

www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/chi-1026vpletersbriefs4oct26,0,5500817.story

chicagotribune.com

Options for those in debt

October 26, 2009

Options for those in debt

As Tribune writer Kayce T. Ataiyero recently noted in her Oct. 2 column, consumer debt in America has reached epidemic proportions. In these times, Americans are in need of a variety of debt-relief options -- options they can afford, options that work and options provided by honest, ethical businesses guided by well-thought-out rules and regulations.

To help in this effort, the United States Organizations for Bankruptcy Alternatives has worked for years to develop, promote and enact rules and regulations in states across the country to both protect consumers in need of debt-relief services, while at the same time ensuring the viability of the businesses that provide those services. This year alone, more than 40 bills have been introduced at the state level toward these ends.

While these regulatory and legislative efforts are needed, there is a danger that proposed rules may go too far, as in the case of so-called "advanced fee bans" and other radical fee limits that effectively eliminate business owners from the marketplace. These harsh tactics may score political points with some, but they result in the loss of jobs and options for consumers in need, consumers who will ultimately be forced into bankruptcy without debt settlement as an option.

USOBA wants consumers and regulators alike to know that we, on behalf of our more than 200 members, strongly support regulation of the debt-settlement industry, including those efforts by both Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Illinois State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias.

We hope, however, that in their efforts to protect consumers, they will be mindful of the effects of over-regulation, and the needs of the honest, ethical small-business owners and their employees who work hard, day in and day out, to help debt-burdened consumers face and overcome their burdens.

-- John Ansbach, legislative director, United States Organizations for Bankruptcy



Alternatives, Houston

Copyright © 2009, [Chicago Tribune](#)