

HOUSE No. 2368

By Mr. Moran of Somerville, petition of William J. Moran for legislation to establish a consumer's council in the Department of Public Utilities. State Administration.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-Two.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CONSUMER'S COUNCIL.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting at the
2 end of chapter 25 the following sections:—

3 *Section 12H.* There shall be in the department, but in no
4 manner subject to its control, a consumer's council consisting of
5 ten members to be appointed by the governor with the advice
6 and consent of the council, two of whom shall be designated in
7 their initial appointments to serve, respectively, for terms of
8 one, two, three, four and five years from the date of their ap-
9 pointment. The governor, with the advice and consent of the
10 council, shall designate from time to time and may remove at
11 any time one of the members as chairman. Upon the expiration
12 of the term of office of a member, his successor shall be appointed
13 in the manner aforesaid for five years. All of said members shall
14 serve without compensation, but shall receive their expenses
15 necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties. The
16 consumer's council shall hold regular monthly meetings and may
17 meet at such other times upon the call of the chairman.

18 *Section 12I.* The governor shall appoint a consumer's counsel
19 who shall be in the department but in no manner subject to its
20 control who shall constitute a research and information bureau
21 and whose duties will be to co-ordinate the consumer's services
22 carried on by other departments and agencies; to bring together

23 the various interested parties seeking to promote ethical prac-
24 tices at the market place, fair to both business and consumer;
25 to assist in developing legislative programs to protect the con-
26 sumer; to provide a two-way channel of communication between
27 government and consumers, both organized and individual; to
28 study, investigate and secure all available information on utility
29 rates, interest rates, insurance rates and to make such informa-
30 tion available to the governor, general court and to the public
31 and to represent the citizens of the commonwealth before federal
32 and state courts and agencies. The consumer's counsel may
33 employ such assistants, experts and specialists to assist him
34 in the performance of his duties and to pay such sums for their
35 salaries and for expenses including travel expenses of witnesses,
36 as may be appropriated. The consumer's counsel shall be paid
37 such compensation as shall be determined by the governor and
38 the governor's council.

39 *Section 12J.* The consumer's council shall act in an advisory
40 capacity only to consumer's counsel, governor and general court
41 on all matters embraced within the duties of the consumer's
42 counsel.