

HCS HBs 971, 293 & 978 -- OFFENSE OF UNLAWFUL TRACKING OF A MOTOR VEHICLE

SPONSOR: Williams

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Transportation by a vote of 16 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 8 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 971.

This bill establishes the offense of unlawful tracking of a motor vehicle, which a person commits if the person knowingly installs, conceals, or otherwise places an electronic tracking device on a motor vehicle without the consent of all owners of the vehicle.

There are several exceptions to the offense, as described in the bill, including, but not limited to, for the purposes of a criminal investigation, for participation in voluntary insurance programs, at the discretion of a parent or legal guardian, or if the vehicle is being repossessed.

The offense of unlawful tracking of a motor vehicle is a class B misdemeanor.

This bill is similar to HB 293 (2025) and HB 1570 (2024).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this is a tool for law enforcement. Stalkers, scorned partners, ex-partners, and other dangerous individuals can track vehicles. Tracking devices have become cheap and compact, increasing the risk of unwanted tracking. Multiple incidents have occurred where tracking of vehicles preceded violent crimes. Instituting a criminal provision related to unlawful tracking will aid law enforcement. It is important that all drivers consent to the tracking, as abusive partners are a primary target of the bill.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Williams; Arnie Dienoff.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say an exception is necessary for certain insurance programs to continue to function smoothly. The insurance programs are all voluntary. Drivers' habits are monitored for behaviors such as hard stops and turns. Safe drivers benefit from reduced insurance premiums.

Testifying in person on the bill was Missouri Insurance Coalition.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.