

THIS COLUMN WILL EDUCATE, INVOLVE YOU AND SAVE YOU MONEY!

My name is Michael Ross, and I am a semi-retired consumer advocate with over 40 years of legislative experience under my belt. The article I am going to share with you today is the first in a series of columns about the Insurance industry in a variety of areas and your wallet. The areas include, but are not limited to Auto, Business, Health and Property.

As this column unfolds over the next couple of weeks, not only will you find tips on how to save money on insurance while educating you about Industry practices, but will provide you with quality information that educates and gets your butt off the bench and into the money savings game.

To do this, you will be presented with a variety of thought provoking concepts, insights and information that's peppered with honest and direct facts that are explained and analyzed. The information contained in these articles will come from a variety of sources ranging from Interviews, legislation, articles and reports, to committee meetings, and State Insurance and Health Department media communications. Along the way we'll teach you how to track legislation, find your legislator, share with you formats for suggested amendments and invite you to discuss what you are reading directly with us because we want to hear your thoughts and feelings.

In the long run, we will present this valuable information to you in two specific ways – for consumption as a consumer and for consumption as a business. Often many think that these two concepts can't survive in the same article, but trust me, they can and I will show you how – starting right now.

Although the positions and needs of businesses and individuals is often different, it is clear that both sides must pay attention to what the legislature is doing, and that a focus needs to be not just on legislative actions, but what the Department of Insurance or Health is doing (or can do for you). Additionally, you will also know who supports what, and why.

Personally, I like to get people directly involved in the legislative process, and often start by teaching them how to look up legislation, read it and then tracking it. Once done, I share with them insights into writing letters, whom to send them to and how to draft suggested Amendments that will change the bill's proposed wording so it minimizes its overall financial impact. To make these concepts truly effective, I will also provide instruction on how to contact and meet your legislator, and how to deal with their legislative staff and keeping them up-to-date with respect to your concerns.

On the business side, I will help the reader establish in house implementation programs that implements the bill's provisions neatly, efficiently and as cheap as possible. In many ways, people would say that doing this is a conflict of interest – but not me. I do this based on this concept: In the long run, both sides have a lot in common, and

believe it or not, getting both sides in the same room and to the table, saves everyone money and makes laws better.

So let's roll up our sleeves and take a quick look under the "legislative hood" as they say and find that "seat at the negotiations table". Finding a seat is simple: find a piece of legislation and take a position on it. When you do this and communicate with the legislature in writing, you become part of the official legislative process and analysis, which is read by industry leaders, as well as the media.

Let's start with this simple concept: finding a bill to take a position on. You can start by visiting the California Legislative Portal and conduct a search. The following link will take you to the Bill Search section of the California server (<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml>). Once the page loads, you will see that you are provided with a variety of options. For this article, please click on the Bill Information Tab. Once there, you are provided with three options – the Bill Search Tab, The Text Search Tab and the Advanced Search Tab. The first tab is for when you know the bill number you want to read, while the second is for the phrase/word or concept you are looking for. The third is for a combination of both and we won't be talking about this today.

At this point, click on the Text Search Tab, and type the word INSURANCE in one of the dialogue boxes. After hitting search, over 400 bills show up that are referenced in two ways: first, the word Insurance is bold faced, with the second being that all legislation listed impacts the Insurance Code, the code that governs the Insurance Industry in California.

Since some 400+ bills is far too many for this exercise, so let's do a multi word search and see what happens. To do this, type the word Insurance in the first box and then consumer in the second and hit search. As the page refreshes, you will notice that you get some 155 pieces of legislation, which is a lot, but is clearly an easier load to handle. For ease, I clicked on the first link mentioned – AB 1211 by Assembly Member Muratsuchi.

Upon looking at the legislation, you will notice in order, the legislator's name, who is co-sponsoring the legislation (if any), the date of introduction, the code section(s) affected and the Legislative Counsel's Digest, which is the Bill's subject. In this case it's a "Small business guide to commercial insurance".

Upon further review of the digest, you will see that it deals specifically with electric vehicles, and does two specific things. On one hand, it is designed to establish standards and requirements for valid insurance relating to electric vehicles, something that clearly is needed and will cost consumers money. On the other hand, the bill's summary states that it enforces and enhances the state's Consumer Automotive Recall Safety Act, and does so by prohibiting a dealer or rental car company from loaning, renting, or offering for loan or rent a vehicle subject to a manufacturer's recall after receiving a notice of the recall. This will save money and lives, as well as litigation. It

does this by making electric mobility manufacturers subject to the Consumer Automotive Recall Safety Act, as well as many other requirements relating to recalls and notifications. Finally, this proposed law requires an electric mobility manufacturer to adhere to prescribed standards, including sending a written notice to each consumer in possession of an electric mobility manufacturer vehicle.

On one side of the coin, this appears to be a solid pro-consumer concept – but is it really?

I believe that in the long run, it is important for consumers to know because it impacts their ability to purchase electric vehicles and related insurance. On the other side of the coin, this sounds like it's a pro business piece of legislation because the consumers who drive these vehicles are being forced to purchase insurance, which adds to corporate profits.

So, which is correct?

The answer is simple: In this day and age, its almost impossible to avoid any type of insurance, especially since in the long run, its good for you. In this case, by codifying requirements under statute, both parties win - consumers will have a structure to follow when they purchase electric vehicles and deal with problems ranging from defective vehicles to how to file claims. This also benefits insurance companies because they will have a roadmap to follow when providing service. This also saves time and money, especially since it will help lower frivolous lawsuits for both parties.

In the long run, both sides here profit because this measure's provisions are good for this growing industry and the public's safety. This will help sell cars, lower their overall costs, and ensure protection for the consumer and their investment.

As you can see, this column offers a lot of possibilities and options, and I want to stress that there are literally thousands of stories just waiting to be written and presented to readers. In many instances, some of the issues may be very complex, and thus could be part of multi-story series, especially when they are tracked throughout the legislative year – so stay tuned for updates.

In conclusion, the actions this column will share will educate and saving you money. This protects your wallet and expands your purchasing power and profit, and I look forward to not only sharing this adventure with you, but talking with you personally. If you have any comments about this article, please leave them below, or, if you need some personal help, please contact me personally at: email/phone.