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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 28, 1975

MR. PRESIDENT:

Attached for your information is the
latest Reagan column.

Don

9/28/75
He is behind
see.

THE RONALD REAGAN COLUMN
(For Release In Papers Of Friday, April 25, And Thereafter)

By RONALD REAGAN

Copley News Service

The bureaucrats, aided by Ralph Nader and a few determined liberal senators, are out to fleece the taxpayers by creating yet another federal bureaucracy.

This one will be called the Agency for Consumer Advocacy if Senate Bill 200 goes all the way through Congress and is signed by the President. It is a rehash of the Consumer Protection Agency bill defeated last year --and that one might as well have been named the Consumer Ripoff Bill.

There are existing federal agencies with the responsibility for preventing consumers from being harmed by bad products or trade practices.

These range from the Federal Drug Administration to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Congress has it within its power to pass corrective legislation to improve the workings of these agencies any time it wants to.

Why then a new agency which, in effect, would compete with existing agencies, challenging their actions and causing a great deal of heat but generating very little light? One thing is certain: it would spawn a large new bureaucracy and it would set its own rules and regulations.

It would have the ability to harass businesses large and small, something that will inevitably cost you more money in the form of increased prices for goods and services.

It is doubtful that even the bill's sponsors think the new agency, if created, would do much real good, since it won't plow any really new ground.

What it will do is please some left-liberal constituents here and there, as well as the professional consumerists who thrive on finding more and more ways to tighten the federal vise on your life. These are the folks who are obsessed with the need to control every aspect of the marketplace, leaving little or nothing to the cycles of supply and demand which, till now at least, have served us best when left pretty much alone.

There is scant evidence of public clamor for the agency. In fact, a recent poll showed a majority of Americans believe they have ample access to redress of market grievances now.

Since consumers don't speak with a single voice, critics of the bill ask how can a federal agency develop a consensus? The answer is, it can't.

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It will, instead, reflect the opinions of the bureaucrats, the more strident consumerists and the politicians who created it.

Creating a new Agency for Consumer Advocacy, when already there are many of them but under different names, is a little like the situation a retail chain might find itself in if one of its own stores began to do poorly. In that case, it would take a good look at pricing, inventory, displays, advertising and personnel, and then make changes. What it certainly wouldn't do is open a competing store across the street.

Yet, that's just what Congress is about to do--all at your expense.