



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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HIT/RUN DRIVERS: STIFFER PENALTIES

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House Bill 4964 as introduced
First Analysis (10-9-89)

OCT 19 1989

Sponsor: Rep. Gary L. Randall
Committee: Transportation

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H.B. 4964 (10-9-89)

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Department of State Police statistics show Michigan had over 7,000 hit-and-run accidents in each of the past two years, in which 15 persons died and over 50 were seriously injured. The vehicle code provides penalties of up to a \$2,000 fine or 2 year's imprisonment, or both, for drivers found guilty of fleeing an accident involving a serious injury or death to another person. Some persons feel the state could help lower the hit-and-run accident rate by imposing stiffer penalties on those found guilty of hit-and-run crimes.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the vehicle code to increase the penalty to the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in a serious injury or death and who failed to stop and give aid. Currently, a person who fails to stop and give aid and identify himself or herself is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment up to 2 years or a \$2,000 fine, or both. The bill would increase the penalties to imprisonment up to 5 years or a \$5,000 fine, or both.

MCL 257.617

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would not affect state expenditures. (10-5-89)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill could help lower the number of hit-and-run crimes that occur each year by providing stiffer penalties for hit-and-run drivers. By increasing the penalties the state would send a strong message to drivers involved in these types of accidents who fail to stay, identify themselves, and give any aid required by an accident victim.

Response: Since most people probably do not know the current penalties for hit-and-run crimes, increasing these penalties would probably do little to discourage drivers from leaving an accident scene. Indeed, a driver involved in a serious accident who lacks courage and compassion to stay and help an accident victim under current law probably would not be moved to do so under the bill. And stiffer penalties would not prevent people from panicking.

POSITIONS:

The Department of State Police supports the bill. (10-3-89)