



Dear Senator Berger,

Thank you for the work that you do on behalf of North Carolinians. We recognize it is both a significant honor and responsibility to hold public office and we hold you and your work in prayer.

As you begin your 2015 legislative session we ask you to pay careful attention to and oppose any legislation that seeks to re-introduce payday lending, to introduce car title lending, or to increase the rates and fees on consumer finance loans. Currently, North Carolina stands proudly as a state that prohibits most predatory lending practices. We ask you to keep it that way.

High-cost loans are designed to entice and then entrap consumers in a cycle of debt. They do not offer helpful solutions. In fact, they take away wealth from our families, our communities and our state.

Independent research and data provided by payday and car-title companies show that borrowers are almost always trapped in debt at very high interest rates. Loan flipping is the norm and incredibly costly. Similarly, data from consumer finance companies shows that the majority of consumer finance company loans are renewals, made to people struggling to stay current on their loan. Making these loans even more expensive will only increase the troubles of borrowers who are barely staying afloat with their expensive loans.

We trust that as public servants your goal is to work for the common good of all North Carolinians. It is in the best interest of individuals, families, communities and the state as a whole to keep predatory lenders out of North Carolina. We ask you to protect the most financially vulnerable residents of our state by preserving our interest rate caps already in place, and not allowing usurious and exploitive loans. As people of faith we are adamant that these practices are completely unacceptable.

We pray that on this issue and all issues that come before this session of the General Assembly, you are guided by wisdom and compassion. May your work help North Carolina live into the words of *The Old North State* that sing, "Tho' too true to herself e'er to crouch to oppression, Who can yield to just rule a more loyal submission?"

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Edward Davis

Rev. Dr. Edward S. Davis, Conference Minister
Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ

Rev. Carla Gregg-Kearns, President
Southern Conference Board of Directors