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To: New Jersey State Senate

Re: YES on S-2174

The New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience, Automotive Association (NJGCA) and the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers NJ (AASP/NJ) hope that you will vote YES on S-2174, a bill which "prohibits the manufacture, sale, or installation of counterfeit or nonfunctional air bags in motor vehicles". NJGCA and AASP represent thousands of independent auto repair and body shops. These are some of New Jersey's quintessential small businesses, and they will benefit from the passage of this legislation.

The sale of counterfeit airbags has been a growing problem throughout the country. Modern airbags, designed to be accurate to the millisecond, are extremely costly to replace; often as much as \$1,000 each. In response, illicit and immoral individuals in foreign countries have begun manufacturing airbags which look remarkably similar to the real thing, but cost a fraction (as little as \$50) of what legitimate airbags retail for. The catch, of course, is that these airbags are totally ineffective.

Some repairers will attempt to cut costs by purchasing counterfeit airbags with the hope that they will never need to be deployed. They then bill the vehicle owner's insurance company for the cost of a real airbag and pocket the difference. When they do, it is not only the customer who has been cheated, not only the insurance company who has been cheated, it is also every other honest auto repairer who has been cheated.

It is important to note that we consider our members to be extremely honest and reputable. Unfortunately, there are the few unscrupulous shop owners who are not honest or reputable and leave a stain on the industry. We are compelled to be the voice of those who are honest and hardworking.

The extra money these disreputable individuals earn from this scam gives them an unfair competitive advantage they will often use to undermine their honest competition. It is for this reason that NJGCA and AASP/NJ have both had a long standing zero tolerance policy of turning in any business that violates the law, even in the rare instance that the business is a member of the association. The choice between sticking up for an honest business and a dishonest one is hardly a choice at all; and it is in that spirit that we ask you to support this bill.

Those that sell counterfeit airbags are a stain on a proud and critical industry, one dominated by honest and hardworking small business owners. With the passage of this bill, the state government will have another tool in its toolbox to help erase that stain, and provide greater safety for the public and fairness for businesses.

Sincerely,



Sal Risalvato
Executive Director
NJGCA



Charles Bryant
Executive Director
AASP/NJ