

SUBJECT: Adding auto burglary to Automobile Theft Prevention Authority duties

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Krusee, Phillips, Hamric, Callegari, Hill

0 nays

4 absent — Casteel, Deshotel, Flores, West

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 10 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: No public hearing

BACKGROUND: The Texas Legislature established the Automobile Theft Prevention Authority in 1991. The authority provides financial support to local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, and community and business groups for auto theft prevention programs and aids consumers in preventing auto theft. The authority is funded through a \$1 fee levied on the total number of motor vehicle years of insurance for an insurer's policies.

DIGEST: SB 1874 would change the name of the authority to the Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority and require it to include in its plan of operation an assessment of the scope of the problems associated with vehicular burglary, an analysis of methods for combating vehicular burglary, and a plan for providing financial support to combat vehicular burglary. The bill would require the authority to use its funds to conduct educational programs designed to teach automobile owners how to prevent vehicular burglary and to provide experimental equipment to help automobile owners prevent vehicular burglary.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2005.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Burglary of vehicles has increased dramatically in Texas in the past decade and especially is a serious problem in urban areas. Offenders are rarely caught but even when they are, they frequently receive lighter sentences than authorized by law.

There is no single entity that has the mandate or the resources to find ways to reduce the high rate of vehicular burglary in Texas. By adding the prevention of vehicular burglary to the mission of the Automobile Theft Prevention Authority, SB 1874 would create such an entity without increasing costs to the state.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.