countersignature by an agent resident in that state on a policy of insurance written by a nonresident agent or nonresident broker of that state, then any policy of insurance written by an agent resident of that state [licensed] QUALIFIED as a nonresident agent in Maryland covering a subject of insurance resident, located or to be performed in Maryland shall be signed or countersigned in writing by an agent resident in Maryland. A policy of insurance may not be deemed invalid because of the absence of the required signature or countersignature. If the laws or regulations of another state require an agent resident in that state to retain a portion of the commission paid on a like policy of insurance written, countersigned or delivered by the agent in that state at the request of a nonresident agent or nonresident broker of that state, then the agent resident in Maryland who signed or countersigned a policy of insurance written by a resident of that state [licensed] QUALIFIED as a nonresident agent in Maryland covering a subject of insurance resident, located, or to be performed in Maryland shall retain an equal pro rata portion of any commission on the policy of insurance.

(2) Nothing in this section shall alter or modify the requirements of section 171 of this article.

(3) Only a [licensed] QUALIFIED agent who is a resident of Maryland and who is compensated by commissions on such policies, and who is not an employee or officer of the insurer, may be granted the power to sign or countersign policies or endorsements subject to the provisions of this section; provided, however, that no provision of this section shall be construed so as to prevent the delegation of signatory or countersigning duties, by the agent, to bona fide employees of such agent who are not employees of lending institutions nor to preclude the payment of commissions upon such policies to a corporation or partnership insurance agency or otherwise as the agent may direct.

166.

As used in this subtitle:

(a) An "agent" is a person [appointed by an insurer (1) to solicit applications for insurance or annuities or to negotiate insurance on its behalf; and (2) if authorized to do so by the insurer, to effectuate and countersign insurance contracts.] WHO FOR COMPENSATION IN ANY MANNER SOLICITS, PROCURES, OR NEGOTIATES INSURANCE CONTRACTS OR THE RENEWAL OR CONTINUANCE OF THE INSURANCE CONTRACTS ON THE BEHALF OF INSURERS. The term "agent" shall not include:

(1) Individuals employed and used by agents or insurers for the performance of clerical, stenographic and similar office duties;

(2) Any regular salaried officer or employee of an insurer rendering assistance to or on behalf of a [licensed]