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National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions

November 30, 2018

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Chairman
House Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maxine Waters
Ranking Member
House Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Marriott International Consumer Data Breach

Dear Chairman Hensarling and Ranking Member Waters:

On behalf of the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions (NAFCU), the only trade association exclusively representing the federal interests of our nation's federally-insured credit unions, I write today following reports of a data breach at Marriott International. On November 30, 2018, the company revealed its Starwood reservations database had been hacked and that the personal information of up to 500 million guests could have been stolen. An unauthorized party had accessed the database since 2014, with the breach including names, email addresses, passport numbers, and payment information of customers. This breach is potentially the largest merchant data breach in history, surpassing others such as Target and Home Depot in terms of the number of consumers that may be impacted.

As NAFCU testified before the Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee last November, there is a need for a national data security standard for entities that collect and store consumers' personal and financial information that are not already subject to the same stringent requirements as depository institutions. While it may not help the millions of Americans that have been victimized by this breach, the time for Congress to act is now to prevent future breaches and harm to consumers. We would urge the Committee's continued focus on this important topic and the need for addressing consumer data security issues in the remaining days of this Congress and in the new Congress.

NAFCU's Principles on Data Security

As our testimony last year noted, we recognize that a legislative solution is a complex issue, and thus have established a set of guiding principles to help define key issues credit unions would like to see addressed in any comprehensive cyber and data security effort that may advance. These principles include:

- **Payment of Breach Costs by Breached Entities:** NAFCU asks that credit union expenditures for breaches resulting from card use be reduced. A reasonable and equitable way of addressing this concern would be to enact legislation to require entities to be accountable for costs of data breaches that result on their end, especially when their own negligence is to blame.

- **National Standards for Safekeeping Information:** It is critical that sensitive personal information be safeguarded at all stages of transmission. Under the *Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act* (GLBA), credit unions and other depository institutions are required to meet certain criteria for safekeeping consumers' personal information and are held accountable if those criteria are not met through examination and penalties. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive regulatory structure akin to the GLBA that covers other entities who collect and hold sensitive information. NAFCU strongly supports the passage of legislation requiring any entity responsible for the storage of consumer data to meet standards similar to those imposed on depository institutions under the GLBA.
- **Data Security Policy Disclosure:** Many consumers are unaware of the risks they are exposed to when they provide their personal information. NAFCU believes this problem can be alleviated by simply requiring merchants to post their data security policies at the point of sale if they take sensitive financial data. Such a disclosure requirement would come at little or no cost to the merchant but would provide an important benefit to the public at large.
- **Notification of the Account Servicer:** The account servicer or owner is in the unique position of being able to monitor for suspicious activity and prevent fraudulent transactions before they occur. NAFCU believes that it would make sense to include entities such as financial institutions on the list of those to be informed of any compromised personally identifiable information when associated accounts are involved.
- **Disclosure of Breached Entity:** NAFCU believes that consumers should have the right to know which business entities have been breached. We urge Congress to mandate the disclosure of identities of companies and merchants whose data systems have been violated so consumers are aware of the ones that place their personal information at risk.
- **Enforcement of Prohibition on Data Retention:** NAFCU believes it is imperative to address the violation of existing agreements and law by those who retain payment card information electronically. Many entities do not respect this prohibition and store sensitive personal data in their systems, which can be breached easily in many cases.
- **Burden of Proof in Data Breach Cases:** In line with the responsibility for making consumers whole after they are harmed by a data breach, NAFCU believes that the evidentiary burden of proving a lack of fault should rest with the negligent entity who incurred the breach.

On behalf of our nation's credit unions and their more than 114 million members, we thank you for your attention to this important matter and stand ready to work with you. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact me or Alex Gleason, NAFCU's Associate Director of Legislative Affairs, at 703-842-2237 or agleason@nafcuh.org.

Sincerely,



Carrie R. Hunt
Executive Vice President of Government Affairs and General Counsel

cc: Members of the House Financial Services Committee