

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**MCRC to release report on Debt Settlement;  
Attorney General Doug Gansler and Marceline White will  
discuss legislative and prosecutorial reforms**

BALTIMORE, MD – Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition Executive Director Marceline White will join with Maryland Attorney General Doug Gansler on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, to discuss MCRC's new report on debt settlement schemes and legislation that will be introduced in the General Assembly to prevent more Marylanders from being hurt by this deceptive practice. A Baltimore resident who was a casualty of this type of scam will also speak at the news conference.

Debt settlement is a scheme that promises to help consumers escape from pressing debt, but instead generally leaves them in worse shape than before. The practice is unregulated in Maryland, and ranks of those who have been taken in by this system are growing at an alarming rate.

Instead of helping consumers negotiate lower rates for their debt and then pay it off in a timely manner – as a credible debt management firm would do – debt settlement companies instead collect huge upfront fees, encourage consumers to *stop* paying their creditors, and typically perform no real service but still walk away with thousands of dollars in profit. The consumer is left with less money, a worse credit score, angrier creditors, and dwindling options. MCRC's new report, *Debt Settlement in Maryland*, explains this scheme and lays out policy recommendations to protect consumers.

**TIME:** 11:00 a.m.

**DATE:** Tuesday, January 5, 2010

**PLACE:** University of Baltimore Thumel Business Center, Room 003 (lower level)  
11 W. Mt. Royal Ave. 21201 – corner of Charles Street and Mt. Royal Ave.

**WHO:** MCRC Executive Director Marceline White; a consumer who was impacted by a debt settlement scam; and Maryland Attorney General Doug Gansler.