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COLORADO

House of Representatives

Rice, Looper Fight for Family-Run, Small Business Owners

Proposal will help local car dealers stand up to GM/Chrysler

(DENVER) - **State Representatives Joe Rice (D-Littleton) and Rep. Marsha Looper R-El Paso** today unveiled their proposal to protect the rights of local automobile dealers in Colorado.

Their bill, House Bill 1049, will require General Motors and Chrysler to offer a right of first refusal to the dealers who have had their businesses forcibly shut-down by the parent corporation. If GM or Chrysler wants to re-open a dealership in the same market area, the previous dealer must be offered the opportunity to take back the franchise in which they made the initial investment.

"Most automobile dealerships are relatively small, family-run businesses with deep roots in the community, said Rep. Joe Rice. Collectively, they employ thousands of people who then spend their wages in other community businesses. All they are asking for is a fair chance to compete. They want the ability to stay open if they are being successful. It isn't right that out-of-state corporations that took taxpayer bailouts are trying to close local dealers that have remained profitable due to their hard work and community ties."

"I am excited to be working with Rep. Rice on a bipartisan bill that stands up for Colorado businesses," Rep. Looper said. "This proposal would protect these business owners from being shut out of their own marketplace."

"While our economy recovers, we need to help our state's businesses remain competitive. House Bill 1049, along with the support of the Colorado Automobile Dealers Association, will give these individual dealers that had been shuttered a fair chance to re-open," said Gov. Bill Ritter. "Auto dealers serve an important role in our communities, especially in rural areas, by providing jobs and much needed services for businesses and families."

HB 1049 will be sponsored in the Senate by Chris Romer and Shawn Mitchell; the bill will have its first hearing in front of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee on January 26.