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## VEHICLE RECORDS: AIR BAGS

### House Bill 4076 as introduced First Analysis (3-18-97)

**Sponsor: Rep. Terry London**  
**Committee: Transportation**

#### ***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

The Motor Vehicle Service and Repair Act requires body shops and other dealers in vehicle parts to maintain records and submit to spot inspections performed by the secretary of state and various law enforcement agencies. The act essentially provides for the creation of a "paper trail" for every used vehicle part, making it more difficult for vehicle theft rings to operate. The act currently requires a vehicle parts facility to keep records of each used and remanufactured "major component part" (defined under the Michigan Vehicle Code), including when and from whom it was purchased or acquired, a description of the part, what make and model of vehicle it came from, the vehicle identification number (or VIN), and the repair invoice number. However, when this list was last updated, in 1988, air bags were not yet widely available in motor vehicles. (When used in conjunction with safety belts, air bags help reduce serious injuries or deaths when an accident occurs by preventing a person from being projected into a hard object like the steering wheel or windshield.) The cost to replace a stolen air bag runs anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000, depending on the make and model of vehicle from which it is taken. Some people feel the theft of air bags could be dramatically reduced by treating them in a manner similar to other major component parts--specifically, by requiring body shops and vehicle repair facilities to keep records on them and subjecting these facilities to occasional inspections.

#### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend the Motor Vehicle Service and Repair Act to require a facility that repaired or replaced air bags in a motor vehicle to maintain a record of the purchase or sale of each used or reconditioned air bag purchased or acquired by the facility. The record would have to indicate when the air bag was bought or acquired, describe each one, include the identification number assigned to each one, and provide the name and address of the person to or from whom each one was purchased, acquired, or sold. The record of the sale, purchase, or acquisition of each air bag would have to be maintained in or attached to a police book as required by the Michigan Vehicle Code, and a facility's police

book and records relating to air bags would have to immediately be made available for inspection by the secretary of state and other law enforcement officials after a request for inspection was made. Such records would have to be kept by a facility for at least five years.

MCL 257.1318a

#### ***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no fiscal impact at the state or local level. (3-17-97)

#### ***ARGUMENTS:***

##### ***For:***

By requiring vehicle repair facilities to keep track of air bags in a parts book as they are required to do for other vehicle parts, and subjecting facilities to occasional inspections, the bill would help reduce the incidence of theft involving air bags. Air bags were not widely available back in 1988 when the act was last updated, but are commonly included as a standard feature on many vehicles today. They are also a fairly expensive part, and may cost several thousand dollars to replace when stolen. Including air bags under the Motor Vehicle Service and Repair Act would lower the incentive for someone to steal them for resale, and this in turn would help cut insurance costs for consumers. In addition, when expensive vehicle parts like air bags are frequently stolen, the reputation of all repair facilities suffers even if only a few are involved with handling hot parts; the bill would help prevent law-abiding facilities from being blamed for the fraudulent practices of a few.

##### ***POSITIONS:***

AAA Michigan supports the bill. (3-12-97)

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