



**House State Government Committee
Proponent Testimony – HB 341
April 12, 2016**

Chairman Maag,

I contact you today in support of HB 341, which makes important reforms to Ohio's towing laws. I am writing you as president of the Automotive Service Association of Ohio (ASA Ohio), representing hundreds of independent automotive repair businesses throughout the state. While the focus of this legislation is on Ohio's towing laws, there are provisions that will effect Ohio's automotive service industry as well.

Like the towing industry, Ohio's automotive repair industry is experiencing problems with customers failing to claim their vehicles once agreed-upon repairs are complete. In these cases, automotive service facilities not only lose out on the cost of the repair, but are also forced to store the vehicle on their property. In these cases, not only have the repair shops invested time and money to repair the vehicle, but unclaimed vehicles take up valuable space at these facilities, space that could be used by paying customers. Obtaining titles to unclaimed vehicles can be a very difficult and costly process. Last session, changes were made to the unclaimed vehicle affidavit to help towers and automotive repair shops more easily obtain titles to these unwanted vehicles. Nevertheless, we believe more needs to be done.

The changes proposed in HB 341 will help shop owners address the costly problem of unclaimed vehicles. The creation of the "salvage title" process will be especially helpful, as it will create a low-cost solution to remove vehicles that are inoperable and of very low value.

It is important to keep in mind that automotive repair facilities are unique in that the customer brings the vehicle to their shop, they sign a repair order, and supply their contact information. Repair facilities make every reasonable effort to contact that individual after the repairs are finished and prior to moving forward with the affidavit process. Despite these efforts, there are cases where the vehicle owner refuses to pay for the repairs and simply leaves the low-valued vehicle unclaimed.

I would like to thank Representatives Young and Sweeney for their willingness to work with interested parties on this important issue. Through this process they have developed legislation that will help us handle the costly problem of unclaimed vehicles. I urge the committee to support this important legislation and look forward to working on this issue as HB 341 moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

James Chilcoat
President/Chairman
Automotive Service Association of Ohio