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Court Watch Issues Review of 2011 Supreme Court Decisions

May 31, 2012 – Court Watch today released its fifth annual report analyzing consumer-related decisions issued by the Supreme Court of Georgia. Court Watch is a project of Georgia Watch, a nonprofit and nonpartisan group committed to strengthening the rights of consumers. The 2011 Court Watch Report identifies and profiles the most noteworthy consumer-related appellate decisions released by the Supreme Court of Georgia throughout the previous calendar year, and identifies notable consumer wins and losses. [Click here to read the report.](#)

"In 2011, the Georgia judiciary wavered back and forth between expanding and constricting the protections afforded to Georgia consumers in today's turbulent marketplace. From an unsettling interpretation of the Fair Business Practices Act to bolstering consumer remedies in foreclosure actions, 2011 was a busy year," said 2011 Court Watch Fellow Matthew Massey.

Notable consumer cases discussed include:

- *City of Statesboro v. Dabbs*: A win for consumers in this Open Meetings Act case, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled in favor of government transparency, candor and accountability with this decision.
- *Novare Group, Inc. v. Sarif*: This decision recognizing the legal weight of written contracts versus sales representatives' words waters down the consumer protections afforded by the Georgia Fair Business Practices Act. The Georgia Supreme Court harshly reminded Georgia consumers, "Let the buyer beware."
- *JIG Real Estate, LLC v. Countrywide Home Loans, Inc* : Here, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled in favor of Georgia consumers facing possible home foreclosure—an issue of high relevance given the economic landscape of recent years.
- *Riggins v. Deutsche Bank Nat'l Trust Co*: This case serves as a stark warning to anyone who is an intended beneficiary in someone's will to immediately execute the will and establish proper legal ownership over the gift.

"Looking ahead to the 2012 docket, the Court will have several great opportunities to promote access to civil justice and develop sound legal precedent," said Daniel Orrock, Georgia Watch board member and chair of the Court Watch committee. "Georgia must do more to protect consumers' access to civil justice, because our courts are often the only means to redress for individual consumers harmed by their interactions with the marketplace."

Founded in 2002, Georgia Watch is a non-profit, nonpartisan 501-(c)(3) watchdog group focusing on consumer education and research in the areas of consumer energy, health care, insurance, identity theft and personal finance.