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Lee M. Zeldin

Zeldin and Dinowitz Work Together to Protect Consumers Against Counterfeit Airbags

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ZELDIN AND DINOWITZ WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT CONSUMERS AGAINST COUNTERFEIT AIRBAGS

ALBANY- Chairman of the Senate Consumer Protection Committee, Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley), and Chairman of the Assembly Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx), today announced that their legislation, the Counterfeit Airbag Prevention Act (S. 5037-B/A.6378-B), was signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The law, which goes into effect in November, aims to protect unsuspecting consumers from the installation of potentially fatal counterfeit airbags.

“Because airbag systems are highly-sophisticated mechanisms, intricately coordinated to provide a lifesaving function, it is critical that any replacement airbags deploy to the exact same specifications as the original,” said Senator Zeldin. “Many consumers would be surprised to learn that only 7/1000s of a second can mean the difference between life and death.”

“Airbags save lives, it’s as simple as that,” said Assemblyman Dinowitz. “Consumers need to know when they buy a vehicle or a replacement airbag that it will function when it is

needed, these counterfeit airbags are made to look and function like a real airbag but they do not, and the difference can be fatal. This law will keep New York drivers safe and will provide the necessary tools to go after those who install these counterfeit products.”

The Counterfeit Airbag Prevention Act makes it unlawful to knowingly traffic in or install a counterfeit or nonfunctional airbag and it provides the Attorney General with the necessary powers to address any large scheme to do so.

The United States became aware of the growing issue of counterfeit automobile parts in 2010, when U.S. Customs intercepted over 300 counterfeit airbags manufactured at Guangzhou Global Auto Parts, bearing the logos of Honda, BMW, Lexus, and Audi.

While Federal officials have ramped up their efforts to prevent counterfeit airbags from entering the United States, the practice has become so pervasive that counterfeit airbags bearing manufacturers’ logos can be easily purchased wholesale online through mainstream websites like Amazon and eBay.

In the most abusive cases, counterfeit airbags are purchased at a discounted rate, while consumers and insurance companies are charged the full cost of the manufacturer’s airbag allowing dishonest shop owners to pocket the difference. In 2011, an independent think tank, Frost and Sullivan, estimated that automobile suppliers lost \$45 billion world-wide to counterfeiting.

“Engaging in such practices demonstrates a blatant disregard for the safety of consumers. The signing of this bill into law sends a clear message to those choosing to do business in this manner—New Yorkers will not tolerate the jeopardizing of consumer safety for a profit,” said Senator Zeldin who concluded by thanking all of those who played a role in getting this legislation passed.

“I greatly appreciate the efforts made by those who worked tirelessly to raise awareness for this issue and I thank my colleagues in both the Senate and the Assembly, especially Assemblyman Dinowitz, who recognized the importance of this legislation.”

“With driving being dangerous enough already, this law will help to ensure that when drivers find themselves in the unfortunate situation of getting into an accident, their vehicle’s most important safety features are fully operational,” said Assemblyman Dinowitz. “I am pleased to see this important legislation become law and I thank Senator Zeldin and those who were instrumental in the process.”

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