

# Bill sponsor says payday lenders trying to "bully" him through e-mails to constituents

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Ohioans for Financial Freedom has a reputation for hysterical untruths, so maybe the latest ploy by the payday lenders' group isn't that surprising.

Barely a week after Rep. Matt Lundy introduced a bill to sew up loopholes that payday lenders are using to skirt Ohio law, some of his constituents got this email from the industry group:

"Taxpayers beware!! Representative Matt Lundy is at it again! He has sponsored HB 486 which would increase Ohio's unemployment rate to over 11%!! Kill thousands of jobs for hardworking Ohioans. Eliminate your credit options. Close down small businesses. Tell Lundy to mind his own business!!"

Lundy, an Elyria Democrat, said the e-mail campaign is an example of "how the payday industry uses its deep pockets in an attempt to bully legislators." He added, "Sorry to break the news to them, but I am not going away."

Ohioans for Financial Freedom led a \$19 million, spectacularly unsuccessful 2008 campaign to scare Ohioans into voting to keep payday lending intact.

Newspapers across the state blasted the group for its misleading campaign ads, which threatened massive payday store shutdowns and job losses - none of which came to pass, even though Ohio voters soundly thumped the payday lenders at the polls by a 27-point margin.

As far as the current e-mail goes:

- HB 486 is a narrow bill that would end loopholes payday lenders use to charge borrowers 680 percent APR on check loans - nearly twice the 391 percent rate Ohioans objected to back in 2008.
- Ohio's unemployment rate already is 11 percent. You can't pin that on Lundy.
- If HB 486 passes, consumers indeed lose the option of a usurious loan. But nothing is stopping lenders from creating paycheck loans that are less predatory, as some of their credit-union competitors have done.

- The only small businesses affected by HB 486 are paycheck loan stores.

And as for Lundy minding his own business, he was elected to work for the people of Ohio, who voted in 2008 to curb payday loans.

Payday lenders are flouting that law. Making sure they do not is Lundy's business, and it should be the business of every legislator in Columbus.

All Ohio House members are up for election. If you would like to encourage yours to stand strong against this sort of bullying, contact him or her through [www.house.state.oh.us](http://www.house.state.oh.us).