

# Senator John Loudon Advances Motorist Safety Legislation

---

## *Timely Amendment Makes Airbag Tampering A Felony Offense*

---

JEFFERSON CITY – Senator John Loudon, R-Ballwin, advanced a potentially life-saving amendment to a Senate transportation bill earning initial approval this week.

Meant to bring Missouri law up to speed with today's motor vehicle safety and design standards, Senate Bill 710 requires the use of booster seats for children riding in the front seats of cars. Loudon's successful amendment makes the removal or disabling of an airbag without the vehicle owner's knowledge a felony offense.

Increasingly prevalent in the 1970s and 80s and nearly standard issue by the 1990s, airbags have long proven helpful in preventing injury and death. Effective, the systems are also expensive, running into the thousands of dollars on newer vehicles with multiple airbags. Incredibly, airbags are being stolen from parked cars – and even from cars in repair shops – for use in cars involved in accidents setting off the one-time use systems.

“It seems inconceivable that someone could leave crumpled-up newspapers in place of an airbag, but that's what is happening with increasingly growing frequency,” Loudon said. “You wouldn't think it needs to be said, but people's safety should never be trumped by the desire to turn an ill-gotten profit.”

Loudon's measure and the primary legislation it is attached to need only a second passing Senate vote to move the bill to the House for similar deliberations. House passage sends the motor vehicle safety measures to the governor's desk.

“I draw little distinction between removing a seatbelt, a bumper or a brake line and tampering with an airbag,” Loudon said. “My legislation serves as a strong deterrent to those

who would consider taking such an ill-conceived action; and imposes a stiff penalty on the willfully reckless few who choose to follow through on the incredibly dangerous act.”