

The Credit Cardholders Bill of Rights is on its way to the President's desk after easily passing a vote in the House, 357-70. Despite some Republican opposition, Nebraska Republican Congressmen Lee Terry and Jeff Fortenberry voted for it. Republican Congressmen Adrian Smith voted against it. President Obama is expected to sign the bill into law Friday.

The bill, which was widely opposed by many credit card issuers, bans practices some consider unethical such as:

- Double cycle billing, which could charge consumers twice for balances that in some cases had been paid off.
- Universal default on existing balances, which could raise interest rates on all cards' existing balances when a consumer missed payment on just one.
- Unfair increases in interest rates and changes in terms and exorbitant fees for consumers in good standing.

The bill also seeks to limit offers to anyone under 21 years of age and would also requires credit card issuers to give 45 days advance notice of interest rate, fee, and finance charge increases. Most provisions go into effect in 9 months.

Some Republicans oppose the bill because they fear it will punish those with good credit and make it more difficult for others to obtain credit.

The House voted Thursday on a bill already passed in the Senate with help from both Nebraska Sen. Ben Nelson (D) and Mike Johanns (R). Only 5 Senators, all

Republicans, voted against the measure in the Senate.

"Today's vote is a win for Nebraska consumers," said Senator Nelson in a news release after the vote. "It's high time we stepped in to protect consumers from some of the clearly abusive practices created by some credit card companies in recent years."

Johanns agreed, releasing a statement saying "This legislation provides better consumer protections for the many families that use credit cards. Too often you hear stories from credit card users of interest rate hikes and fees that seemingly come from thin air. Now, there will be clearer, more understandable and upfront terms and conditions for consumers."

