

# Consumer Assembly 2009

## Challenges and Opportunities in a Year of Recession and Political Change

**T**he Consumer Federation of America's Consumer Assembly serves as the consumer movement's principal meeting where issues are debated and new initiatives are presented. Each year since 1967, several hundred consumer activists and representatives of cooperatives, other non-profits, business, government, and the press have participated in this annual conference.

Consumer Assembly 2009 will focus on consumer needs during a period of financial crisis, economic recession, and political change. General sessions will feature keynote speeches and debates. Concurrent panel discussions will include consumer leaders who define their 2009 issue priorities.

The conference will begin at 8:45 a.m. on Thursday, March 12 and will end at 12:15 p.m. on Friday, March 13. All those with an interest in consumer issues are invited to attend.

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH CONSUMER PRIORITIES

A new Administration takes office with more pro-consumer positions on many issues than the current Administration has supported. New leaders of Executive Branch agencies explain their consumer priorities.

### CONGRESSIONAL CONSUMER PRIORITIES

The 111th Congress will have consumer champions in key leadership positions. What are their consumer priorities and what are the prospects for their congressional approval?

### HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSUMER PRIORITIES FOR A NEW ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS

Health and safety leaders in the consumer movement explain their priorities for the new Administration and Congress. Among federal agencies, they will focus special attention on the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

### CONSUMERS, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Growing concern about global warming has driven significant changes in transportation and electricity policy, including tougher fuel economy standards and greater restrictions on building coal-fired power plants. A diverse panel will discuss these changes, their impacts on consumer energy costs, and remedies that protect both consumers and the environment.

### LESSENING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Most consumers with the least education and lowest incomes do not even have dial-up Internet access at home, let alone access to broadband. Experts will analyze this digital divide and discuss strategies for reducing it.

### PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONSUMER MOVEMENT

Academics and journalists will discuss the current status and effectiveness of the consumer movement and offer suggestions for increasing this effectiveness.

### CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND CONCERNS

In one session, survey researchers will provide recent data about the greatest concerns of consumers and what policy reforms they support. In another session, state and local consumer protection leaders will discuss consumer complaints related to the recession, such as foreclosure scams, failure to honor service contracts when stores go bankrupt, and sharp auto retail practices.

### CONSUMERS IN A RECESSION

Experts will discuss how the current recession is affecting consumers, especially the vulnerable, and the effectiveness of the "bailout" and proposed economic stimulus legislation in restoring economic growth and modernizing sectors including housing, electricity, and transportation.

### THE ROLE OF MEDICAL DEBT IN CONSUMER INSOLVENCIES

More than 29 million Americans have medical debt, and research has shown that these debts are a primary reason for household insolvencies and bankruptcies. Experts will discuss the extent of the problem and how it can be remedied.

### CONSUMER CONCERNS ABOUT INTERNET PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Survey research suggests that most consumers worry about the privacy and security of personal information they disclose on the Internet. At the same time, new developments such as online payday loans and online behavioral tracking and targeting pose new threats to privacy and security. Experts will discuss these concerns and their effective mitigation.

### THE BLOGOSPHERE AND CONSUMERS

Blogs proliferate and increasing numbers of Internet users participate in them. Experts will discuss the extent to which the blogosphere influences thinking about, and even public policy, on consumer issues.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

- Group 1:** Designated representatives of CFA member groups. **Fee: \$90.00**
- Group 2:** Government, academic, and non-CFA public interest groups. **Fee: \$110.00**
- Group 3:** Industry and trade association representatives. **Fee: \$300.00**

The registration fee includes all sessions, conference materials, and a luncheon and reception on Thursday, March 12.

- Yes, I will attend the CFA Thursday luncheon.
- No, I will not attend the CFA Thursday luncheon.

**Check here to order a vegetarian lunch** \_\_\_\_\_

Register online by using a credit card or check at [www.consumerfed.org](http://www.consumerfed.org) OR register by mail or fax:

**Consumer Federation of America**  
1620 I Street, NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20006  
202-387-6121 Fax: 202-265-7989

**Cancellation Policy:** There is no refund for day-of-conference “no-shows,” but substitutions may be made.

On-site registration will be available on Thursday, March 12th beginning at 8:00 a.m.

**Access services will be provided on request. Please notify CFA if these services are required.**

### HOTEL

The Embassy Suites Convention Center Hotel has rooms at the rate of \$279 plus tax on a first come basis. There is no reserved block and the rate is guaranteed only until February 9, 2009. Reservations should be made individually by calling 1-800-362-2779. Please identify yourself as a registrant of CFA’s Consumer Assembly Conference in order to receive this rate.

**Consumer Federation of America**  
1620 I Street, NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20006



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**March 12-13, 2009**

**Consumer  
Federation of  
America**

[www.consumerfed.org](http://www.consumerfed.org)

**Embassy Suites  
Convention Center Hotel  
900 10th Street, NW  
Washington, DC**