

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That new Sections 20A, 20B, 20C, 20D, 20E, 20F, 20G, 20H, 20I, 20J and 21 be and they are hereby added to Article 83 - Sales and Notices, of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1969 Replacement Volume and 1973 Supplement) to read as follows:

Article 83 - Sales and Notices

20A.

THIS SUBHEADING SHALL BE LIBERALLY CONSTRUED AND APPLIED TO PROMOTE ITS PURPOSE AND POLICIES. IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT IN CONSTRUING UNLAWFUL AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES AS DEFINED IN THIS SUBHEADING DUE CONSIDERATION AND WEIGHT SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION AND THE FEDERAL COURTS RELATIVE TO SECTION 5(A)(1) OF THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION ACT, 15 U.S.C. 45(A)(1), AS IT MAY FROM TIME TO TIME BE AMENDED.

20B.

A CONSUMER COUNCIL IS CREATED AS A PART OF THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION ~~[[WHICH SHALL]]~~ TO ADVISE THE DIVISION ON GENERAL GOALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMS, UNDERTAKES STUDIES AND REPORTS, AND FOSTER COOPERATION AMONG FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PRIVATE GROUPS. THE COUNCIL ~~[[SHALL CONSIST]]~~ CONSISTS OF THE DIVISION CHIEF AND NINE MEMBERS ~~[[FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR]]~~ APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR WITH THE CONSENT OF THE SENATE. THREE MEMBERS REPRESENT CONSUMER GROUPS OR INTERESTS, THREE REPRESENT BUSINESS GROUPS OR INTERESTS, AND THREE REPRESENT THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN STAGGERED TERMS WITHIN EACH GROUP. OF THE NINE MEMBERS, THREE SHALL BE APPOINTED FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, THREE SHALL BE APPOINTED FOR TERMS OF FOUR YEARS, AND THREE SHALL BE APPOINTED FOR TERMS OF SIX YEARS. AS THE INITIAL TERMS OF OFFICE EXPIRE, THE SUCCESSOR MEMBERS SHALL BE APPOINTED FOR TERMS OF SIX YEARS. THEY SHALL SERVE WITHOUT COMPENSATION, BUT SHALL BE REIMBURSED FOR ALL EXPENSES REASONABLY INCURRED. THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL SHALL ~~[[ANNUALLY]]~~ ELECT ANNUALLY A CHAIRMAN FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS AND SHALL APPOINT A SECRETARY.

20C.

THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION HAS THE FOLLOWING POWERS AND DUTIES TO:

(1) ~~[[TO]]~~ RECEIVE AND INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS FROM ALL PERSONS AFFECTED BY POTENTIAL OR ACTUAL VIOLATION OF THIS SUBHEADING OR TO INITIATE ITS OWN INVESTIGATION OF FRAUDS AND UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES AGAINST THESE PERSONS;