

something to do with the unrest in our cities, gentlemen, this very thing is one of the causes of it, but unlike that, here is something that many people don't realize which is that it is not the small business man, the small entrepreneur operating in the ghetto that takes advantage of the ghetto dwellers by these unscrupulous prices, but it is also your largest chains in America that do it.

We have one of these chains that are constantly on the radio saying "We care about you," and testimony was brought our right here in the City of New York that in a certain section of East Harlem they charge more for a can of beans and for various other things in that chain store here than they charge in the stores in the west of Manhattan, and there is no reason for that.

I went up to Massachusetts and Boston to see how they are working up there on the matter protecting the consumer, and I was told up there of the reforms they are initiating, and as Mrs. Eichler up there said to me, "It is not only the small credit company or the fly-by-night credit company, but the old, established financial institutions in the State of Massachusetts that are also guilty of these practices where the consumer is concerned."

Some of the ancestors of these people who came over on the Mayflower who run the big banks and trust companies in Boston are just as guilty in these practices as the little finance officer. One of the things that we need is something in the law, whether at the State level or municipal level, where the finance company could not, after the person who sold this machine which is something that is going to cure arthritis, and he sells it for \$300 and puts the paper in the bank and then leaves going on to greener pastures, and his machine breaks down because it never was any good in the first place, and the machine breaks down and the person misses the payment and the bank starts a garnishee or sues them or forecloses on their home, and the bank says, "We are not responsible for the person who sold it to you."

There has got to be some responsibility for the sale to be followed, and we certainly wanted to inform you of what we are trying to do on the State level, at the Constitutional level, in putting this into the Constitution. And we wanted to tell you that certainly our Committee, the Committee on Health, Housing and Social Services, is very, very happy that your Committee is working as diligently as possible and we wish you God speed in your efforts.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Brewer.

Congressman HALPERN. I just have one very brief question.

My very distinguished friend, the witness, is a dear friend and a fine public servant. He has been a credit as a public servant and it's a pleasure to welcome him to this hearing, and I wish to commend him.

We are constantly reminded by Congressman Gonzalez of Texas, who is on this Subcommittee and is also a sponsor of H.R. 11601, that Texas and its Constitution prohibits garnishment, and Pennsylvania has prohibited it for 120 years.

Are you considering such a provision in our new State Constitution?

Mr. BREWER. Probably no place. The details are the subject of legislation. The details have no place in the Constitution, but we do want to give the Legislature, by our proposition, we want to give them, if not a mandate, we want to give them a broad umbrella under which to produce this kind of legislation.

And let me tell you, gentlemen, when the Constitutional Convention is over and we hope to meet by the September 26th deadline, we won't need it if everything is down here instead of in Albany. We try to meet it and even after we close, I can continue my efforts in January when the Legislature meets.

Let me say I want to disagree with Mr. Costello. I am not so concerned about this garnishment provision, that it will dry up credit for the poor. This thing that everybody has got to have credit and everybody has got to live on borrowed money, and all that sort of thing, we have got to come to grips with it one day, and it seems to me the sooner the better. I don't mean for the essentials of credit, but for all of these trivia, like electric can openers, when you can buy a can opener for twenty-five cents why do you have to go out and buy one for \$10 that goes on the wall and that's electric. All of that sort of stuff, credit for that should be made hard.

I am not trying to be concerned with drying up credit for the poor and middle class. I think we ought to be concerned with the middle class out on the Island, Congressman. One of these days they are going to be in a bad way.

Congressman HALPERN. Thank you.