



Coalition on Homelessness
and Housing in Ohio
COHHIO

For Immediate Release
December 15, 2006

CONTACT: 614-280-1984, Bill Faith, Executive Director
Suzanne Gravette Acker, Dir. Communications

COHHIO Supports Veto of SB 117

COLUMBUS -- COHHIO is in support of Attorney General Jim Petro and incoming Attorney General Marc Dann in their urging of Governor Taft to veto SB 117, a law that includes a last-minute provision that severely weakens consumer protections.

At issue is an amendment that was tagged to SB 117, an unrelated bill, that caps non-economic damages available under the Consumer Sales Practices Act (CSPA) to \$5,000 for victims of unfair and deceptive business practices. "Dishonest businesses get a pass under this law," said Faith, "because it takes away disincentive to avoid bad behavior."

Faith also agrees with the generals that there has not been adequate debate on a law that has been working effectively for almost 30 years. "There was no public testimony to ensure this issue received full consideration," said Faith. "The rush in 26 hours to deal with a 28-year-old consumer protection law is no way to run a railroad," he said. "And it's no way to protect consumers."

COHHIO is deeply disappointed by the fast-track passage in the House and Senate and calls it a law that "would significantly erode 30 years of consumer protection in Ohio."

Ohio's CSPA damage provisions have been in place since 1978 and have provided deterrent against dishonest business practices, allowing consumers to recover damages that reflect trauma and suffering – called "non-economic" damages. "CSPA is the threat used to keep bad actors in check," said Faith. "The new law makes that threat all but vanish, and it will keep private lawyers from taking cases where consumers have been victimized. This is an overreaction to a Supreme Court ruling that has yet to be settled. It's premature, and its effect will be devastating to consumers in Ohio."

-30-