

March 11, 2024

Hon. Sara Coffey and Members of the Committee
Committee on Transportation
Vermont House of Representatives

RE: S. 309 – Counterfeit Airbags

Dear Chair Coffey and Members of the Committee:

The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) is a national, century-old, not-for-profit organization supported by approximately 1,200 property and casualty insurance companies, including many who write business in Vermont. Working hand-in-hand with our member-companies and Vermont law enforcement, we help to detect, prevent, and deter insurance crimes.

Counterfeit airbags are a national and growing concern. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has warned consumers that counterfeit airbags have been shown to consistently malfunction, from non-deployment to the expulsion of metal shrapnel during deployment. Vehicle safety equipment as important as airbags are subject to strict quality control standards to keep the public safe. Counterfeiters are much more likely to skirt these standards which can lead to disastrous consequences.

Counterfeit airbags are procured in many different ways, from consumers unwittingly purchasing them online to unscrupulous body shops purposely installing counterfeits while billing consumers and insurers for genuine, original bags. No matter how counterfeit airbags are obtained and installed in the vehicles of unsuspecting motorists, the results can be deadly.

Accordingly, we support S. 309 which expands current Vermont criminal statutes to penalize those who knowingly import, manufacture, or sell a counterfeit or nonfunctioning airbag. The legislation also better defines the term of airbag.

We thank you for scheduling a hearing and for considering our views as you deliberate the merits of the bill. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at hhandler@nicb.org or 847-544-7083.

Sincerely,



Howard Handler, MPPA
Senior Director
Office of Strategy, Policy, and Government Affairs
National Insurance Crime Bureau