leads to the contention of collection agencies that garnishments are essential to the economy. Current earnings, they argue, are often the only asset that a debtor has and that a creditor can reach. Without garnishment, the argument continues, fewer debts would be collected. This in turn, it is claimed, would lead to a tremendous drop in the granting of consumer credit, thus adversely affecting the economy as well as those families to whom credit would no longer be available.[142] A spokesman for collection agencies illustrated his viewpoint by arguing that it is much harder for a person to buy on credit in New York than it is in California.[143]

These contentions are important, if correct. However, estimates made by the collection agencies and other available data indicate that consumer credit is as readily available in New York as in California and that the extension of consumer credit is unrelated to garnishment laws. Data given a California legislative committee by the Associated Credit Bureaus of California show that in 1963, 6.621 billion dollars of installment credit was extended in California and 6.124 billion dollars in New York.[144] This amounts to 24.6 per cent of total retail sales in California during 1963 and 25.5 per cent of New York sales.[145] The Associated Credit Bureaus also covered five other states: Colorado, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, and Alabama. The ratio of installment credit to retail sales varies very little among them or, for that matter, from the ratio in New York or California.[146] This is particularly interesting because Texas,

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from purchases, 26.7% from hospital and medical services, 6.7% from loans and 6.7% from rent. Purchases included a used car, furniture, jewelry, clothing, and several items merely listed as "goods, wares and merchandise"—a catchall designation often used in complaints.

142 *Hearings* 29-30, 37-38.

143 *Id.* at 37.

144 *Id.* at App. A (letter from Robert C. Kopriva, Legislative Chairman, Associated Credit Bureaus of California). These are unofficial estimates; there appear to be no official data showing retail installment credit by states. See also note 148 *infra*.

145 In dollars the respective retail sales figures are $26.889 billion and $23.977 billion. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS, CENSUS OF BUSINESS, 1963 RETAIL TRADE, California 6-5 (1965); *Id.* at New York 34-5. The percentages given in the Kopriva letter, note 144 *supra*, are incorrectly identified as showing installment credit as a percentage of retail sales. Rather, the letter shows the ratio of installment credit in California and New York to all such credit extended in the U.S. in 1963. (California's was 10.9% of the national total; New York's, 10.1%.) In 1963, California and New York were also close in personal income, $52.419 billion and $53.120 billion, respectively; per capita personal income was $2,980 in California and $3,000 in New York. U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS 13 (April 1964).

146 The data for the seven states are as follows: (installment credit data from Kopriva letter, note 144 *supra*; retail sales figures from CENSUS OF BUSINESS, 1963, note 145 *supra*