

that consumer protection is one of the major issues which confront all levels of government, and that there has been mounting concern over the increase of deceptive practices in connection with sales of merchandise, REAL PROPERTY, and services and the extension of credit.

(b) (2) The General Assembly is concerned that public confidence in merchants offering goods, services, REALTY, and credit is being undermined, although the majority of business people operate with integrity and sincere regard for the consumer.

13-204.

In addition to any other of its powers and duties, the Division has the powers and duties to:

(9) Undertake activities to encourage business and industry to maintain high standards of honesty, fair business practices, and public responsibility in the production, promotion, and sale OR LEASE OR RENTAL of consumer goods, CONSUMER REALTY, and consumer services and in the extension of consumer credit;

13-301.

Unfair or deceptive trade practices include any:

(1) False, falsely disparaging, or misleading oral or written statement, visual description, or other representation of any kind which has the capacity, tendency, or effect of deceiving or misleading consumers [and which is made in connection with:

(i) The sale, lease, rental, loan, or bailment of consumer goods or consumer services;

(ii) The offer for sale, lease, rental, loan or bailment of consumer goods or services;

(iii) The extension of consumer credit; or

(iv) The collection of consumer debts];

(2) Representation that:

(i) Consumer goods, CONSUMER REALTY, or consumer services have a sponsorship, approval, accessory, characteristic, ingredient, use, benefit, or quantity which they do not have;

(ii) A merchant has a sponsorship, approval, status, affiliation, or connection which he does not have;

(iii) Deteriorated, altered, reconditioned, reclaimed, or second hand consumer goods are original or new; or