

The House Committee on Motor Vehicles offers the following substitute to HB 1072:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 22 of Chapter 1 of Title 10 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to motor vehicle franchise practices, so as to provide legislative findings; to provide
3 definitions; to clarify provisions relating to voluntary releases entered into by a dealer; to
4 prohibit a franchisor from assessing a surcharge against a dealer for warranty repairs; to
5 require a franchisor to pay a dealer terminated as a result of a bankruptcy or industry
6 reorganization the fair market value of the terminated franchise as of the notice of
7 termination or 12 months prior, whichever is greater; to clarify franchisor termination
8 assistance requirements with regard to repurchase of new vehicles acquired by a dealer; to
9 require a franchisor to reimburse a dealer terminated as a result of a bankruptcy or industry
10 reorganization for upgrades or renovations to dealership facilities performed within two years
11 of bankruptcy or reorganization; to prohibit a franchisor from demanding exclusive facilities,
12 personnel, or showrooms if the imposition of such requirements is unreasonable in light of
13 economic conditions; to prohibit a franchisor from conditioning a franchise agreement or
14 renewal of a franchise agreement or participation in franchisor programs and incentives on
15 the relocation or exclusivity of a dealership facility; to prohibit a franchisor from
16 conditioning franchise agreements or renewals of franchise agreements, addition of line
17 makes, approval of relocation, sale or transfer on dealer's or prospective dealer's willingness
18 to enter into a site control agreement; to clarify existing law to prohibit a franchise from
19 charging back dealers for transactions that took place more than 12 months prior to an audit,
20 investigation, or independent inquiry of the franchisor; to prohibit a franchisor from charging
21 back, withholding payment, or denying vehicles to a dealer based on exportation by customer
22 unless franchisor can demonstrate that dealer had knowledge that customer intended to
23 export new vehicle; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
24 purposes.

SECTION 1.

25
26 WHEREAS, the General Assembly desires to reaffirm the legislative findings and
27 declarations set forth in Code Section 10-1-621 and to make changes to the Georgia Motor

H. B. 1072 (SUB)

28 Vehicle Franchise Practices Act in an effort to promote the stability of franchised motor
 29 vehicle dealerships in this state, thereby maintaining necessary reliable services to the
 30 consuming public, maintaining full and fair competition among dealers in the public interest,
 31 and providing continued employment to the citizens of this state,

32 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

33 **SECTION 2.**

34 Article 22 of Chapter 1 of Title 10 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
 35 motor vehicle franchise practices, is amended in Code Section 10-1-622, relating to
 36 definitions pertaining to the Georgia Motor Vehicle Franchise Practices Act, by adding a new
 37 paragraph as follows:

38 "(8.1) 'Line-make' is a collection of models, series, or groups of motor vehicles
 39 manufactured by or for a particular manufacturer, distributor, or importer that are offered
 40 for sale, lease, or distribution pursuant to a common brand name or mark; provided,
 41 however:

42 (A) Multiple brand names or marks may constitute a single line-make, but only when
 43 included in a common dealer agreement and the manufacturer, distributor, or importer
 44 offers such vehicles bearing the multiple names or marks together only, and not
 45 separately, to its authorized dealers; and

46 (B) Motor vehicles bearing a common brand name or mark may constitute separate
 47 line-makes when pertaining to motor vehicles subject to separate dealer agreements or
 48 when such vehicles are intended for different types of use."

49 **SECTION 3.**

50 Said article is further amended in Code Section 10-1-623, relating to actions for violations
 51 of the Georgia Motor Vehicle Franchise Practices Act, by revising subsection (d) as follows:

52 "(d) This Code section shall not prevent a dealer from voluntarily entering into a valid
 53 release agreement when separate and adequate consideration is offered and accepted to
 54 resolve a specific claim, dispute, or action between the franchisor and the dealer."

55 **SECTION 4.**

56 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 10-1-627, relating to waivers, as
 57 follows:

58 "10-1-627.

59 No franchisor, nor any agent nor employee of a franchisor, shall use a written instrument,
 60 agreement, or waiver to attempt to nullify any of the provisions of this article and any such

61 agreement, written instrument, or waiver shall be null and void. This Code section shall
 62 not prevent a dealer from voluntarily entering into a valid release agreement when separate
 63 and adequate consideration is offered and accepted to resolve a specific claim, dispute, or
 64 action between the franchisor and the dealer."

65 **SECTION 5.**

66 Said article is further amended in Code Section 10-1-641, relating to warranty and recall
 67 work obligations of franchisors, by revising subsection (b) and by adding a new subsection
 68 as follows:

69 "(b) Manufacturers and distributors shall include in written notices of factory recalls to
 70 new motor vehicle owners and dealers the expected date by which necessary parts and
 71 equipment will be available to dealers for the correction of such defects. Manufacturers
 72 and distributors shall compensate any dealers in this state for repairs ~~effected~~ affected by
 73 all recalls."

74 "(d) A manufacturer or distributor shall not otherwise recover its costs from dealers within
 75 this state, including an increase in the wholesale price of a vehicle or surcharge imposed
 76 on a dealer solely intended to recover the cost of reimbursing the dealer for parts and labor
 77 pursuant to this Code section, provided that a manufacturer or distributor shall not be
 78 prohibited from increasing prices for vehicles or parts in the normal course of business."

79 **SECTION 6.**

80 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 10-1-651, relating to termination
 81 of a motor vehicle franchise, as follows:

82 "10-1-651.

83 (a) Notwithstanding the terms, provisions, or conditions of any franchise and
 84 notwithstanding the terms or provisions of any waiver, no franchisor shall cancel,
 85 terminate, or fail to renew any franchise with a dealer unless the franchisor:

86 (1) Has satisfied the notice requirement of subsection (e) of this Code section; and

87 (2) Has good cause for cancellation, termination, or nonrenewal.

88 (b) Notwithstanding the terms, provisions, or conditions of any franchise or the terms or
 89 provisions of any waiver, good cause shall exist for the purposes of a termination,
 90 cancellation, or nonrenewal when there is a failure by the dealer to comply with a provision
 91 of the franchise which is both reasonable and of material significance to the franchise
 92 relationship, provided the dealer has been notified in writing of the failure within 180 days
 93 after the franchisor first acquired knowledge of such failure or after the dealer is given a
 94 reasonable opportunity to correct such failure for a period of not less than 180 days.

95 (c) If the failure by the dealer, as defined in subsection (b) of this Code section, relates to
 96 the performance of the dealer in sales or service, then good cause shall be defined as the
 97 failure of the dealer to comply with reasonable performance criteria established by the
 98 franchisor if: in light of existing circumstances, including but not limited to current and
 99 forecasted economic conditions, provided the following conditions are satisfied:

100 (1) The dealer was notified by the franchisor in writing of such failure;

101 (2) Said notification stated that notice was provided of failure of performance pursuant
 102 to this Code section; and

103 (3) The dealer was afforded a reasonable opportunity, for a period of not less than six
 104 months, to comply with such criteria.

105 (d) The franchisor shall have the burden of proof under this Code section.

106 (e)(1) Notwithstanding franchise terms to the contrary, prior to the termination,
 107 cancellation, or nonrenewal of any franchise, the franchisor shall furnish notification, as
 108 provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, of such termination, cancellation, or
 109 nonrenewal to the dealer as follows:

110 (A) Not less than 90 days prior to the effective date of such termination, cancellation,
 111 or nonrenewal;

112 (B) Not less than 15 days prior to the effective date of such termination, cancellation,
 113 or nonrenewal with respect to any of the following:

114 (i) Insolvency of the dealer, or filing of any petition by or against the dealer under
 115 any bankruptcy or receivership law;

116 (ii) Failure of the dealer to conduct its customary sales and service operations during
 117 its customary business hours for seven consecutive business days, except for acts of
 118 God or circumstances beyond the direct control of the dealer;

119 (iii) Conviction of the dealer, general manager, or managing executive or any owner
 120 with a substantial interest therein of any crime which materially relates to the
 121 operation of the dealership or any felony which is punishable by imprisonment;

122 (iv) Suspension for a period of more than 14 days or revocation of any license which
 123 the dealer is required to have to operate a dealership; or

124 (v) Fraud or intentional misrepresentation by the dealer which materially affects the
 125 franchise, provided the franchisor gives notice within one year of the time when the
 126 fraud or misrepresentation occurred or was discovered, whichever is later; or

127 (C) Not less than 180 days prior to the effective date of such termination or
 128 cancellation where the franchisor is discontinuing the sale of the product line.

129 (2) Notification under this Code section shall be in writing and shall be by certified mail
 130 or statutory overnight delivery or personally delivered to the dealer and shall contain:

131 (A) A statement of intention to terminate, cancel, or not to renew the franchise;

132 (B) A statement of the reasons for the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal; and
 133 (C) The date on which such termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal is to take effect.

134 (f)(1)(A) Upon the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal of any franchise by the
 135 franchisor, the franchisor shall repurchase from the dealer any new and ~~unused~~
 136 undamaged motor vehicles of the current and one year prior model year ~~and any new~~
 137 ~~and unused motor vehicles~~ acquired by the dealer within 12 months of the date of
 138 termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal so long as such motor vehicles have been
 139 acquired from the franchisor or from another dealer of the franchisor same line make
 140 in the ordinary course of business prior to receipt of the notice of termination,
 141 cancellation, or nonrenewal and so long as such motor vehicles have not been altered,
 142 damaged, or materially changed while in the dealer's possession. Any new and unused
 143 motor vehicle repurchased by the franchisor shall be repurchased at the net cost to the
 144 dealer. For purposes of this subparagraph, a motor vehicle shall be considered new and
 145 unused if it has less than 500 miles on the odometer and has not been issued a
 146 certificate of title.

147 (B) In addition to the motor vehicles repurchased under subparagraph (A) of this
 148 paragraph, the franchisor shall repurchase ~~demonstration motor vehicles of the current~~
 149 ~~model year and~~ demonstration motor vehicles acquired by the dealer within 12 months
 150 of the date of termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal so long as such motor vehicles
 151 have been acquired from the franchisor or from another dealer of the franchisor prior
 152 to receipt of the notice of termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal and so long as such
 153 motor vehicles have not been altered, damaged, or materially changed and so long as
 154 such motor vehicles do not have more than 6,000 miles each on their odometers. Any
 155 such demonstration motor vehicle shall be repurchased at the net cost to the dealer less
 156 an allowance for use equal to the net cost to the dealer times the current mileage
 157 divided by 100,000. The franchisor shall repurchase a number of demonstration motor
 158 vehicles equal to 10 percent of the number of motor vehicles repurchased under
 159 subparagraph (A) of this paragraph; however, in no event shall the number of
 160 demonstration motor vehicles which the franchisor is required to repurchase ever be
 161 less than two or more than 15 motor vehicles.

162 (C) For purposes of this paragraph, a motor vehicle shall not be deemed to have been
 163 altered, damaged, or materially changed if it has been provided with original equipment
 164 or with nonoriginal equipment which does not alter, damage, or materially change the
 165 motor vehicle, such as undercoating, pinstriping, interior conditioning, or paint sealant.

166 (2) Upon the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal of any franchise by the dealer, the
 167 franchisor shall repurchase from the dealer any new and ~~unused~~ undamaged motor
 168 vehicles, except motorcycles as defined in paragraph (29) of Code Section 40-1-1 and

169 except motor homes as defined in paragraph (31) of Code Section 40-1-1 and except
170 school buses as defined in paragraph (55) of Code Section 40-1-1, ~~of the current model~~
171 year acquired by the dealer within 12 months prior to the effective date of the termination
172 so long as such motor vehicles have been acquired from the franchisor or from another
173 dealer of the franchisor of the same line-make and in the normal course of business and
174 so long as such motor vehicles have not been altered, damaged, or materially changed
175 while in the dealer's possession. Any new and unused motor vehicle repurchased by the
176 franchisor shall be repurchased at the net cost to the dealer. For purposes of this
177 paragraph, a motor vehicle shall be considered new and unused if it has less than 500
178 miles on the odometer and has not been issued a certificate of title. For purposes of this
179 paragraph, a motor vehicle shall not be deemed to have been altered, damaged, or
180 materially changed if it has been provided with original equipment or with nonoriginal
181 equipment which does not alter, damage, or materially change the motor vehicle, such as
182 undercoating, pinstriping, interior conditioning, or paint sealant.

183 (3)(A) Upon the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal of any franchise by the
184 franchisor or upon the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal of any franchise by the
185 franchisee, the franchisor shall repurchase, at fair and reasonable compensation, from
186 the dealer the following:

187 (i) Any unused, undamaged, and unsold parts which have been acquired from the
188 franchisor, provided such parts are currently offered for sale by the franchisor in its
189 current parts catalog and are in salable condition. Such parts shall be repurchased by
190 the franchisor at the current catalog price, less any applicable discount;

191 (ii) Any supplies, equipment, and furnishings, including manufacturer or line-make
192 signs, purchased from the franchisor or its approved source within three years of the
193 date of termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal; and

194 (iii) Any special tools purchased from the franchisor within three years of the date
195 of termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal or any special tools or other equipment
196 which the franchisor required the dealer to purchase regardless of the time purchased.

197 (B) Except as provided in division (i) of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, fair and
198 reasonable compensation shall be the net acquisition price if the item was acquired in
199 the 12 months preceding the effective date of the termination, cancellation, or
200 nonrenewal; 75 percent of the net acquisition price if the item was acquired between 13
201 and 24 months preceding the effective date of the termination, cancellation, or
202 nonrenewal; 50 percent of the net acquisition price if the item was acquired between 25
203 and 36 months preceding the effective date of the termination, cancellation, or
204 nonrenewal; 25 percent of the net acquisition price if the item was acquired between 37
205 and 60 months preceding the effective date of the termination, cancellation, or

206 nonrenewal; or fair market value if the item was acquired more than 60 months
207 preceding the effective date of the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal.

208 (4) The repurchase of any item under this subsection shall be accomplished within 60
209 days of the effective date of the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal or within 60
210 days of the receipt of the item by the franchisor, whichever is later in time, provided the
211 dealer has clear title to the inventory and other items or is able to convey such title to the
212 franchisor and does convey or transfer title and possession of the inventory and other
213 items to the franchisor.

214 (5) In the event the franchisor does not pay the dealer the amounts due under this
215 subsection or subsection ~~(g)~~ (h) of this Code section within the time period set forth in
216 this subsection, the franchisor shall, in addition to any amounts due, pay the dealer
217 interest on such amount. This interest shall not begin to accrue until the time for payment
218 has expired. The interest shall be computed monthly on any balance due and the monthly
219 interest rate shall be one-twelfth of the sum of the then current *Wall Street Journal* Prime
220 Interest Rate and 1 percentage point.

221 (g) If a termination or nonrenewal of a franchise is the result of a bankruptcy filing or
222 reorganization of a franchisor, a plan or policy to reduce the number of dealers, whether
223 publicly announced or not, or the sale or other change in the business operation of the
224 franchisor, the franchisor shall be required to pay the fair market value of the franchise as
225 of the date of the notice of termination or nonrenewal or 12 months prior to the date of
226 notice of termination or nonrenewal, whichever is greater. Fair market value shall be the
227 goodwill value of the dealer's franchise in the dealer's community or territory. In addition,
228 if a termination or nonrenewal of a franchise is the result of a bankruptcy filing or
229 reorganization of a franchise, a plan or policy to reduce the number of dealers, whether
230 publicly announced or not, or the sale or other change in the business operation of the
231 franchisor, the franchisor shall also be required to reimburse the dealer for the cost of
232 facility upgrades and renovations required by the franchisor within two years prior to
233 termination or nonrenewal. Termination assistance provided for in this subsection shall be
234 in addition to repurchase obligations otherwise set forth in this Code section.

235 ~~(g)~~(h) Within 60 days of the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal of any franchise by
236 the franchisor, the franchisor shall commence to reimburse the dealer for one year of the
237 dealer's reasonable cost to rent or lease the dealership's facility or location or for the
238 unexpired term of the lease or rental period, whichever is less, or, if the dealer owns the
239 facility or location, for the equivalent of one year of the reasonable rental value of the
240 facilities or location. If more than one franchise is being terminated, canceled, or not
241 renewed, the reimbursement shall be prorated equally among the different franchisors.
242 However, if a franchise is terminated, canceled, or not renewed but the dealer continues in

243 business at the same location under a different franchise agreement, the reimbursement
 244 required by this subsection shall not be required to be paid. The provisions of this
 245 subsection shall not apply if the dealer is convicted of any criminal offense which
 246 conviction is cause of the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal. In addition, any
 247 reimbursement due under this subsection shall be reduced by any amount received by the
 248 dealer by virtue of the dealer leasing, subleasing, or selling the facilities or location during
 249 the year immediately following the termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal. If
 250 reimbursement is made under this subsection, the franchisor is entitled to possession and
 251 use of the facilities or location for the period covered by such reimbursement.

252 ~~(h)~~(i) If, in an action for damages under this Code section, the franchisor fails to prove that
 253 there was good cause for the franchise termination, cancellation, or nonrenewal, then the
 254 franchisor may pay the dealer an amount equal to the value of the dealership as an ongoing
 255 business, at which time the franchisor shall receive any title to the dealership facilities
 256 which the dealer may have and the franchisee shall surrender his franchise agreement to
 257 the franchisor. If the dealer receives an amount equal to the value as an ongoing business,
 258 the dealer shall have no other recovery from the franchisor absent a showing such as would
 259 warrant punitive damages under Code Section 10-1-623.

260 ~~(i)~~(j) Without limitation as to factors which may constitute or indicate a lack of good
 261 cause, no termination shall be considered to be for good cause:

262 (1) If such termination relates to the death or disability of an owner and the franchisor
 263 has not complied with Code Section 10-1-652; or

264 (2) If such termination relates to a change in ownership or management and the
 265 franchisor has not complied with Code Section 10-1-653.

266 ~~(j)~~(k) All procedures, protections, and remedies afforded to a motor vehicle dealer under
 267 this Code section shall be available to a motor vehicle distributor whose distributor
 268 agreement is terminated, canceled, not renewed, modified, or replaced by a manufacturer
 269 or an importer."

270 SECTION 7.

271 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 10-1-661, relating to delivery of
 272 motor vehicles and modification of dealership facilities, as follows:

273 "10-1-661.

274 (a) For purposes of this Code section, the term 'coerce' means to compel or attempt to
 275 compel by threat or use of force or to fail to act in good faith in performing or complying
 276 with any term or provision of a franchise or dealer agreement.

277 ~~(a)~~(b) No franchisor shall require, attempt to require, coerce, or attempt to coerce any
 278 dealer in this state:

- 279 (1) To order or accept delivery of any new motor vehicle, part, or accessory thereof,
 280 equipment, or any other commodity not required by law which shall not have been
 281 voluntarily ordered by the dealer, except that this paragraph does not affect any terms or
 282 provisions of a franchise requiring dealers to market a representative line of those motor
 283 vehicles which the franchisor is publicly advertising;
- 284 (2) To order or accept delivery of any new motor vehicle with special features,
 285 accessories, or equipment not included in the list price of such new motor vehicle as
 286 publicly advertised by the franchisor;
- 287 (3) To refrain from participation in the management of, investment in, or the acquisition
 288 of any other line of new motor vehicle or related products. However, this paragraph does
 289 not apply unless the dealer maintains a reasonable line of credit for each make or line of
 290 new motor vehicle, the dealer remains in compliance with any reasonable facilities
 291 requirements of the franchisor, the dealer provides acceptable sales performance, and no
 292 change is made in the principal management of the dealer;
- 293 (4) To expand, construct, or significantly modify facilities without assurances that the
 294 franchisor will provide a reasonable supply of new motor vehicles within a reasonable
 295 time so as to justify such an expansion in light of the market and economic conditions;
- 296 (5) To sell, assign, or transfer any retail installment sales contract obtained by such
 297 dealer in connection with the sale by such dealer in this state of new motor vehicles to a
 298 specified finance company or class of such companies or to any other specified persons;
- 299 (6) To provide warranty or other services for the account of franchisor, except as
 300 provided in Part 3 of this article, the 'Motor Vehicle Warranty Practices Act'; ~~or~~
- 301 (7) To acquire any line make of motor vehicle or to give up, sell, or transfer any line
 302 make of motor vehicle which has been acquired in accordance with this article once such
 303 dealer has notified the franchisor that it does not desire to acquire, give up, sell, or
 304 transfer such line make or to retaliate or take any adverse action against a dealer based
 305 on such desire; or
- 306 (8) To construct, renovate, or maintain exclusive facilities, personnel, or showroom area
 307 dedicated to a particular line make if the imposition of such a requirement would be
 308 unreasonable in light of the existing circumstances, including the franchisor's reasonable
 309 business considerations, present economic and market conditions, and forecasts for future
 310 economic and market conditions in the dealer's retail territory. The franchisor shall have
 311 the burden of proof to demonstrate that its demand for exclusivity is justified by
 312 reasonable business considerations and reasonable in light of the dealer's circumstances;
 313 provided, however, that this provision shall not apply to a voluntary agreement when
 314 separate and adequate consideration was offered and accepted. The franchisor shall have

315 the burden of proof to show that the dealer has entered into a voluntary, noncoerced
 316 agreement regarding exclusivity.
 317 ~~(b) No action shall in any way be based on this Code section with respect to acts occurring~~
 318 ~~prior to July 1, 1983."~~

319 SECTION 8.

320 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 10-1-662, relating to unlawful
 321 activities of motor vehicle franchisors, as follows:

322 "10-1-662.

323 (a) It shall be unlawful for any franchisor:

324 (1) To delay, refuse, or fail to deliver new motor vehicles or new motor vehicle parts or
 325 accessories in a reasonable time and in reasonable quantity if such vehicles, parts, or
 326 accessories are publicly advertised as being available for immediate delivery. This
 327 paragraph is not violated, however, if such failure is caused by acts or causes beyond the
 328 control of the franchisor;

329 (2) To obtain money, goods, services, or any other benefit from any other person with
 330 whom the dealer does business, on account of, or in relation to, the transaction between
 331 the dealer and such other person, other than as compensation for services rendered, unless
 332 such benefit is promptly accounted for and transmitted to the dealer;

333 (3) To release to any outside party, except under subpoena or as otherwise required by
 334 law or in an administrative, judicial, or arbitration proceeding involving the franchisor
 335 or dealer, any business, financial, or personal information which may be from time to
 336 time provided by the dealer to the franchisor, without the express written consent of the
 337 dealer;

338 (4) To resort to or to use any false or intentionally deceptive advertisement in the
 339 conduct of business as a franchisor in this state;

340 (5) To make any false or intentionally deceptive statement, either directly or through any
 341 agent or employee, in order to induce any dealer to enter into any agreement or franchise
 342 or to take any action which is prejudicial to that dealer or that dealer's business;

343 (6) To require any dealer to assent prospectively to a release, assignment, novation,
 344 waiver, or estoppel which would relieve any person from liability to be imposed by law
 345 or to require any controversy between a dealer and a franchisor to be referred to any
 346 person other than the duly constituted courts of the state or the United States if such
 347 referral would be binding upon the dealer, provided that this Code section shall not
 348 prevent any dealer from entering into a valid release agreement with the franchisor;

349 (7) To fail to observe good faith in any aspect of dealings between the franchisor and the
 350 dealer;

- 351 (8) To deny any dealer the right of free association with any other dealer for any lawful
352 purposes;
- 353 (9) To engage in any predatory practice or discrimination against any dealer;
- 354 (10) To propose or make any material change in any franchise agreement without giving
355 the dealer written notice by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery of such change
356 at least 60 days prior to the effective date of such change;
- 357 (11) To cancel a franchise or to take any adverse action against a dealer based in whole
358 or in part on the failure of the dealer to meet the reasonable performance goals of the
359 manufacturer criteria established by the franchisor in light of existing circumstances,
360 including but not limited to current and forecasted economic conditions, or when that
361 failure is due to the failure of the franchisor to supply, within a reasonable period of time,
362 new motor vehicles ordered by or allocated to the dealer;
- 363 (12) To offer to sell or lease or to sell or lease any new motor vehicle or accessory to any
364 dealer at a lower actual price therefor than the actual price offered to any other dealer for
365 the same model vehicle similarly equipped or same accessory or to use any device,
366 including but not limited to an incentive, sales promotion plan, or other similar program,
367 which results in a lower actual price of a vehicle or accessory being offered to one dealer
368 and which is not offered to other dealers of vehicles of the same line make or the same
369 accessory;
- 370 (13) To conduct an audit, investigation, or inquiry of any dealer or dealership as to any
371 activity, transaction, conduct, or other occurrence which took place or as to any
372 promotion or special event which ends more than one year prior to such audit,
373 investigation, or inquiry or to base any decision adverse to the dealer or dealership on any
374 activity, transaction, conduct, or other occurrence which took place or as to any
375 promotion or special event which ends more than one year prior to such decision or
376 which took place any time prior to the period of time covered by such audit,
377 investigation, or inquiry or to apply the results of an audit, investigation, or inquiry to any
378 activity, transaction, conduct, or other occurrence which took place any time prior to the
379 time covered by such audit, investigation, or inquiry;
- 380 (14) To charge back to, deduct from, or reduce any account of a dealer or any amount
381 of money owed to a dealer by a franchisor any amount of money the franchisor alleges
382 is owed to such franchisor by such dealer as a result of an audit, investigation, or inquiry
383 of such dealer or based upon information obtained by the franchisor through other
384 resources which relates to any transaction that occurred more than 12 months prior to
385 notice to the dealer of the charge back or deduction, but rather if a franchisor alleges that
386 a dealer owes such franchisor any amount of money as a result of an audit, investigation,

387 or inquiry, such franchisor shall send a notice to such dealer for such amount and the
388 dealer shall have not less than 30 days to contest such amount or remit payment;

389 (15) To deny, delay payment for, restrict, or bill back a claim by a dealer for payment
390 or reimbursement for warranty service or parts, incentives, hold-backs, special program
391 money, or any other amount owed to such dealer unless such denial, delay, restriction,
392 or bill back is the direct result of a material defect in the claim which affects the validity
393 of the claim;

394 (16) To engage in business as a dealer or to manage, control, or operate, or own any
395 interest in a dealership either directly or indirectly, if the primary business of such dealer
396 or dealership is to perform repair services on motor vehicles, except motor homes,
397 pursuant to a manufacturer's or franchisor's warranty; ~~or~~

398 (17) To refuse to allow, to limit, or to restrict a dealer from maintaining, acquiring, or
399 adding a sales or service operation for another line make of motor vehicles at the same
400 or expanded facility at which the dealer currently operates a dealership unless the
401 franchisor can prove by a preponderance of the evidence that such maintenance,
402 acquisition, or addition will substantially impair the dealer's ability to adequately sell or
403 service such franchisor's motor vehicles;

404 (18) To directly or indirectly condition a franchise agreement or renewal of a franchise
405 agreement, addition of a line make, approval of relocation, or approval of a sale or
406 transfer on the dealer's or prospective dealer's willingness to enter into a site control
407 agreement; provided, however, that this paragraph shall not apply to a voluntary
408 agreement when separate and adequate consideration is paid to the dealer. The franchisor
409 shall have the burden of proof to show the voluntary, noncoerced acceptance of the site
410 control agreement by the dealer; or

411 (19) To charge back, withhold payment, deny vehicle allocation, or take other adverse
412 action against a dealer when a new vehicle sold by the dealer has been exported to a
413 foreign country unless the franchisor can demonstrate that the dealer knew or reasonably
414 should have known that the customer intended to export or resell the new vehicle. There
415 shall be a rebuttable presumption that the dealer had no such knowledge if the vehicle is
416 titled or registered in any state in this country.

417 (b) No action shall in any way be based on this Code section with respect to acts occurring
418 prior to July 1, 1983."

419 **SECTION 9.**

420 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
421 without such approval.

422

SECTION 10.

423 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.