

HB 2497 -- MERCHANDISING PRACTICES

SPONSOR: Lovasco

This bill establishes the "Goods Once Unleashed Guarantee Excellence (GOUGE) Act" which states that it is not an unfair trade practice for any person in connection with the advertisement or sale of merchandise to: charge a price higher than the standard market price in the area; charge an excessive price for necessity; or charge any person an excessive price for a necessity the seller knows is likely to be provided to consumers within a disaster area.

Missouri residents who pay on excessive charges resulting from necessity when a disaster or emergency has been proclaimed may seek reimbursement as provided in the bill.

Currently, when a disaster or emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor or there is a national emergency, the Director of the State Emergency Management Agency shall have the authority to expend funds in certain instances listed in the bill.

The bill adds the following to the list of approved expenditures: reimbursement to any Missouri resident who purchased necessities within a designated disaster area at an amount greater than the average market value. Only the amount in excess of market value shall be eligible for reimbursement, up to \$300 per applicant.