

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

Cruz v. The Connor Group, A Real Estate Investment Firm, LLC, Case No. 1:22-cv-01966

IF YOU WORKED FOR THE CONNOR GROUP, A REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT FIRM, LLC (“TCG”), IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS BETWEEN FEBRUARY 28, 2017 AND APRIL 8, 2022, AND HAD YOUR BIOMETRIC IDENTIFIERS AND/OR BIOMETRIC INFORMATION COLLECTED BY TCG, YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO A PAYMENT FROM A CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT.

A court authorized this notice. You are not being sued. This is not a solicitation from a lawyer.

- A Settlement has been reached in a class action lawsuit against The Connor Group, A Real Estate Investment Firm, LLC (“TCG”). The class action lawsuit involves whether TCG unlawfully collected or captured Biometric Identifiers and/or Biometric Information without first providing notice, obtaining informed written consent or making a biometric data policy publicly available in violation of the Illinois Biometric Privacy Act (“BIPA” or “Privacy Act”), 740 ILCS 14/1 *et seq.*
- You are included if you worked for TCG in Illinois and had your Biometric Identifiers and/or Biometric Information allegedly collected or captured by TCG without first signing a written consent form, for the period February 28, 2017, through April 8, 2022.
- Those included in the Settlement will be eligible to receive a *pro rata* (meaning equal) portion of the Net Settlement Fund, which Class Counsel anticipates to be approximately \$452 per class member.
- Read this notice carefully. Your legal rights are affected whether you act, or don’t act.

YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THIS SETTLEMENT	
DO NOTHING	You will receive a <i>pro rata</i> share of the Net Settlement benefits – estimated to be approximately \$452 – and will give up your rights to sue the Defendant about the claims in this case.
EXCLUDE YOURSELF	You will receive no benefits, but you will retain any rights you currently have to sue the Defendant about the claims in this case.
OBJECT	Write to the Court explaining why you don’t like the Settlement.
GO TO THE HEARING	Ask to speak in Court about your opinion of the Settlement.

These rights and options—**and the deadlines to exercise them**—are explained in this Notice.

The Court in charge of this action has preliminarily approved the Settlement as fair, reasonable, and adequate, and must decide whether to give final approval to the Settlement. The relief provided to Class Members will be provided only if the Court gives final approval to the Settlement and, if there are any appeals, after the appeals are resolved in favor of the Settlement. ***Please be patient.***

BASIC INFORMATION

1. Why was this Notice issued?

A Court authorized this notice because you have a right to know about a proposed Settlement of this class action lawsuit and about all of your options, before the Court decides whether to give final approval to the Settlement. This Notice explains the lawsuit, the Settlement, and your legal rights.

The case is pending in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. The case is called *Cruz v. The Connor Group, A Real Estate Investment Firm, LLC*, Case No. 1:22-cv-01966. The person who sued is called the Plaintiff. The Defendant is TCG.

2. A court has not decided that TCG did anything wrong.

TCG denies any wrongdoing and maintains it has not violated BIPA or any other law. Nonetheless, TCG is willing to enter into this settlement in the interest of putting this matter behind it, and allowing the parties to move on.

3. What is a class action?

In a class action, one or more people called class representatives (in this case, Belicia Cruz) sue on behalf of a group or a “class” of people who have similar claims. In a class action, the court resolves the issues for all class members, except for those who exclude themselves from the Class.

4. What is this lawsuit about?

This lawsuit alleges that TCG violated Illinois law by unlawfully collecting or capturing Biometric Identifiers and/or Biometric Information through its fingerprint and/or hand scan clock-in system. As noted above, TCG denies the claims in the lawsuit and contends that it did not do anything wrong and denies that class certification is warranted or appropriate. The Court did not resolve the claims or defenses raised in this action. Nor has the Court determined that TCG did anything wrong or that this matter should be certified as a class action except if the Settlement is fully approved by the Court. Rather, the Parties have, without admitting liability, agreed to settle the lawsuit to avoid the uncertainties and expenses associated with ongoing litigation.

5. Why is there a Settlement?

The Court has not decided whether the Plaintiff or the Defendant should win this case. Instead, both sides agreed to a Settlement. That way, they avoid the uncertainties and expenses associated with ongoing litigation, and Class Members will get compensation sooner rather than, if at all, after the completion of a trial.

WHO’S INCLUDED IN THE SETTLEMENT?

6. How do I know if I am in the Settlement Class?

The Court decided that everyone who fits the following description is a member of the **Settlement Class**:

All individuals who worked for Defendant in the State of Illinois, including temporary workers or contractors engaged by Defendant, who allegedly had their Biometric Identifiers and/or Biometric Information collected, captured, received, or otherwise obtained or disclosed by Defendant or its agents, without first signing a written consent form, for the period February 28, 2017, through April 8, 2022.

THE SETTLEMENT BENEFITS

7. What does the Settlement provide?

Monetary Relief: A Settlement Fund has been created totaling \$237,600. Class Member payments, and the cost to administer the Settlement, the cost to inform people about the Settlement, attorneys' fees (inclusive of litigation costs), and an award to the Class Representative will also come out of this fund (*see* Question 12).

Prospective Relief: TCG has represented that it has provided, and will continue to provide, all notices and consents as required by BIPA.

A detailed description of the settlement benefits can be found in the Settlement Agreement, a copy of which is accessible on the Settlement Website by visiting www.CruzBIPASettlement.com.

8. How much will my payment be?

The amount of this payment will depend on how many requests for exclusion are submitted. Each Class Member will receive a proportionate share of the Settlement Fund, which Class Counsel anticipates will be approximately \$452. You can contact Class Counsel at (646) 837-7150 to inquire as to the number of requests for exclusion that have been received to date.

9. When will I get my payment?

The hearing to consider the fairness of the settlement is scheduled for January 24, 2023. If the Court approves the settlement, eligible Class Members will receive their payment 28 days after the Settlement has been finally approved and/or after any appeals process is complete. The payment will be made in the form of a check, and all checks will expire and become void 90 days after they are issued.

HOW TO GET BENEFITS

10. How do I get a payment?

If you are a Class Member who received a Notice via postcard and you want to get a payment, do nothing and you will automatically receive a *pro rata* share of the Settlement Fund, which Class Counsel anticipates will be approximately \$452 sent to the postal address identified in the Notice you received. If you have changed addresses or are planning to change addresses prior to February 21, 2023, please visit www.CruzBIPASettlement.com to complete and submit a change of address form on the Settlement Website.

If you are a Settlement Class Member who did not receive a Notice via postcard and you want to get a payment, you must complete and submit a change of address form. You may submit a change of address form either electronically on the Settlement Website by clicking [here](http://www.CruzBIPASettlement.com) www.CruzBIPASettlement.com, or by printing and mailing in a paper change of address form, copies of which are available for download at www.CruzBIPASettlement.com. Change of address forms must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. EST on February 21, 2023 or postmarked and mailed by February 21, 2023.

REMAINING IN THE SETTLEMENT

11. What am I giving up if I stay in the Class?

If the Settlement becomes final, you will give up your right to sue the Defendant and other Released Parties for the claims being resolved by this Settlement. The specific claims you are giving up against the Defendant are described in the Settlement Agreement. You will be “releasing” the Defendant and certain of its affiliates,

employees and representatives as described in Section 1.28 of the Settlement Agreement. Unless you exclude yourself (*see* Question 13), you are “releasing” the claims. The Settlement Agreement is available through the “court documents” link on the website.

The Settlement Agreement describes the released claims with specific descriptions, so read it carefully. If you have any questions you can talk to the lawyers listed in Question 12 for free or you can, of course, talk to your own lawyer if you have questions about what this means.

THE LAWYERS REPRESENTING YOU

12. Do I have a lawyer in the case?

The Court has appointed Philip L. Fraietta, Joseph I. Marchese, and Julia K. Venditti of Bursor & Fisher, P.A. to represent the class. They are called “Class Counsel.” They believe, after conducting an extensive investigation, that the Settlement Agreement is fair, reasonable, and in the best interests of the Settlement Class. You do not need to pay these lawyers. Their fees will be taken from the Settlement Funds. If you want to be represented by your own lawyer in this case, you may hire one at your expense.

13. How will the lawyers be paid?

The Defendant and Class Representative have agreed that Class Counsel attorneys’ fees and costs may be paid out of the Settlement Fund in an amount to be determined by the Court. The fee petition will seek no more than 35% of the Settlement Fund, which includes reimbursement for their out-of-pocket costs and expenses; the Court may award less than this amount. Under the Settlement Agreement, any amount awarded to Class Counsel will be paid out of the Settlement Fund.

Subject to approval by the Court, Defendant has agreed that the Class Representative may be paid a service award of \$5,000 from the Settlement Fund for her services in helping to bring and resolve this case.

EXCLUDING YOURSELF FROM THE SETTLEMENT

13. How do I get out of the Settlement?

To exclude yourself from the Settlement, you must submit a request for exclusion by 11:59 p.m. EST on January 3, 2023. Requests for exclusion may be submitted either on the Settlement Website (via the online form accessible at www.CruzBIPASettlement.com) or by mailing or otherwise deliver a letter (or request for exclusion) stating that you want to be excluded from the *Cruz v. The Connor Group, A Real Estate Investment Firm, LLC*, Case No. 1:22-cv-01966 settlement. Your letter or request for exclusion must also include your name, your address, an explanation of the basis upon which you claim to be a Class Member, your signature, the name and/or number of this case (noted above in italics in this paragraph), and a statement that you wish to be excluded. If you choose to submit a request for exclusion by mail, you must mail or deliver your exclusion request, postmarked no later than January 3, 2023, to the following address:

Cruz BIPA Settlement
c/o Analytics Consulting LLC
P.O. Box 2002
Chanhassen, MN 55317-2002

15. If I don’t exclude myself, can I sue the Defendant for the same thing later?

No. Unless you exclude yourself, you give up any right to sue the Defendant for the claims being resolved by this Settlement.

QUESTIONS? CALL (844) 433-5220 TOLL FREE, OR VISIT WWW.CRUIBIPASETTLEMENT.COM

16. If I exclude myself, can I get anything from this Settlement?

No. If you exclude yourself, you will not receive a *pro rata* share of the Settlement Fund.

OBJECTING TO THE SETTLEMENT

17. How do I object to the Settlement?

If you are a Class Member, you can object to the Settlement if you don't like any part of it. You can give reasons why you think the Court should not approve it. The Court will consider your views. To object, you must file with the Court a letter or brief stating that you object to the Settlement in *Cruz v. The Connor Group, A Real Estate Investment Firm, LLC*, Case No. 1:22-cv-01966, and identify all your reasons for your objections (including citations and supporting evidence) and attach any materials you rely on for your objections. Your letter or brief must also include your name, your address, the basis upon which you claim to be a Class Member, the name and contact information of any and all attorneys representing, advising, or in any way assisting you in connection with your objection, and your signature. If you, or an attorney assisting you with your objection, have ever objected to any class action settlement where you or the objecting attorney has asked for or received payment in exchange for dismissal of the objection (or any related appeal) without modification to the settlement, you must include a statement in your objection identifying each such case by full case caption. You must also mail or deliver a copy of your letter or brief to Class Counsel and Defendant's Counsel listed below.

Class Counsel will file with the Court and post on this website its request for attorneys' fees by December 20, 2022.

If you want to appear and speak at the Final Approval Hearing to object to the Settlement, with or without a lawyer (explained below in answer to Question Number 21), you must say so in your letter or brief. File the objection with the Court (or mail the objection to the Court) and mail a copy of the objection to Class Counsel and Defendant's Counsel, at the addresses below, postmarked no later than **January 3, 2023**.

Court	Class Counsel	Defendant's Counsel
The Honorable Sharon Johnson Coleman Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse 219 South Dearborn Street Courtroom 1241 Chicago, IL 60604	Philip L. Fraietta Bursor & Fisher P.A. 888 Seventh Avenue New York, NY 10019	Tiffany S. Fordyce Greenberg Traurig, LLP 77 West Wacker Drive Suite 3100 Chicago, IL 60601

18. What's the difference between objecting and excluding myself from the Settlement?

Objecting simply means telling the Court that you don't like something about the Settlement. You can object only if you stay in the Class. Excluding yourself from the Class is telling the Court that you don't want to be part of the Class. If you exclude yourself, you have no basis to object because the case no longer affects you.

THE COURT'S FINAL APPROVAL HEARING

19. When and where will the Court decide whether to approve the Settlement?

The Court will hold the Final Approval Hearing at 10:00 a.m. on January 24, 2023, at Courtroom 1241 at

Dirksen United States Courthouse, 219 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago Illinois. The purpose of the hearing will be for the Court to determine whether to approve the Settlement as fair, reasonable, adequate, and in the best interests of the Class; to consider the Class Counsel's request for attorneys' fees and expenses; and to consider the request for an incentive award to the Class Representative. At that hearing, the Court will be available to hear any objections and arguments concerning the fairness of the Settlement.

The hearing may be postponed to a different date or time without notice, so it is a good idea to check for updates by visiting the Settlement Website at www.CruzBIPASettlement.com or calling (844) 433-5220. If, however, you timely objected to the Settlement and advised the Court that you intend to appear and speak at the Final Approval Hearing, you will receive notice of any change in the date of the Final Approval Hearing.

20. Do I have to participate in the hearing?

No. Class Counsel will answer any questions the Court may have. But, you are welcome to participate at your own expense. If you send an objection or comment, you don't have to come to Court to talk about it. As long as you filed and mailed your written objection on time, the Court will consider it. You may also pay another lawyer to attend, but it's not required.

21. May I speak at the hearing?

Yes. You may ask the Court for permission to speak at the Fairness Hearing. To do so, you must include in your letter or brief objecting to the settlement a statement saying that it is your "Notice of Intent to Appear in *Cruz v. The Connor Group, A Real Estate Investment Firm, LLC*, Case No. 1:22-cv-01966." It must include your name, address, telephone number and signature as well as the name and address of your lawyer, if one is appearing for you. Your objection and notice of intent to appear must be filed with the Court and postmarked no later than **January 3, 2023**, and be sent to the addresses listed in Question 16.

GETTING MORE INFORMATION

22. Where do I get more information?

This Notice summarizes the Settlement. More details are in the Settlement Agreement. You can get a copy of the Settlement Agreement at www.CruzBIPASettlement.com. You may also write with questions to Cruz BIPA Settlement, P.O. Box 2002, Chanhassen, MN 55317-2002. You can call the Settlement Administrator at (844) 443-5220 or Class Counsel at (646) 837-7150, if you have any questions. Before doing so, however, please read this full Notice carefully. You may also find additional information elsewhere on the case website.