

The Honorable Joe Straus
Speaker
Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

via facsimile to 512-463-0675

Dear Speaker Straus,

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 Bronco Chevrolet in Odessa 1954, and Bronco 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 stop Senate Bill 1628. This bill would put our family 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 making it virtually impossible 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 bill could criminalize the efforts of a business like mine to recover every dollar we are owed under our policy. And we could even face criminal charges on the basis of repair estimates we provide to our own customers.

Exposing auto dealers to criminal charges would have a chilling effect on Texas's business environment. For all of these reasons, I request that you oppose Senate Bill 1628.

Respectfully,

Steve Late
Austin, Texas

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Late". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" and "L".