

APPLIANCE DOCTOR

New law to be at your service



JOE GAGNON

A week ago on a Wednesday around 11 a.m. the advisory and regulatory committee of our state government voted in favor of sending House Bill 6833 to the full house.

The sponsor of the bill, state Rep. Lyn Bankes, hopes to have the bill into law before the end of the year, and I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

After two public hearings and much testimony from the appliance service industry, we are now ready in the state of Michigan to have in effect laws to protect consumers from being ripped off by the few unethical service technicians who service your major home appliances. It has been a long time in the making.

In May 1986 there appeared in the Detroit News a front page story that quoted consumers and how they were ripped off by members of the service industry. This two-day story in the paper gave names of companies that were at fault and who had a terrible record with the Better Business Bureau. The whole story was a beauti-

ful piece of consumer education that was badly needed and I feel proud of playing a major role in that story. During this year of 1996 you haven't seen any stories written by our major papers about the appliance service industry except in the paper you are now reading.

In 1989, now retired state Rep. Perry Bullard introduced into committee a similar bill that never made it out of committee. I could never understand why, and I was never given an explanation.

This time around I have learned a great deal about how our government works and how the negative forces sitting in the sidelines care little about the average American. The National Federation of Independent Business opposes the bill along with the Michigan Retailers Association and for the life of me the same language was used at his last hearing that was used in 1989. Are these organizations so blind they can't realize what is good for the consumer, or are they supported by people who shouldn't even belong?

Major supporters of the bill are the Whirlpool Corp. and Sears, who know how important customer loyalty is. Along with them is the Maytag Co.,

whose service manager, Rich Robbins, involved himself to no small degree. Several key players in the service industry represented their companies with favorable comments and support. Murray Gula represented the home building industry along with a lobbyist from the Air Conditioning Association to testify as to why this law is needed in the state of Michigan.

Many years ago, I decided to make all of this my life's ambition before I would retire from the service industry. To the many readers who have helped me, I owe you a vote of thanks for your involvement. I would ask you to continue to write to your state representatives and ask for their support on your

behalf when this bill gets to the House and Senate.

In this era of less regulation as the opinion of our government, there has to be an exception for the sake of the Michigan consumer. Many of you homeowners have proven that you have been ripped off by some members of the appliance service industry. I'm sure you will all agree, it's that time in our history to put a stop to it and to write a short note to your government officials who have the final say-so. Here's hoping that this fall, they care enough about you to vote the bill into law.

Joe Gagnon, the Appliance Doctor, will answer your questions about maintaining and repairing large appliances.

Southfield antiques show slated

The Southfield Pavilion Antiques Exposition will take place 2-9 p.m. Friday, Sept. 27, noon to 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 28, and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 29, at the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen at 10-1/2 Mile.

Admission is \$5 with any of the event's ads or listings, \$6 regular, free for children age 12 or under. One paid admission is good for all three days of

the show.

A diverse selection of fine American, European and Oriental antiques and fine art will be featured.

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