

SENATE BILL 208

R4
SB 178/20 – JPR

(PRE-FILED)

1lr0633

By: **Senators Hough, Ready, and Waldstreicher**

Requested: September 16, 2020

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2021

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Vehicle Laws – Manufacturers and Dealers – Prices Listed on Dealer Websites**

3 FOR the purpose of providing that a manufacturer, distributor, or factory branch may not
4 prohibit a dealer from listing on the dealer’s website a vehicle for sale or lease at a
5 certain price, coerce or require a dealer to list a certain price on the dealer’s website,
6 or take an adverse action against a dealer for listing a certain price on the dealer’s
7 website; defining a certain term; and generally relating to advertising for the sale or
8 lease of vehicles.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – Transportation
11 Section 15–207(a) and (h)
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2020 Replacement Volume)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
15 Article – Transportation
16 Section 15–313(a) and (b)
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2020 Replacement Volume)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Transportation

22 15–207.

23 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (2) (i) “Coerce” means to compel or attempt to compel by threat of harm,
2 breach of contract, or other adverse action or consequences, including the loss of any
3 incentive or other benefit made available to other dealers of the same line make in the
4 State.

5 (ii) “Coerce” includes to act in a manner that violates § 15–206.1 of
6 this subtitle.

7 (iii) “Coerce” does not include to argue, urge, recommend, or
8 persuade.

9 (3) **“PURCHASE PRICE” MEANS THE FULL DELIVERED PRICE OF A**
10 **VEHICLE, EXCLUDING ONLY TAXES, TITLE FEES, AND ANY FREIGHT OR DEALER**
11 **PROCESSING CHARGE DISCLOSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 15–311.1 OF THIS TITLE.**

12 (4) “Require” means to impose upon a dealer a provision not required by
13 law or previously agreed to by a dealer in a franchise agreement, excluding business
14 decisions made to comply with the requirements of this title by a manufacturer, distributor,
15 or factory branch which are uniformly applied to all Maryland dealers in new vehicles of
16 the manufacturer, distributor, or factory branch.

17 (h) (1) (i) Any consumer rebates, dealer incentives, price or interest rate
18 reductions, or finance terms that a manufacturer, distributor, or factory branch offers or
19 advertises, or allows its dealers to offer or advertise, shall be offered to all dealers of the
20 same line make.

21 (ii) Any manufacturer, distributor, or factory branch that denies the
22 benefit of any consumer rebates, dealer incentives, price or interest rate reductions, or
23 finance terms to a dealer on the basis that the dealer failed to comply with performance
24 standards has the burden of proving that the performance standards comply with the
25 provisions of this section.

26 (2) Unless a dealer violates a State or local law intended to protect the
27 public, a manufacturer, distributor, or factory branch may not:

28 (i) Require a dealer to alter or replace an existing dealership
29 facility; or

30 (ii) Deny, or threaten to deny, any benefit generally available to all
31 dealers for a dealer’s failure to alter or replace an existing dealership facility.

32 (3) **UNLESS A DEALER VIOLATES § 15–313(A) OR (B) OF THIS TITLE**
33 **OR A STATE OR LOCAL LAW INTENDED TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC, A MANUFACTURER,**
34 **DISTRIBUTOR, OR FACTORY BRANCH MAY NOT:**

35 (I) **PROHIBIT A DEALER FROM LISTING A VEHICLE FOR SALE**

1 OR LEASE ON THE DEALER'S WEBSITE AT THE PURCHASE PRICE;

2 (II) COERCE OR REQUIRE A DEALER TO LIST A PRICE ON THE
3 DEALER'S WEBSITE THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PURCHASE PRICE OF A VEHICLE;
4 OR

5 (III) TAKE AN ADVERSE ACTION AGAINST A DEALER FOR LISTING
6 A VEHICLE FOR SALE AT A PARTICULAR PRICE ON THE DEALER'S WEBSITE.

7 [(3)] (4) A manufacturer, distributor, or factory branch may not reduce
8 the price of a motor vehicle charged to a dealer or provide different financing terms to a
9 dealer in exchange for the dealer's agreement to:

10 (i) Maintain an exclusive sales or service facility;

11 (ii) Build or alter a sales or service facility; or

12 (iii) Participate in a floor plan or other financing arrangement.

13 (5) NOTHING IN THIS SUBSECTION PROHIBITS A MANUFACTURER,
14 DISTRIBUTOR, OR FACTORY BRANCH FROM REQUIRING ALL DEALERS TO INCLUDE
15 FREIGHT OR DEALER PROCESSING CHARGES IN THE PRICES LISTED ON A DEALER'S
16 WEBSITE.

17 15-313.

18 (a) A dealer or an agent or employee of a dealer may not use any advertisement
19 that is in any way false, deceptive, or misleading.

20 (b) A dealer or an agent or employee of a dealer may not by any means advertise
21 or offer to the public any vehicle without intent to sell it as advertised or offered.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
23 October 1, 2021.