

I'm the recent victim of identity theft. Just two weeks ago, I received a curious letter from the Social Security Administration asking me to sign a form to release medical information to them. Instead of ignoring it – it didn't make sense to me – I suspected fraudulent activity.

I took it in person to my local Social Security office. The representative came out with a file, and asked me a series of questions, and then confirmed my suspicion.

Someone had filed an online claim to initiate my retirement and disability benefits, and arranged for direct deposit.

By the way, I understand that much of the time, the automated deposit is directed to a debit card. Nifty.

This person used multiple data points to make this online filing: my name, social security number, date of birth, mother's name, home address, and more. It feels awful, and creepy.

Thank goodness, I live in a neighborhood with locked mailboxes.

I have filed a police report. I filed an identity theft report with the Federal Trade Commission. I have initiated audit alert, or freeze, with three credit rating agenciesⁱ.

I think we have stopped this in time to prevent public money from being fraudulently claimed.

But now, with all these data points to try to pose as me, what's next?

And if there's a financial impact on me -- legal fees, investigators, and theft – who's going to make it right?

Who will be held accountable for releasing all that information that made this possible?

Please take action to protect Oregonians. Thank you.

ⁱ Experion, Equifax, TransUnion