

"What we envisage here is a person in whom the citizen could have full confidence that his complaint would be investigated and remedial action taken," the Governor said.

"The idea, while relatively new in this country, is an old and successful one in some European countries. Sweden has had a People's Advocate or Ombudsman since 1809. Such an official later became a part of the governmental structure of all of the Scandinavian countries and of New Zealand.

"In this country several states are considering such an office and Nassau County in New York created one last May 31.

"As I stated in a campaign position paper on this subject, I believe it is the responsibility of State government to assure the individual citizen of adequate protection against the capricious acts of public authorities," Governor Agnew said.

"I believe it is our indisputable obligation to guarantee, as does the Bill of Rights, the means by which citizens may 'petition the Government for a redress of grievances.'

"It has been my thought that such an individual is needed to investigate citizen allegations of:

- "1. Preferential treatment and influence peddling.
- "2. Arbitrary censorship, or secrecy in government operations.
- "3. Payoffs and kickbacks in State contracts.
- "4. Agency reluctance or refusal to give explicit reasons for its decisions; or unjust procedures in agency hearings.
- "5. Discriminatory enforcement or flagrant nonenforcement of State laws, or abuses stemming from inadequate or unpublished regulations.
- "6. Inefficiency on the part of State personnel or agencies.
- "7. Patronage excesses.
- "8. Undesirable conditions in prisons or mental institutions.
- "9. Wrongful detentions.
- "10. Overzealousness or laxity on the part of State Police."

The Administration bill provides that the People's Advocate "shall be selected on the basis of learning and integrity. His personal qualities should include industry, common sense, breadth and depth of knowledge of the administrative process, ability to appreciate the difficulties of private citizens in their dealing with officials of the State government, and ability to command the respect and confidence of the people of Maryland."

The bill would take effect June 1, 1967.