

Act No. 697
Public Acts of 2002
Approved by the Governor
December 30, 2002
Filed with the Secretary of State
December 30, 2002
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 31, 2003

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
91ST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2002**

Introduced by Senator Bullard

ENROLLED SENATE BILL No. 1164

AN ACT to amend 1956 PA 218, entitled "An act to revise, consolidate, and classify the laws relating to the insurance and surety business; to regulate the incorporation or formation of domestic insurance and surety companies and associations and the admission of foreign and alien companies and associations; to provide their rights, powers, and immunities and to prescribe the conditions on which companies and associations organized, existing, or authorized under this act may exercise their powers; to provide the rights, powers, and immunities and to prescribe the conditions on which other persons, firms, corporations, associations, risk retention groups, and purchasing groups engaged in an insurance or surety business may exercise their powers; to provide for the imposition of a privilege fee on domestic insurance companies and associations and the state accident fund; to provide for the imposition of a tax on the business of foreign and alien companies and associations; to provide for the imposition of a tax on risk retention groups and purchasing groups; to provide for the imposition of a tax on the business of surplus line agents; to provide for the imposition of regulatory fees on certain insurers; to provide for assessment fees on certain health maintenance organizations; to modify tort liability arising out of certain accidents; to provide for limited actions with respect to that modified tort liability and to prescribe certain procedures for maintaining those actions; to require security for losses arising out of certain accidents; to provide for the continued availability and affordability of automobile insurance and homeowners insurance in this state and to facilitate the purchase of that insurance by all residents of this state at fair and reasonable rates; to provide for certain reporting with respect to insurance and with respect to certain claims against uninsured or self-insured persons; to prescribe duties for certain state departments and officers with respect to that reporting; to provide for certain assessments; to establish and continue certain state insurance funds; to modify and clarify the status, rights, powers, duties, and operations of the nonprofit malpractice insurance fund; to provide for the departmental supervision and regulation of the insurance and surety business within this state; to provide for regulation over worker's compensation self-insurers; to provide for the conservation, rehabilitation, or liquidation of unsound or insolvent insurers; to provide for the protection of policyholders, claimants, and creditors of unsound or insolvent insurers; to provide for associations of insurers to protect policyholders and claimants in the event of insurer insolvencies; to prescribe educational requirements for insurance agents and solicitors; to provide for the regulation of multiple employer welfare arrangements; to create an automobile theft prevention authority to reduce the number of automobile thefts in this state; to prescribe the powers and duties of the automobile theft prevention authority; to provide certain powers and duties upon certain officials, departments, and authorities of this state; to provide for an appropriation; to repeal acts and parts of acts; and to provide penalties for the violation of this act," by amending sections 3135 and 3163 (MCL 500.3135 and 500.3163), section 3135 as amended by 1995 PA 222.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Sec. 3135. (1) A person remains subject to tort liability for noneconomic loss caused by his or her ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle only if the injured person has suffered death, serious impairment of body function, or permanent serious disfigurement.

(2) For a cause of action for damages pursuant to subsection (1) filed on or after July 26, 1996, all of the following apply:

(a) The issues of whether an injured person has suffered serious impairment of body function or permanent serious disfigurement are questions of law for the court if the court finds either of the following:

(i) There is no factual dispute concerning the nature and extent of the person's injuries.

(ii) There is a factual dispute concerning the nature and extent of the person's injuries, but the dispute is not material to the determination as to whether the person has suffered a serious impairment of body function or permanent serious disfigurement. However, for a closed-head injury, a question of fact for the jury is created if a licensed allopathic or osteopathic physician who regularly diagnoses or treats closed-head injuries testifies under oath that there may be a serious neurological injury.

(b) Damages shall be assessed on the basis of comparative fault, except that damages shall not be assessed in favor of a party who is more than 50% at fault.

(c) Damages shall not be assessed in favor of a party who was operating his or her own vehicle at the time the injury occurred and did not have in effect for that motor vehicle the security required by section 3101 at the time the injury occurred.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, tort liability arising from the ownership, maintenance, or use within this state of a motor vehicle with respect to which the security required by section 3101 was in effect is abolished except as to:

(a) Intentionally caused harm to persons or property. Even though a person knows that harm to persons or property is substantially certain to be caused by his or her act or omission, the person does not cause or suffer that harm intentionally if he or she acts or refrains from acting for the purpose of averting injury to any person, including himself or herself, or for the purpose of averting damage to tangible property.

(b) Damages for noneconomic loss as provided and limited in subsections (1) and (2).

(c) Damages for allowable expenses, work loss, and survivor's loss as defined in sections 3107 to 3110 in excess of the daily, monthly, and 3-year limitations contained in those sections. The party liable for damages is entitled to an exemption reducing his or her liability by the amount of taxes that would have been payable on account of income the injured person would have received if he or she had not been injured.

(d) Damages for economic loss by a nonresident in excess of the personal protection insurance benefits provided under section 3163(4). Damages under this subdivision are not recoverable to the extent that benefits covering the same loss are available from other sources, regardless of the nature or number of benefit sources available and regardless of the nature or form of the benefits.

(e) Damages up to \$500.00 to motor vehicles, to the extent that the damages are not covered by insurance. An action for damages pursuant to this subdivision shall be conducted in compliance with subsection (4).

(4) In an action for damages pursuant to subsection (3)(e):

(a) Damages shall be assessed on the basis of comparative fault, except that damages shall not be assessed in favor of a party who is more than 50% at fault.

(b) Liability shall not be a component of residual liability, as prescribed in section 3131, for which maintenance of security is required by this act.

(5) Actions under subsection (3)(e) shall be commenced, whenever legally possible, in the small claims division of the district court or the municipal court. If the defendant or plaintiff removes the action to a higher court and does not prevail, the judge may assess costs.

(6) A decision of a court made pursuant to subsection (3)(e) is not res judicata in any proceeding to determine any other liability arising from the same circumstances as gave rise to the action brought pursuant to subsection (3)(e).

(7) As used in this section, "serious impairment of body function" means an objectively manifested impairment of an important body function that affects the person's general ability to lead his or her normal life.

Sec. 3163. (1) An insurer authorized to transact automobile liability insurance and personal and property protection insurance in this state shall file and maintain a written certification that any accidental bodily injury or property damage occurring in this state arising from the ownership, operation, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle as a motor vehicle by an out-of-state resident who is insured under its automobile liability insurance policies, is subject to the personal and property protection insurance system under this act.

(2) A nonadmitted insurer may voluntarily file the certification described in subsection (1).

(3) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (4), if a certification filed under subsection (1) or (2) applies to accidental bodily injury or property damage, the insurer and its insureds with respect to that injury or damage have the rights and immunities under this act for personal and property protection insureds, and claimants have the rights and benefits of personal and property protection insurance claimants, including the right to receive benefits from the electing insurer as if it were an insurer of personal and property protection insurance applicable to the accidental bodily injury or property damage.

(4) If an insurer of an out-of-state resident is required to provide benefits under subsections (1) to (3) to that out-of-state resident for accidental bodily injury for an accident in which the out-of-state resident was not an occupant of a motor vehicle registered in this state, the insurer is only liable for the amount of ultimate loss sustained up to \$500,000.00. Benefits under this subsection are not recoverable to the extent that benefits covering the same loss are available from other sources, regardless of the nature or number of benefit sources available and regardless of the nature or form of the benefits.

Enacting section 1. This amendatory act applies to motor vehicle accidents that occur on or after January 1, 2003.

Carol Morey Viventi

Secretary of the Senate.

Sam E. Randall

Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Approved _____

Governor.