

Idaho man files data-breach lawsuit against federal office

REBECCA BOONE, Associated Press

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho (AP) — An Idaho man has filed a lawsuit against the federal government because he says his personal information was compromised as part of a massive data breach of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Victor Hobbs, an aviation safety inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration in Spokane, Washington, is asking the judge to grant the case class-action status on behalf of himself and other federal employees who may have been compromised by the data breach.

He filed the lawsuit in Idaho's U.S. District Court against the Office of Personnel Management, former and current officials at the government agency and against agency contractor KeyPoint Government Solutions. The agency and contractor have not yet responded to the lawsuit.

Hackers suspected of working for the Chinese government are believed to have stolen records for as many as 18 million current and former federal employees and contractors last year, including detailed background investigations for employees with security clearances.

In his lawsuit, Hobbs contends that the federal government knew for years before the 2014 data hack that the Office of Personnel Management had deficiencies in its cyber security, including that agency employees didn't have guidance on how to prevent software systems from being hacked.

"Log-in credentials stolen in the OPM Breach are reportedly already being offered for sale on the internet," Hobbs wrote in the lawsuit.

He contends that the Office of Personnel Management's actions violated the federal Privacy Act and the Administrative Procedures Act, as well as amounting to negligence.

Several other potentially class-action lawsuits have been filed against the Office of Personnel Management in other jurisdictions. It's not yet known if those cases will ultimately be combined or if they will proceed separately.