

"Crimes and Punishments," to follow immediately after Section 79 thereof and to be under the new subheading "Debt Adjusting," to create the offense of engaging in the business of adjusting debts in this state, with some exceptions, and providing penalties for violations.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland,* That new Section 79A be and it is hereby added to Article 27 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1967 Replacement Volume), title and subtitle "Crimes and Punishments," to follow immediately after Section 79 thereof and to be under the new subheading "Debt Adjusting."

#### Debt Adjusting

##### 79A.

(a) *For the purpose of this section, "debt adjusting" means the making of a contract, expressed or implied, with a particular debtor whereby the debtor agrees to pay a certain amount of money periodically to the person engaged in the debt adjusting business, who shall for a consideration distribute the same among certain specified creditors in accordance with a plan agreed upon.*

(b) *Whoever shall engage in the business of debt adjusting shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined not more than five hundred (\$500.00) dollars, or be imprisoned not more than six months, or both.*

(c) *Nothing in this section applies to the following when engaged in the regular course of their respective business and professions:*

(1) *Attorneys-at-law.*

(2) *Banks and fiduciaries, as duly authorized and admitted to transact business in this state and performing credit and financial adjusting service in the regular course of their principal business.*

(3) *Title insurers and abstract companies, while doing an escrow business.*

(4) *Judicial officers or others acting under court orders.*

(5) *Non-profit, religious, fraternal or cooperative organizations offering debt management service exclusively for their members, PROVIDED NO CHARGE IS MADE NOR FEE IMPOSED.*

(6) *Certified public accountants.*

(7) *Bona fide trade or mercantile associations in the course of arranging adjustment of debts with business establishments.*

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1968 JANUARY 1, 1969.

Approved May 7, 1968.