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Senators Worry Troops Could Fall Victim to Fraud in Wake of Equifax Hack

A bipartisan pair of senators is pressing Equifax for details on how it plans to protect data on U.S. service members caught up in a massive breach, underscoring fears of potential identity theft and financial fraud. Sens. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.) wrote to the credit reporting firm on Tuesday, raising concerns that active-duty troops stationed overseas might not have the resources to place credit freezes on their accounts if affected by the breach.

Equifax revealed on Sept. 7 that hackers had accessed personal information on as many as 143 million Americans earlier this summer, opening the credit reporting firm up to broad scrutiny. “We are particularly concerned about the roughly 1.3 million active-duty U.S. military personnel, especially the nearly 200,000 currently stationed overseas, who may lack the access and resources required to place a credit freeze on their files or take other necessary measures to adequately protect their personal information,” Donnelly and Heller wrote in a letter to Equifax CEO Richard Smith. “This could leave members of our military especially vulnerable to identity theft and financial fraud in the days, months, and years ahead,” they wrote. “We request that you immediately detail the specific actions Equifax will take to ensure our service members are not victimized any further by thieves with access to personal information such as Social Security numbers, dates of birth, and home addresses,” they wrote, requesting a response by Oct. 6.