



Home > Miscellaneous Issues > Privacy Issues > Congress Considers Redesigning Cars, Mandating Black Box

PRINTER-FRIENDLY EMAIL TO A FRIEND

5/20/2010

Related News

Congress Considers Redesigning Cars, Mandating Black Box

Maine: Legislative Committee Considers ANPR Ban

Rhode Island Governor Vetoes E-ZPass Privacy Bill

Canada: Privacy Commissioner Concerned Over License Plate Spying

UK Billboards Equipped with License Plate Spy Cameras

Congress Considers Redesigning Cars, Mandating Black Box

US House subcommittee drafts legislation to tax cars, redesign their controls and implement black boxes.

Members of Congress are scheduled to meet later today to discuss how to redesign the way in which an automobile's most familiar controls operate. The US House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection will hold a markup session on the Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 2010, which was sponsored by Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV (D-West Virginia) and eight fellow Democrats.



Their bill expands the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration by creating a new \$280 million agency called the Center for Vehicle Electronics, Vehicle Software, and Emerging Technologies. The center would be in charge of implementing the bill's mandate to alter how acceleration and braking systems function. The proposal would give federal regulators specific control over the design of gas and brake pedal placement, the way starter buttons function and the "conspicuity of the neutral position" on gear selectors -- all in response to the Toyota unintended acceleration problem.

The center would also issue regulations to govern the legislation's mandate that all new cars be installed with electronic data recorders or black boxes that "continuously record vehicle operational data." The information would remain the vehicle owner's property, except when retrieved by others under a court order or by any "government motor vehicle safety agency" with personally identifying information removed.

To pay for this regulatory infrastructure, the legislation imposes a \$9 "vehicle safety fee" on each automobile that is collected from the manufacturer. The Cato Institute's Director of Information Policy Studies, Jim Harper, testified earlier this month that the subcommittee lacked authority to implement its goals.

"The Motor Vehicle Safety Act shares a constitutional infirmity with much of the legislation Congress considers today," Harper said. "There is no source of authority for it in the Constitution."

Harper went on to oppose the black box requirements on privacy and fairness grounds.

"It is a near certainty that putting EDRs in cars raises their costs and lowers sales," Harper said. "It lowers sales more for poor people than for rich people. New car sales affect the availability of used cars, of course, and the cost of trading up from an older used car to a newer used car... Overall the disability on consumers to control the existence of EDRs in their cars and to control the functioning of EDRs in their cars threatens privacy."

A copy of the draft legislation is available in a 70k PDF file at the source link below.

Source: Draft of Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 2010 (US House of Representatives, 5/18/2010)

Permanent Link for this item

Return to Front Page

Toyota Recall

Toyota takes care of its customers Read the FAQs at Toyota.com

Toyota.com/Recall

Ads by Google

Search Go

View Main Topics:

Camera Enforcement go

get e-mail UPDATES SIGNUP NOW Add to Google Subscribe via RSS or E-Mail

Back To Front Page

Ads by Google

Toyota Recall

Toyota takes care of its customers Read the FAQs at Toyota.com Toyota.com/Recall