

LOS GATOS DAILY NEWS

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April 6, 2005

Bill may boost card protection

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A California Senate committee yesterday moved a bill forward that would give debit cards the same level of protection as credit cards, a

bill written by a Redwood Estates man.

Ron "Dean" Tomich, who lives in the unincorporated Los Gatos neighborhood in the Santa Cruz Mountains, said he wrote the bill

after he noticed his entire account number was included on a purchase receipt.

Tomich said he was a credit card user normally, and it was the first time he used his debit card to pay

for performance tickets at San Pedro Square in San Jose.

Tomich said he called the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office and learned that existing laws protecting account numbers from

being printed on transaction receipts only apply to credit cards. Because debit cards are akin to cash and are directly pulled from checking accounts, they are not beholden to

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the same level of protection. "So, I called Sen. Joe Simitian's office, and coincidentally was told about his contest," Tomich said of the Democrat Palo Alto lawmaker.

Law contest

Simitian's fourth-annual "There Oughta Be A Law" contest netted five winners out of 129 bill ideas last week. One of those was Tomich's, now Senate Bill 802. Jill Levy of Campbell was also a winner with her idea to reduce sales tax paperwork for self-employed businesses and small businesses.

The Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday approved SB 802 on a 5-1 vote, with Sen. Dick Ackerman, R-Tustin, voting no.

The proposed bill would make it illegal in the state of California to print more than the last five digits of a debit or credit card, or the expiration date, on receipts.

Simitian said he was drawn to sponsor the bill because of the rise of debit card use in the past five years.

Federal law will also add greater privacy to debit cards in about two years, and Tomich's proposed law would bridge that time.

"I thought it was a common-sense solution to an everyday problem," Simitian said yesterday.

Other bills

Simitian's jurisdiction includes unincorporated Los Gatos.

The other proposed bill ideas are from Daniel Frederick Leon of Hayward for his "Move Over, Slow Down" for Highway Safety bill; Michael Breslin and Roxane Baxter of Los Altos for their Adoption Document Fee Reduction bill; and Josemaria Paterno of Menlo Park for his Prescription Drug Distribution Program for low-income and disabled communities.

Tomich, by the way, is a record producer and owns Mino-taur Records. The artist he was buying the ticket for, when he noticed the debit card number listed on the receipt, has a new album out. Andrew Ceglie of San Jose has a dance album available online at www.cdbaby.com/ceglia or at Streetlight Records.