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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SB177: Rental Vehicle Agreements - Disclosures - Spare Tires

Senate Finance Committee

February 8, 2023 1pm

While traveling in 2020, my Avis rental car got a flat tire in rural Illinois. I thought I had two options-- waiting for 4-5 hours for roadside assistance... or changing it myself. After unloading the trunk, I was shocked to discover that the vehicle did not come with a spare. A regular occurrence like mine could easily become dangerous. Imagine a driver who gets a flat at 2am with no cell service, cold weather, and isolated from help. This individual would be vulnerable to assault, abduction, or even murder. Rental car agencies must clearly disclose whether or not a rental is equipped with a spare tire and tools.

Rental companies are *only* required to provide individuals with a “[vehicle in operating condition](#).” [Avis](#) & [Budget](#) rental agreements both state that they will “replace a flat or damaged tire with **the** spare or get the car towed to the nearest service facility.” The word “**the**” rather than “**a**” implies that the car is equipped with a spare tire. My Avis rental car did not come with “**the**” spare tire, and I was never informed.

Millions of Americans use rental cars when going on vacation; traveling for work; or waiting on repairs to their vehicle. In a 2022 [survey](#) of US adults who had rented a car, **21 percent reported having had a flat tire.**

This year’s [SB177](#) would require rental car agencies to provide a spare tire and tools, or disclose in the rental agreement that the car is not equipped with a spare tire or tools. This would allow consumers to make a safe, informed decision about their rental choice.

Mike DeLorenzo from Next Car Rental shared in his testimony [during the 2021 hearing](#) that “If you want us to disclose, that’s not a problem.” We are hopeful that all rental companies will find this to be a simple change to protect their customers.

I urge a favorable report on SB177.