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FOR RELEASE ON RECEIPT

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Anti-consumer Auto Repair Bill Deserves a “NO” vote



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Anti-consumer Auto Repair Bill Deserves a “NO” vote *Consumer Education Campaign Launched to Oppose Legislation*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Californians are being urged to demand that their legislators vote against legislation that would deprive accident victims of making informed choices about getting their vehicles repaired.

The bill – which could end up costing policyholders more money – is SB 1167 by Senator Patricia Wiggins (D-Santa Rosa), and it is scheduled to be heard Wednesday, April 2, 2008, before the Senate Banking, Insurance and Finance Committee.

Current law guarantees California consumers the right to decide where their cars are fixed after an accident. SB 1167 would permit some auto repair shops to steer customers to their shops by limiting the information available to claimants.

Insurers have created a Web site – www.caautobodychoice.com – that allows Californians to directly contact their legislators on this issue.

“Visitors to the site can communicate to the members of the Senate Banking, Finance and Insurance Committee to register their concerns about this anti-consumer effort,” said Sam Sorich, president of the Association of California Insurance Companies.

“This is a special interest bill for auto body shops that are afraid of informed consumer choice,” said Rex Frazier, president of the Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC). “Why are auto body shops afraid to let consumers know which shops provide a better guarantee of repairing work? Consumers should be able to choose any body shop they want following a crash and they also deserve to know whether or not a particular body shop will stand by its work.”

The media campaign also includes radio ads reaching out to listeners to inform them of the auto body shop’s effort to keep them from getting key information to make the most informed decision as to where to get their car repaired.

“Consumers deserve the right to have all information about repair options, including facilities with a proven track record of quality repairs, warranties and a hassle-free claims process,” said Janine Gibford, AIA assistant vice president. “Consumers should not be denied information because some auto body shops are afraid of competition and think that full disclosure will cost them business.”

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The Association of California Insurance Companies (ACIC) is an affiliate of the Property Casualty Insurers Association of America (PCI) and represents more than 300 property/casualty insurance companies doing business in California. ACIC member companies write 41.8 percent of the property/casualty insurance in California, including 57.3 percent of personal auto insurance, 45.7 percent of commercial automobile insurance, 40 percent of homeowners insurance, 32.5 percent of business insurance and 43.4 percent of the private workers compensation insurance. PCI is composed of more than 1,000 member companies, representing the broadest cross-section of insurers of any national trade association.

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