

Testimony to the Economic Matters Committee
HB 144 Abolition of People's Insurance Counsel Division
Position: Unfavorable

February 2, 2010

The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair
House Economic Matters Committee, Room 231
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members, Economic Matters Committee

Honorable Chair Davis and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances and protects the interests of consumers through education, advocacy, and training programs. MCRC works to ensure fairness and safety in the marketplace. Our members include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-and moderate-income families throughout Maryland.

MCRC opposes HB 144, which would close the People's Insurance Counsel Division. The Division was established in the 2004 special session to represent consumers' interests related to homeowners insurance and medical malpractice.

This office has worked for the benefit of consumers since its inception. In this current economic climate, it is critical that experienced counsel is available to represent consumers' interests in these types of insurance matters.

MCRC not only believes that this office is needed; we believe the jurisdiction and scope of the office should be expanded to include other insurance products that affect consumers, such as auto and life insurance.

MCRC urges the Committee to oppose HB 144 to maintain this needed resource for consumers.

Respectfully submitted,



Marceline White
Executive Director, MCRC