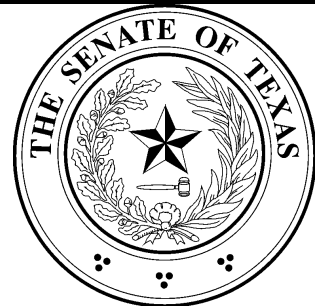


SENATOR
JOHN WHITMIRE
DISTRICT 15
NEWS RELEASE



February 22, 2007

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Whitmire Gets Tough on Auto Burglary

AUSTIN, Texas-- State Senator John Whitmire (D-Houston) filed Senate Bill 807 aimed to combat the incidence of auto burglary. "I am committed to preventing auto burglary. Increased law enforcement coupled with prevention and harsher punishment can reduce the instances of auto burglaries," said Whitmire.

Although offenders can serve up to one year in county jail, due to plea bargaining they usually receive only a 90 day term of confinement for auto burglary. Under S.B. 807, offenders will be required to serve a minimum term of six months in county jail or one year probation on their second offense. This will ensure repeat offenders receive a sanction comparable to the seriousness of their continued behavior. After the third offense for burglary of a motor vehicle, the punishment will be enhanced to a state jail felony.

Senate Bill 807 will also strengthen the renamed Texas Auto Theft and Burglary Prevention Authority. Currently, the Authority is funded by a \$1 fee attached to the renewal of automobile insurance. The Authority also receives state funding to fight auto theft. The bill, as proposed, provides additional financial support to safeguard against auto burglary or theft. It will also include an approach to study the problem areas within the state and mandate a plan of action to address those problems related to automobile burglary and theft. Senate Bill 807 will also provide financial support to combat auto burglary and theft. Educational programs will also be established to help educate automobile owners on preventing auto burglary and theft. "Prevention is a key element in decreasing the number of automobile burglary and theft incidents in this State. We must educate the public that the risk of auto burglary increases when you leave valuables in the car."

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