

STATEMENT ON SIGNING SENATE BILL 34
(CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION)

SENATE BILL 42
(REVOLVING CREDIT)
AND SENATE BILL 566
(SECOND MORTGAGE BILL)

April 21, 1967

Before me today is a package of three bills which should go far in protecting the interests of the buying public in Maryland.

Senate Bill 42 regulates the amount of interest that may be charged on so-called "Revolving Credit" accounts in retail stores and on installment sales. It reaches me after many years of legislative battles, and it still bears some of the scars of those conflicts. But rather than veto the bill for its imperfections, as some would have me do, I am happy to sign it and work toward strengthening the law in the future.

Senate Bill 566 is the so-called Second Mortgage Bill, another subject of lively controversy. It brings under the strong control of the Banking Commissioner a thriving, unregulated industry in which thousands of Marylanders have been the victims of high interest rates. The bill also sets a limit of 12 per cent a year that can be charged on the unpaid balances of such mortgages.

And, finally, Senate Bill 34 creates the new Division of Consumer **Protection under the discretion and control of the Attorney General.** It provides generally for the regulation of fraud and of false advertising to consumers by unscrupulous merchants who would deceive and take advantage of an unsuspecting public. These, fortunately, are in a minority, but it is past time that they were brought under the watchful eye of the law.

It is with pleasure that I affix my signature to all three of these bills enacted in the interest of Maryland purchasers.
