



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Salem, OR

# NEWS RELEASE

April 25, 2017

CONTACT: Rick Osborn (503) 986-1074  
[Rick.osborn@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Rick.osborn@oregonlegislature.gov)

## **Oregon Senate votes to crack down on predatory towing**

*SB 117 adds additional requirements for towing companies to remove vehicles*

SALEM – Towing companies that engage in predatory practices will be prohibited from aggressively taking people's vehicles, under legislation passed today in the Oregon Senate.

Senate Bill 117 – which passed by a 29-0 vote on the Senate floor – cracks down on towing companies that go around looking for cars to tow and who stick the owners with outrageous bills. The bill is in response to a variety of these situations occurring in the Portland Metro area, and around other parts of the Willamette Valley.

"This is an important issue for a lot of folks in my district and throughout the Willamette Valley," said Sen. Chuck Riley (D-Hillsboro), who introduced and carried the legislation. "These predators are going around towing people's cars aggressively and then charging obscene rates for these folks – many of them cash-strapped and vulnerable – to get their cars back. Basically, in many cases they are holding people's only means of transportation hostage. Most tow truck drivers are good and honest people, but this bill certainly helps create some protections so that the bad actors out there can be held accountable, and we can limit damages to people who mistakenly or unknowingly park their cars in the wrong spots."

The bill adds towing provisions that are enforceable as unlawful trade practices. Before a vehicle can be towed, the bill also requires that there be a sign in plain view indicating that parking in that area is restricted or prohibited, as well as a signed consent form by the property owner or a representative for the property from which the vehicle is to be towed. A vehicle can be towed for blocking access for emergency vehicles, blocking in another car or blocking an exit. The bill requires signed authorization 24 hours a day by the property owner or designee before a tow may occur.

In situations where the owner or operator of the vehicle is present at the time of the tow, the person doing the towing must release the vehicle at no charge unless the hookup is complete. If the hookup is complete, the tower would be able to charge a fee that does not exceed the hookup fee.

Senate Bill 117 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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