

Commissioner is appointed by the Secretary of Licensing and Regulation with the approval of the Governor (Code 1957, Art. 41, sec. 192).

During the 1977 Session, the General Assembly completely revised the law regulating licensed lenders doing business in Maryland. The agency is responsible for licensing these consumer loan companies under the provisions of Art. 58A and for conducting regular investigations and audits of the licensee's books and records to discover violations of the law, the purpose of which is for the protection of borrowers or the punishment of usurious money lenders. The Commissioner may revoke or suspend a consumer loan license following a formal hearing upon a finding that the licensee has violated any provision of the Consumer Loan Law (Code 1957, Art. 58A, secs. 1-6, 11).

The Commissioner is also responsible for licensing sales finance companies. He conducts annual investigations of these companies to determine their fitness to engage in the sales finance business in Maryland. Following a formal hearing before the Agency, the Commissioner may suspend or revoke such licenses for violations of the law (Code 1957, Art. 83, secs. 154-159).

Installment lenders making loans pursuant to the Commercial Law Article, sec. 12-103(c), are also licensed and examined by the Commissioner. Following a formal hearing, the Commissioner may suspend or revoke such licenses for violations of law (Code 1957, Art. 49, sec. 5(b)).

The Commissioner's power to protect consumers under the Retail Credit Accounts Law and the Retail Installment Sales Act was strengthened by the General Assembly to allow the issuance of an order against a seller to cease and desist from a practice in violation of these laws. The Commissioner is limited to acting only on a written complaint and after a formal hearing (Code Commercial Law Article, sec. 12-514, 12-631).

In order to insure that the various financial institutions, firms, and persons engaged in the extension of credit exercise their responsibility to make credit available with fairness, impartiality, and without discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status, the General Assembly enacted the Maryland Equal Credit Opportunity Act. The provisions of this subtitle are administered by the Commissioner of Consumer Credit, except that the office of the State Banking Commissioner has sole jurisdiction for administration of banking institutions. If a complaint alleging a violation of any provision of the subtitle is filed with the

Commissioner, he may investigate the complaint and hold a hearing on it. After hearing, the Commissioner may order a creditor to cease and desist from an act or practice deemed to be prohibited by the subtitle (Code Commercial Law Article, sec. 12-701 through 12-708).

COLLECTION AGENCY LICENSING BOARD

Chairperson: Alan T. Fell, 1981

Leon I. Snyder, 1982; Paul E. Hartman, 1982; James J. Jones, 1982; Nellie Miller, 1982

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The Collection Agency Licensing Board, which is part of the office of the Commissioner of Consumer Credit, was created by Chapter 319, Acts of 1977. The Board consists of five members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate for a term of four years. One member shall be the Commissioner of Consumer Credit who serves as chairperson, two members represent debt collection agencies, and two members represent consumers and must be either an officer or board member of a recognized consumer group or an employee of a county or other local consumer protection agency of the State.

The Board has the power to issue, suspend, and revoke licenses; to reprimand licensees; to receive written complaints from consumers and to hold hearings into allegations of violations of the Consumer Debt Collection Act by a debt collection agency; and to mediate disputes between consumers and debt collection agencies, including suggesting monetary compensation to the consumer. The Board serves without compensation (Code 1957, Art. 56, secs. 323-329).

STATE BOARD OF COSMETOLOGISTS

Chairperson: Mary Ellen Brooke, 1980

Christina J. Anderson, 1980; Mrs. Howard McIntyre, 1980; Ellen P. McLane, 1981; Harold P. Johnson, 1979

Eunice R. Alper, *Executive Director*

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The State Board of Cosmetologists, created by Chapter 282, Acts of 1935, as the Board of