



Coalition on Homelessness  
and Housing in Ohio  
**COHHIO**

**For Immediate Release**  
**December 11, 2006**

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

## **Amendment Would Gut Consumer Protections**

A damaging amendment to a bill now pending in the House Judiciary Committee would severely weaken consumer protection in Ohio by limiting the damages available under the 28-year-old Consumer Sales Practices Act (CSPA). Earlier this year, mortgage lending was placed under the purview of the CSPA with the passage of SB 185, the Homebuyers' Protection Act. "Ohio homeowners took a huge step forward with SB 185," said Bill Faith, COHHIO executive director. "This new amendment would clearly take them two steps backward."

The amendment to SB 117 would limit damages available under the CSPA to out-of-pocket losses for victims of dishonest business practices. The amendment would be a slap to all consumers, but especially to homebuyers making likely the largest purchase of their lives, Faith said. "Lenders will not stop abusive behavior until victims are able to recover non-economic damages," he said. "Until then, lenders will consider actual damages merely a cost of doing business. It won't fundamentally change the culture of dishonesty that is rampant in the subprime lending market."

Ohio's CSPA damage provisions have been in place since 1978, allowing consumers the ability to recover all damages caused by a company's dishonest conduct. Faith said the amendment to SB 117 was an overreaction to a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year (*Whitaker v. M.T. Automotive, Inc.*) that held that a consumer harmed by unfair or deceptive trade practices is entitled to all damages resulting from CSPA violations.

SB 185 was an example of broad bipartisan cooperation that sought to make Ohio a safer place for homeowners and homebuyers, said Faith. "COHHIO opposes any attempt to force through an egregious amendment before the year's end that would gut Ohio consumer protections."

The House Judiciary Committee will meet Tuesday, December 12, at 2:00 p.m. in room 114.

-30-

175 S. Third St., Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Ph: 614-280-1984 Fax: 614-463-1060  
For more information about COHHIO, please visit [www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org)