

Members of the Texas Legislature
1100 North Congress
Austin, Texas 78701

To the Members of the Texas House and Texas Senate:

My name is Steve Late. I am a third generation auto-dealer with roots in west Texas. Our family started selling cars at Mustang Chevrolet in San Angelo in 1937. We founded Broncho Chevrolet in Odessa 1954, and Broncho BMW of Odessa in 1986. Today, I am President of BMW of Austin, and owner of Bentley of Austin, Rolls Royce Motor Cars Austin, and Aston Martin of Austin.

I am writing today to respectfully ask you to oppose Senate Bill 1628 and House Bill 3646. These bills would put our family's businesses at risk, by making it harder for companies like ours to recover from insurance companies when our inventory is damaged by storms – particularly hail storms.

Hailstorms pose a unique risk to auto dealers. When our unsold inventory is damaged by hail, our business suffers immediate and sometimes severe financial harm. We rely on our insurance company to cover those potential losses and make us whole after a storm. By potentially making it harder to enforce requirements that insurers handle claims fairly and pay them promptly, this proposed legislation would make it harder for insureds to recover our losses.

Additionally, the bills could expose policyholders to criminal penalties for submitting a claim deemed to contain so-called false information as to the scope of damage or the cost of repairs. The problem, however, is that the scope of damage and the cost of repairs is precisely the matter likely to be in dispute between a policyholder and an insurance company. To criminalize the efforts of a business like mine to recover every dollar we are owed under our policy would have a chilling effect on Texas's business environment. And why should a business owner be subject to a potential criminal penalty when the insurance adjuster does not face the same risk of criminal exposure?

For all of these reasons, I request that you oppose Senate Bill 1628 and House Bill 2646.

Respectfully,

Steve Late
Austin, Texas

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Late". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "Steve Late".