

Former Congressman Jim Renacci

PROPONENT TESTIMONY H.R. 247 (Roemer)

Ohio House of Representatives Energy and Natural Resources Committee

December 3, 2019

Chairman Vitale, Vice-Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Resolution 247.

As a former Congressman, Mayor, and business owner with establishments throughout Ohio, I have witnessed first-hand the limitations of antiquated red-tape that hinders businesses from growing and prospering. From my travels to every corner of Ohio, business-owners time and time again tell me Ohio must change its regulatory climate or else they will find greener pastures in states that are more business-friendly. We don't have to look any further than the fact that Ohio is on pace this year to lose jobs for the first time since 2009 and is one of the most regulated states in the country with over 200,000 regulations. It is my hope that House Resolution 247 helps limit at least one of those many burdens.

While I was Mayor of the City of Wadsworth and a member of Congress, constituents would regularly contact my office and tell me directly how unfair and antiquated E-Check requirements are. Since my congressional district encompassed multiple counties, some with E-Check and some without, I saw the effect on constituents and business owners from those same counties. With only seven counties impacted by the Federal requirements, this causes unfair business advantages between contiguous counties in Northeast Ohio. Because of the way the regulations have been established there clearly is an added burden in some counties and not the other which leads many individuals to simply register their cars in counties that are not impacted. One of the major side effects of this E-Check burden is the impact on individuals of lower-income. In many cases, they can't afford brand new vehicles. They bear much of the burden.

In my experience as an automotive dealer in an E-Check county, I cannot begin to tell you the headaches E-Check would give my business and my customers. Yet a dealer across county lines did not suffer the same effects. Automobiles continue to evolve and become more efficient while testing by E-Check has remained limiting. Though E-Check greatly impacts the automobile industry it impacts numerous employers and employees across Northeast Ohio. Particularly those employees that travel for work regularly and do not have the time or ability to get to an E-Check facility. These are the type of policies we must change to ensure business growth in Ohio. I understand the need to always maintain clean air and water. But these policies do not encourage growth in E-Check communities and can be sidestepped by registration irregularities. While we should encourage the EPA to look for alternatives to improving air quality in the Buckeye state, E-Checks are not the answer.

Finally, we must be good stewards of the taxpayer dollars. With E-Check costing Ohio taxpayers millions every year, it is time we reevaluate this cost versus its benefit.

I would like to thank Chairman Vitale, Vice-Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee for allowing me this opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Resolution 247 and I apologize I was not able to attend in person.