## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

### CASE NO.

FERNANDO CONDE, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

WEBCOLLEX, LLC, *a Virginia Limited Liability Company*, d/b/a, CKS FINANCIAL,

Defendant.

## **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

 Plaintiff, Fernando Conde, alleges violations of the *Fair Debt Collection Practices* Act, 15 U.S.C. §1692 et seq. ("FDCPA").

### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k.

3. Venue in this District is proper because Plaintiff resides here, and Defendant conducts business in this District.

#### **PARTIES**

4. Plaintiff, Fernando Conde, ("Plaintiff"), is a natural person and citizen of the State of Florida, residing in Indian River County, Florida.

5. Defendant, Webcollex, LLC, ("Defendant"), is a Virginia Limited Liability Company doing business as CKS Financial and is engaged in the business of collecting consumer debts, which operates from offices located at 505 Independence Parkway, Suite 300, Chesapeake, Virginia 23320. 6. Defendant regularly uses the United States Postal Service and telephone in the collection of consumer debt.

7. Defendant regularly collects or attempts to collect debts for other parties. Defendant is a "debt collector" as defined in the *FDCPA*.

8. Defendant is licensed in the State of Florida as a consumer collection agency, license number CCA99202342. Defendant is not licensed in the State of Florida to collect commercial debts.

9. At all times material to the allegations of this complaint, Defendant was acting as a debt collector with respect to the collection of Plaintiff's alleged debt.

## **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

10. Defendant sought to collect from Plaintiff an alleged debt incurred by Plaintiff for personal, family, or household purposes.

11. On or about October 6, 2017, Defendant sent a demand letter to Plaintiff that sought to collect an alleged debt. (The "Demand Letter" attached hereto as "Exhibit 1.")

12. The Demand Letter was Defendant's initial communication with Plaintiff with respect to the debt alleged therein.

13. The Defendant's Demand Letter stated in part:

Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request of this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

14. Pursuant 15 U.S.C § 1692g(a) Defendant must provide Plaintiff with:

Validation of debts

(a) Notice of debt; contents

Within five days after the initial communication with a consumer in connection with the collection of any debt, a debt collector shall, unless the following information is contained in the initial communication or the consumer has paid the debt, send the consumer a written notice containing—

(1) the amount of the debt;

(2) the name of the creditor to whom the debt is owed;

(3) a statement that unless the consumer, within thirty days after receipt of the notice, disputes the validity of the debt, or any portion thereof, the debt will be assumed to be valid by the debt collector;

(4) a statement that if the consumer notifies the debt collector in writing within the thirty-day period that the debt, **or any portion thereof**, is disputed, the debt collector will obtain verification of the debt or a copy of a judgment against the consumer and a copy of such verification or judgment will be mailed to the consumer by the debt collector; and

(5) a statement that, upon the consumer's written request within the thirty-day period, the debt collector will provide the consumer with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

(emphasis added)

## 15. *15 U.S.C.* § *1692e(10)* states:

A debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt. Without limiting the general application of the foregoing, the following conduct is a violation of this section:

#### XXXX

(10) The use of any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt or to obtain information concerning a consumer.

16. Defendant's Demand Letter falsely and misleadingly pronounces the verification rights of Plaintiff provided by 15 U.S.C. § 1692g. Defendant's statement "If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification." omits that the Plaintiff's written notification can dispute the any portion of the debt, as stated in 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(4).

17. Any potential *bona fide* error defense which relies upon Defendant's mistaken interpretation of the legal duties imposed upon it by the *FDCPA* would fail as a matter of law.

## CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS AS TO DEFENDANT

18. This action is brought on behalf of a Class consisting of (i) all natural persons with addresses in the State of Florida (ii) to whom initial communication letters that contained the language: "If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification." (iii) were mailed, or caused to be mailed, by the Defendant (iv) and were not returned undeliverable by the U.S. Post Office (v) in an attempt to collect a debt incurred for personal, family, or household purposes (vi) during the one-year period prior to the filing of the original Complaint in this action.

19. Plaintiff alleges on information and belief, based upon the Defendant's use of the phrase: "If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification." in its initial communication letters served upon the Class, is so numerous that joinder of all members of the Class is impractical.

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20. There are questions of law or fact common to the Class, which common issues predominate over any issues involving only individual Class members. The factual issue common to each Class member is that each was mailed, or caused to be mailed, an initial communication letter by Defendant that contained the phrase: "If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification." The common principal legal issue is whether Defendant failed to provide to each member of the Class the correct validation notice required by *15 U.S.C. § 1692g* after an "initial communication" by a debt collector.

21. Plaintiff's claims are typical of those of the Class members. All are based on the same facts and legal theories.

22. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class. He has retained counsel experienced in handling actions involving unlawful practices under the *FDCPA* and Class actions. Neither Plaintiff nor his counsel have any interests which might cause them not to vigorously pursue this action.

23. Certification of the Class under *Rule* 23(b)(3) of the *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure* is also appropriate in that:

(1) The questions of law or fact common to the members of the class predominate over any questions affecting an individual member.

(2) A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

24. Plaintiff requests certification of a Class under *Rule 23(b)(3)*, of the *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure*, for monetary damages; his appointment as Class Representative; and that his attorney Leo W. Desmond be appointed Class Counsel.

## <u>COUNT I</u> <u>VIOLATION OF 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(4)</u> CLASS CLAIM AGAINST DEFENDANT

25. Plaintiff incorporates Paragraphs 1 through 17.

26. 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(4) states after an initial communication the Defendant must

provide Plaintiff with:

(4) a statement that if the consumer notifies the debt collector in writing within the thirty-day period that the debt, or any portion thereof, is disputed, the debt collector will obtain verification of the debt or a copy of a judgment against the consumer and a copy of such verification or judgment will be mailed to the consumer by the debt collector; and

27. Defendant sent the Demand Letter to Plaintiff on behalf of Plaintiff's creditor in an attempt to collect a consumer debt.

28. Defendant's Demand Letter omits that the consumer, in order to receive the benefits provided by 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(4), may dispute any portion of the debt.

29. Defendant's statement "If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification." could mislead the least sophisticated consumer to believe that he or she could only dispute the entire portion of the debt.

30. As a result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to an award of statutory damages pursuant to *15 U.S.C. § 1692k*.

31. As a result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to an award of costs and attorney fees pursuant to *15 U.S.C.* § *1692k*.

## <u>COUNT II</u> <u>VIOLATION OF 15 U.S.C. § 1692e</u> CLASS CLAIM AGAINST DEFENDANT

32. Plaintiff re-alleges Paragraphs 1 through 17 and Paragraphs 26 through 29.

## 33. *15 U.S.C.* § *1692e* states:

A debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt. Without limiting the general application of the foregoing, the following conduct is a violation of this section:

#### XXXX

(10) The use of any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt or to obtain information concerning a consumer.

34. Defendant sent the Demand Letter to Plaintiff on behalf of Plaintiff's client in connection with the collection of a consumer debt.

35. Defendant's Demand Letter omits that the consumer may dispute **any portion** of the debt, in writing despite the clear wording of 15 U.S.C. \$ 1692g(a)(4).

36. Defendant's Demand Letter is a misstatement of 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a)(4) that would be confusing and misleading to the least sophisticated consumer with regard to his/her legal rights as it omits to inform the Plaintiff (and the Class) that he (they) may dispute any portion thereof of the debt, in writing in order to receive verification of the debt as well as the protections available pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(b).

37. Defendant's statement "If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification." could mislead the least sophisticated consumer to believe that he or she may only dispute the entire debt. Defendant's statement could dissuade the least sophisticated consumer from disputing the debt. Many times, a consumer knows they owe a debt but may be unsure as to the amount of the

debt because of late fees and interest that may have accrued on the debt. Defendant's statement is susceptible to more than one interpretation.

38. As a result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to an award of statutory damages pursuant to *15 U.S.C. § 1692k*.

39. As a result of Defendant's conduct, Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to an award of costs and attorney's fees pursuant to *15 U.S.C.* § *1692k*.

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff requests that the Court enter judgment in his favor against Defendant for:

- An Order certifying this matter as a Class action and appointment of Plaintiff as Class Representative as to all claims against Defendant;
- b. An Order appointing Leo W. Desmond as Class Counsel;
- c. An award of statutory damages for Plaintiff and the Class pursuant to 15 U.S.C.
   §1692k for all Class claims;
- d. An award of attorney's fees, litigation expenses and costs of the instant suit; and
- e. Such other or further relief as the Court deems proper.

Dated: February 16, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

<u>/s/ Leo W. Desmond</u> Leo W. Desmond, Esquire Florida Bar Number 0041920 DESMOND LAW FIRM, P.C. 5070 Highway A1A, Suite D Vero Beach, Florida 32963 Telephone: 772.231.9600 Facsimile: 772.231.0300 Iwd@desmondlawfirm.com Attorney for Plaintiff

## JS 44 (Rev. 060398282k1&200/0124060-KAM Docume OI VIL COMERCI SHIELSD Docket 02/16/2018 Page 1 of 2

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. *(SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)* NOTICE: Attorneys MUST Indicate All Re-filed Cases Below.

# I. (a) PLAINTIFFS Fernando Conde

DEFENDANTS Webcollex, LLC

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Indian River County, Flo (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				da County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOO THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.					E LOCATIO	ON OF		
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#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

#### Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

**I.** (a) **Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.

(b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)

(c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".

**II.** Jurisdiction. The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.C.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.

United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)

**III.** Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties. This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.

**IV.** Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerks in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.

V. Origin. Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Refiled (3) Attach copy of Order for Dismissal of Previous case. Also complete VI.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.

Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.

Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment. (7) Check this box for an appeal from a magistrate judge's decision.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (8) Check this box if remanded from Appellate Court.

VI. Related/Refiled Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases or re-filed cases. Insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judges name for such cases.

 VII.
 Cause of Action.
 Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause.
 Do not cite jurisdictional

 statutes unless diversity.
 Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553

Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service

VIII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.

Demand. In this space enter the dollar amount (in thousands of dollars) being demanded or indicate other demand such as a preliminary injunction.

Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

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AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

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1

Civil Action No.

Southern District of Florida

FERNANDO CONDE, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated

	)
	)
	)
Plaintiff(s)	)
V.	)
	)
WEBCOLLEX, LLC	)
a Virginia Limited Liability Company,	)
d/b/a CKS FINANCIAL	)
	)
Defendant(s)	)

*Defendant(s)* 

#### SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address)

WEBCOLLEX, LLC c/o C T Corporation System (Registered Agent) 1200 South Pine Island Road Plantation, FL 33324

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

> Leo W. Desmond, Esq. Desmond Law Firm, P.C. 5070 Highway A1A Suite D Vero Beach, FL 32963

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

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AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No.

## **PROOF OF SERVICE**

## (This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

	This summons for (nam	ne of individual and title, if any)							
vas re	ceived by me on (date)								
	□ I personally served	the summons on the individu	al at <i>(place)</i>						
	<b>,</b>	on (date)							
			or usual place of abode with (name)						
		rson of suitable age and discretion who res	sides there,						
	on <i>(date)</i> , and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or								
		summons on (name of individual)							
	□ I served the summons on <i>(name of individual)</i> designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of <i>(name of organization)</i>								
	<i>c i</i>	on (date)							
		nons unexecuted because							
	□ Other <i>(specify)</i> :								
	My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$	0.00					
	I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.								
Date:									
			Server's signature						
			Printed name and title						

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

Case 2:18-cv-14060-KAM Document 1-3 Entered on FLS Docket 02/16/2018 Page 1 of 1

10/06/2017



Creditor: Prosper Funding LLC Account ID: 1251738 Balance: \$21,164.97

Dear Fernando Conde,

This letter serves as notification to inform you that Velocity Investments LLC purchased your Prosper Funding LLC account, and has been placed with this office.

Unless you notify this office within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt or any portion thereof, this office will assume this debt is valid. If you notify this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice that you dispute the validity of this debt, this office will obtain verification of the debt or obtain a copy of a judgment and mail you a copy of such judgment or verification. If you request of this office in writing within 30 days after receiving this notice, this office will provide you with the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

You may call our office our office at (888) 273-8454 if you would like to speak with a representative. Our office hours are Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Eastern Standard Time.

Please send all correspondence & payments to: CKS Financial, P.O. Box 2856, Chesapeake, VA 23327-2856

Webcollex, LLC dba CKS Financial - 505 Independence Parkway, Suite 300, Chesapeake VA 23320 - 888-273-8454

This communication is from a debt collector. This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. CFIN/5 663008816907

448/000000446/00000003

PO Box 1110 Southgate, MI 48195-0110

10/06/2017

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Fernando Conde 1026 34th Ave SW Vero Beach, FL 32968-5054

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