**~~  
16 ~~**NOT MORE THAN \$500 FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT VIOLATION.**~~

17           ~~**(C) THE FINES PROVIDED FOR IN SUBSECTIONS (A) AND (B) OF THIS**~~  
18 ~~**SECTION ARE CIVIL PENALTIES AND ARE RECOVERABLE BY THE COMMISSIONER OF**~~  
19 ~~**FINANCIAL REGULATION IN A CIVIL ACTION OR AN ADMINISTRATIVE CEASE AND**~~  
20 ~~**DESIST ACTION UNDER § 2-115 OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ARTICLE.**~~

21           **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall be construed to**  
22 **apply only prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on or**  
23 **application to any merchant processing agreement entered into or renewed before the**  
24 **effective date of this Act.**

25           **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect**  
26 **October 1, 2019.**