



**THE OFFICE OF
CONGRESSMAN RITCHIE TORRES**

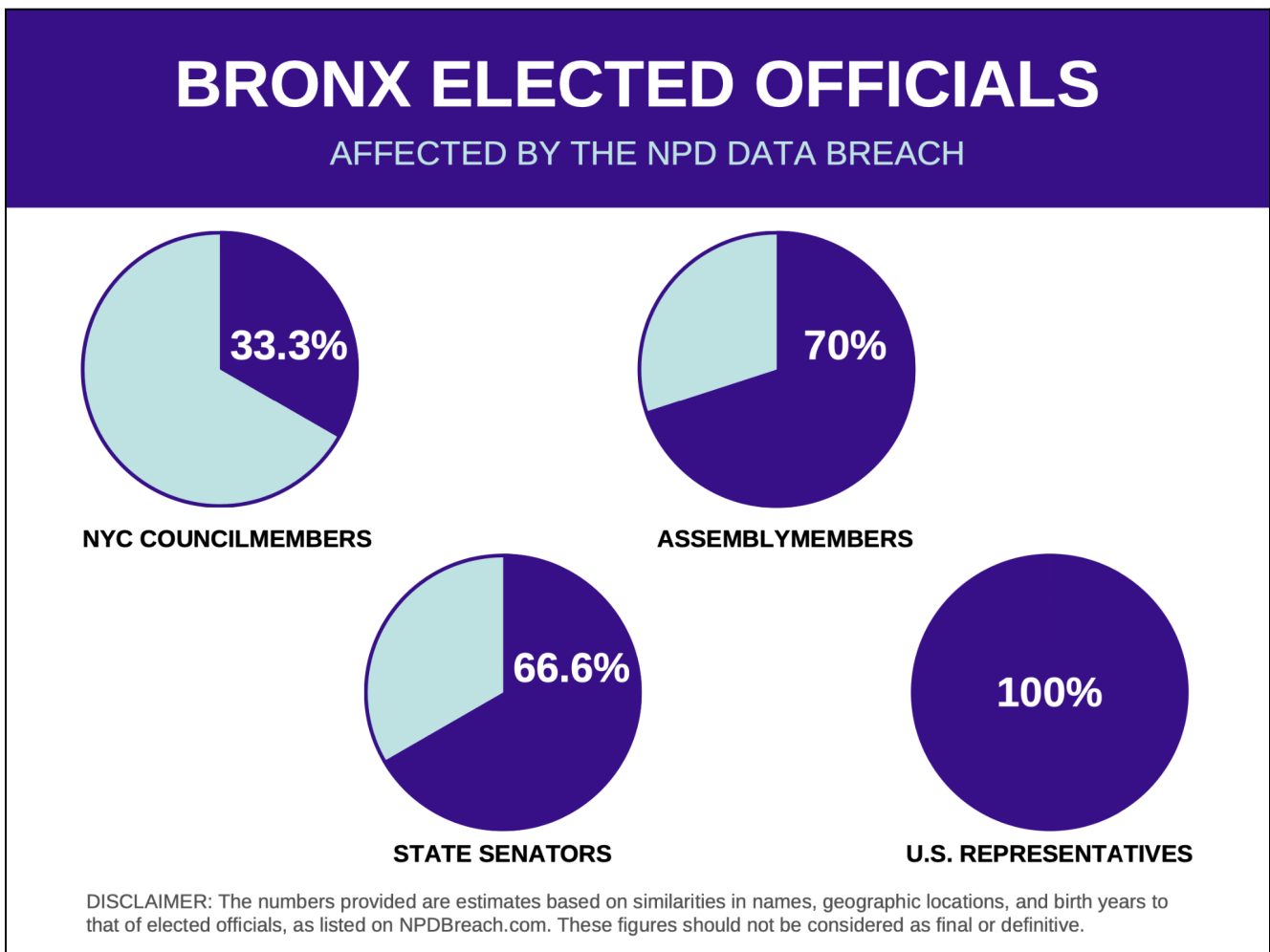
**AN INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON
THE NATIONAL PUBLIC DATA
BREACH**

The Office of Congressman Ritchie Torres:
An Investigative Report on the National Public Data Breach

A cybercriminal gang, operating under the alias of USDoD, stole a massive database from National Public Data (NPD), and then on April 8th, 2024, the cyber gang published it on a Dark Web forum entitled “Breached.”¹ USDoD, which may have breached National Public Data as far back as December 2023, offered to sell 2.9 billion rows of records for \$3.5 million.

National Public Data is a private company that aggregates data in order to run background checks. A company like NPD is known as a data aggregator or data broker. National Public Data had a massive database stolen, a database containing 2.9 billion rows of private records. Among those private records are the social security numbers of millions of Americans. I write not only as a United States Congressman but as a victim of the NPD breach. I am among the millions of Americans whose social security number has been stolen.

I am hardly the only elected official who has fallen victim to the NPD breach. According to our internal analysis:



¹ <https://www.bloomberglaw.com/public/desktop/document/Hofmannv.JericoPicturesIncDocketNo024cv61383SDFlaAug012024CourtDoc>

The Office of Congressman Ritchie Torres: *An Investigative Report on the National Public Data Breach*

The NPD breach serves as a sobering reminder that the United States continues to have no federal data privacy law to protect the American people. When it comes to cyberspace, there is no law and order—only lawlessness and disorder. All Americans live in a lawless cyber dystopia where our most sensitive information can be collected without our knowledge and consent by a private company like NPD and then stolen by a cybercriminal like USDoD, leaving us all wide open to identity theft.

If cyberspace were a police precinct, it would surely be the highest-crime police precinct in the United States. It would be the police precinct with the most amount of criminality and the least amount of policing, prosecution, and punishment. According to Third Way, for every 1000 cyber crimes committed, only 3 result in enforcement actions². There are experts who suspect that .3% is an overestimation of law enforcement against cybercrime. The cyber underworld enjoys a level of impunity that conventional criminals could only dream of.

If you are a victim of the NPD breach, one resource worth consulting is Pentester.com, which is as simple as inputting one's name, state, and year of birth. If your inputs generate an output that contains your personally identifiable information, it means you are at risk of identity theft.

ENTER YOUR INFORMATION ON THIS WEBSITE TO CHECK IF YOUR PERSONAL DATA WAS EXPOSED IN THE NPD BREACH.

SEARCH RESULT EXAMPLE

NAME	DOB	ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP	PHONE	SSN
JOHN A DOE	1-03-****	123 E FORDHAM RD	BRONX	NY	10451	*****34	*****34
JOHN B DOE	12-14-****	3 HOLLAND AVE	BRONX	NY	10035	*****21	*****21
JOHN C DOE	NONE	45 THIRD AVE	BRONX	NY	10474	*****42	*****42
JOHN D DOE	NONE	67 JEROME AVE	BRONX	NY	10462	*****	*****
JOHN E DOE	4-06-****	89 TREMONT AVE	BRONX	NY	10455	*****	*****

² <https://www.thirdway.org/report/cyber-enforcement-in-four-key-states>

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The best preventative against identity theft lies in freezing your credit. A credit freeze prevents an identity thief from opening new accounts in your name. In order to freeze your credit, you must contact each of the three major consumer credit reporting agencies.

CREDIT FREEZE

PROACTIVELY PROTECT YOUR FINANCIAL IDENTITY

To place a freeze you must **contact each of the three major credit bureaus separately:**



EQUIFAX

1 (888) 378-4329



EXPERIAN

1 (888) 397-3742



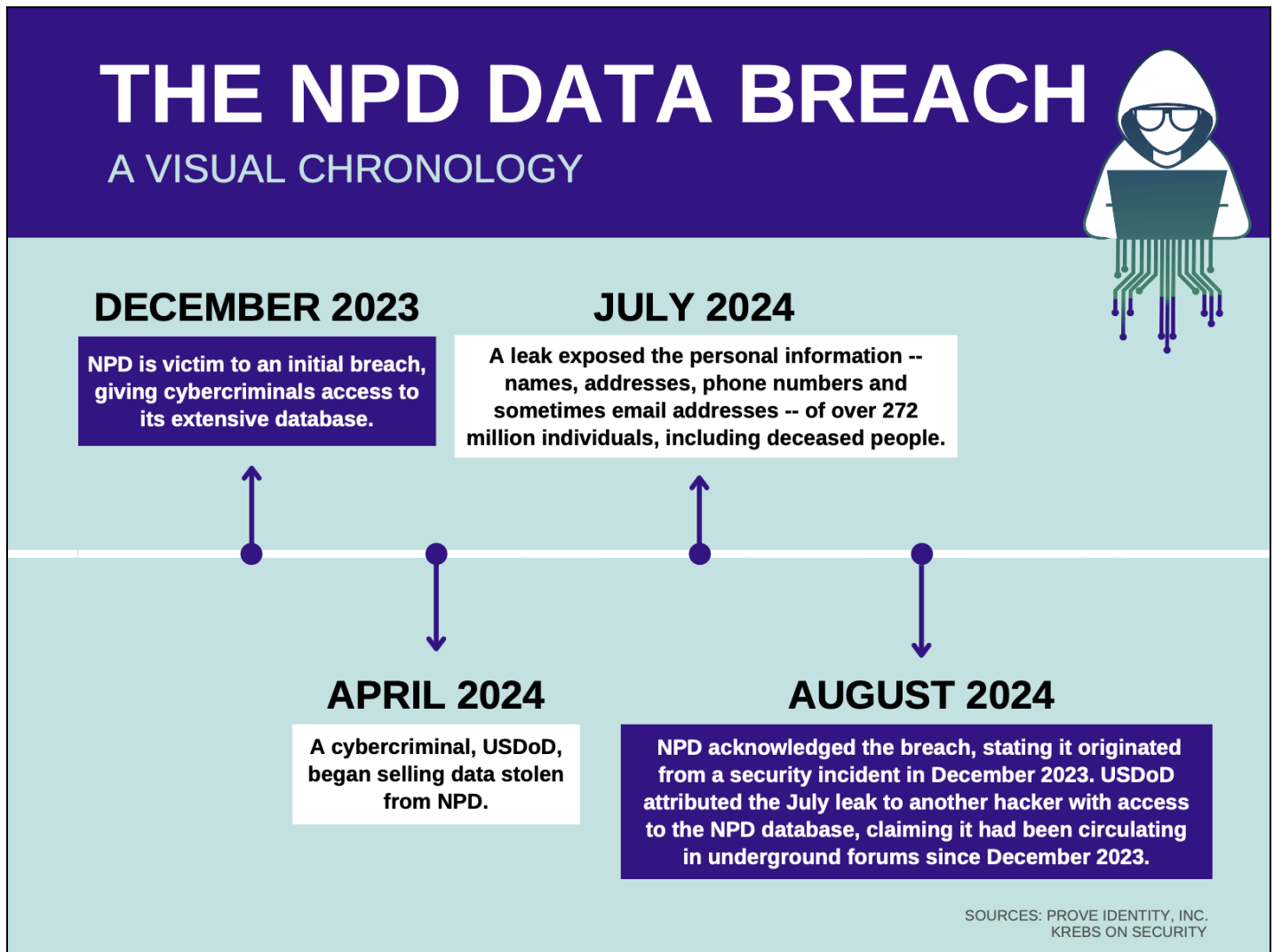
TRANSUNION

1 (800) 916-8800

Freezing your credit is a proactive and free step to protect your financial identity. It prevents new creditors from accessing your credit report, making it more difficult for identity thieves to open accounts in your name.

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The conduct of National Personal Data has been so egregious that it all but rises to the level of corporate malfeasance. In early August, a class action lawsuit was filed against Jericho Pictures, which owns and operates NPD. Only after the lawsuit did National Public Data finally admit there had been a breach as far back as December and a leak in both April and August. If the breach dates as far back as December and the leak as far back as April, why would National Public Data go four to eight months without disclosing the breach to the general public? Why would it go four to eight months without disclosing the breach to the victims whose social security numbers were stolen? Why would NPD leave millions of Americans wide open to identity theft? NPD has some explaining to do.



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The NPD data breach is as definitive a sign as any that data aggregators and brokers cannot be trusted to police themselves. What is needed, now more than ever, is a federal data privacy law that brings law and order to the lawlessness and disorder of cyberspace.

In a properly functioning world, Congress would pass a law establishing comprehensive federal standards of data privacy, as it came close to doing before falling short. At a bare minimum, Congress should pass a law prohibiting data aggregators and data brokers from collecting social security information whose leakage has put millions of Americans at risk of identity theft. As George Santayana once said, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat.” The time has come for Congress to legislate lessons learned.

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LOCAL NEWS

What New Yorkers should do after the recent Social Security number data breach

CBS NEWS
NEW YORK

By Jesse Zanger, Alice Gainer
Updated on: August 21, 2024 / 6:42 PM EDT / CBS New York



NEW YORK -- New York Rep. Ritchie Torres says his Social Security number was included in a massive breach that involved billions of personal data records being leaked.

Back in April, a group of hackers reportedly stole over 2.9 billion records from a background check company called National Public Data.

"The information that was suspected of being breached contained name, email address, phone number, Social Security number, and mailing address(es)," NPD said. "We cooperated with law enforcement and governmental investigators and conducted a review of the potentially affected records and will try to notify you if there are further significant developments applicable to you."

A leaked version of the stolen NPD data was reportedly posted on a free hacking forum.

Following the breach, a class action lawsuit was filed against the company.

"The Social Security data breach serves as a painful reminder that America has no federal data privacy law to protect the American people. When it comes to cyberspace, there is no law and order, only lawlessness and disorder," Torres said Wednesday. "We live in a cyber world, where your most sensitive data can be collected without your knowledge or consent by a private company and then stolen by a cyber criminal, leaving you wide open to identity theft."

"It is fair to say that cyberspace is the most lawless place on earth," he added.

Torres said people can check to see if their Social Security was leaked by using this website.

Cybersecurity expert offers tips

"I think what's interesting about this is we really didn't know about this breach until the lawsuit, which kind of says something about breaches in general, which is there's so many of them and they're happening so often that we don't even notice them anymore," cybersecurity expert Andrew Plato said.

Plato said at this point assume your data is probably already out there. He said to protect yourself going forward get what's called a password vault program.

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"They're a simple way to create really complex passwords for all the different websites you log into," Plato said. "Use a different password on each website. This will contain any breach that happens of your personal data. So if hackers do get your data from one particular website you wouldn't necessarily give them access to all the other websites you have."

To put it simply, using the same password for different websites is a bad idea.

"I know a lot of security people look down on the people who write their passwords down on a little notebook. You know, if that's what works for you, as long as you're using a different password on each website, go for it. Because it's a lot harder to steal that notebook than your password at this point," Plato said.

What you can do if you've been impacted

NPD says people have been impacted by the breach should:

- Monitor their financial accounts for unauthorized activity
- Contact Equifax, Experian and TransUnion credit reporting agencies to obtain a free credit report at 877-322-8228 or [by clicking here](#)
- Place a free fraud alert on your credit file, which means creditors will contact you before any new accounts are opened in your name, or changes are made to your existing accounts. You can reach Equifax at 800.685.1111, Experian at 888-397-3742 and TransUnion at 888.909.8872
- Review your free credit report for accounts and inquiries that you don't recognize, which may be signs of identity theft
- In the event of identity theft, [contact the FTC](#)
- You may consider a free credit freeze, which would make potential creditors can't get your credit report, making opening new accounts in your name less likely to be able to opened. You can temporarily lift or remove any such freeze.

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LIVE **BREAKING NEWS**

CBS NEWS NEW YORK **REP. RITCHIE TORRES ADDRESSES NATIONAL PUBLIC DATA SECURITY BREACH IMPACT ON BRONX RESIDENTS**

10:48 AM **NEW ROCHELLE** WED 73° THU 76° FRI 81° SAT 84° SUN 85° MON 84° TUE 83°

Rep. Ritchie Torres discusses massive Social Security data breach

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