

**Proponent Testimony of Jordan Davis
on House Bill 341
House State Government Committee
January 27th 2016**

Chairman Maag, Vice Chairwoman Kunze, Ranking Member Slesnick and members of the House State Government Committee, I am Jordan Davis and I appear before you today as part owner of Camcar Towing located in Columbus, Ohio, and on behalf of the Towing and Recovery Association of Ohio as both a member and as President of the central Ohio region.

As the owner of a towing company in Columbus, I have seen the evolution of the public perception of our industry. Towing used to be viewed as a critical component of a city's emergency services network, providing a much desired service to the motoring public. Towing companies more recently have unfairly been given a bad reputation. This view, perpetuated by the media and reinforced in legislation has been detrimental to our industry. This negative attitude against towing companies has increased over the last few decades, particularly in the heavily populated cities of our state. This is not a result of towing companies operating under different standards or changing what type of service they provide, it is simply a product of a greater issue. As population increases and traffic into certain areas of these large cities increase (in the case of Columbus, the OSU campus and Short North areas in particular), there becomes a severe shortage of parking. These areas simply cannot support the amount of vehicles trying to find parking. Property owners in these areas are increasingly burdened with the challenge of protecting their properties against predatory parking. Those property owners, many of whom are small business owners, rely on their own parking lots to support their businesses by providing their customers or tenants parking. Without our industry's effort to thwart predatory parking, residing or shopping in these areas would not be possible. Property owners have the right to control who parks on their property and when, towing companies simply enforce the rules laid out by the property owner.

For every person that is towed from a private property tow away zone, many more are able to park at their residence or shop in the many businesses these areas have to offer without the fear of being towed. This majority does not thank towing companies every time they are able to park in front of their apartment, for the same reason that I do not thank the police every time I arrive home and find my house not burglarized. Towing

companies and police alike provide what is often a thankless, and dangerous service that most people take for granted. While unpleasant for few, it is a service that must continue to grow to match the demand our cities create.

I understand that this view may be unpopular, however this is the other side of the coin that must be strongly considered. For far too long public opinion and legislation has been heavily weighted in favor of the “violator” instead of the “violated”. This, over time, has made providing this essential service increasingly difficult.

New regulations has made private property impounding a bad business decision for towing companies. They greatly increased a towing company’s exposure to legal repercussions, implemented excessive requirements to dispose of junk vehicles abandoned on our storage lots by the vehicle owners and introduced a rule that would allow the courts to suspend our operating license which would order a company to stop all towing operation. Most of these companies provide other services to the community such as police ordered impounds, roadside assistance and clearing accidents from our roadways. These services would also cease if a suspension were ordered. While my association and I had hoped that House Bill 341 would reverse the loss of license language entirely, we applaud Representative Young and Representative Sweeney for adding language that will decrease the likelihood of this happening to companies that obey the law. House Bill 341 takes significant strides by correcting some of these new regulations to provide relief to the towing companies providing these valuable services. House Bill 341 also implements a new process that would reevaluate the state regulated private property impound rates on an annual basis, these rates have not been adjusted in over 15 years.

I have brought pictures today to reflect one of the major issues affecting towing companies like mine. Picture #1 shows what my storage lot looked like before we were forced to adopt a new process for obtaining title to abandoned vehicles. Picture #2 shows what my storage lot looked like in August of 2015. That was 4 months after the new process laid out in Senate Bill 274 was put into effect. This clearly shows that Senate Bill 274 was ineffective in its intent to help towing companies dispose of vehicles abandoned on our lots.

Private property towing is a necessity in Columbus and many other cities across our state. Regulation is necessary, but we must be careful not to allow these regulation to prevent reputable towing companies from providing this valuable service to the community. My association and I support House Bill 341 in its current version, however we would not support any proposed amendment without ample time to consider said

amendments and negotiate if necessary. And if i ever did arrive home to find my house burglarized, I believe that my best interests and my rights would be strongly considered if law enforcement requested support to allow them to prevent it from happening in the future. I hope we can make that same consideration today. Thank you for your time.