

My name is Jim Shriner. I own a local towing company, Broad & James Towing. We have been in business in Columbus, OH for 44 years, and we employ approximately 40 people.

I appreciate all of the hard work that Representative Young, Representative Sweeney, legislators, and many others have put into HB341. However, it is out of control. There have been 11 revisions and numerous amendments.

This bill started out to correct some of the injustices placed on the towors in SB 274, a bill that was rushed through in order to correct a situation the Ohio BMV put Ohio towing companies in, when they changed their policy. This BMV "in house policy change" prevented towing companies from using the process, which had been used the prior 30 years, to obtain titles for impounded vehicles. Our lots were overflowing with junk and wrecked vehicles. In SB 274, Senator Hughes put together a bill that included reinstating a similar process to file for these abandoned vehicles.

However, within this bill was section 4513.611, Civil actions against towing and storage services. These civil actions have the ability to cripple our industry. One example is; the bill allows for 5 business days to send notification to the owner and lienholder of an impounded vehicle. Is this possible to do? Yes. My company tows over 100 vehicles per day. Not all of these tows are impounds, but a large percentage are. Is it possible to send a letter on all of these impounds within 5 days? No. But, according to SB274, if my company fails to do this 3 times in one year, my family business of nearly 50 years will be fined thousands of dollars and lose its PUCO authority for 6 months. This basically puts my towing company out of business. I don't know very many businesses of any kind that don't make 3 mistakes in 1 year. We are not even given the opportunity to correct the error with the owner or lienholder. I think the punishment should fit the infraction. For example, no storage charge permitted if the letter is not sent out on time, but not a suspension of our license to do business.

This is not abstract rhetoric. I am currently being sued for sending a letter in 8 days. The attorney has asked for a \$50,000 settlement or he says he will pursue a class action lawsuit and put my company out of business. My attorney says it will cost that much in attorney fees to defend the class action lawsuit. Not only will this will soon be common practice and lucrative business for attorneys, but it will be the end of many towing businesses.

HB 341 started out to correct several things, like the fact that there has not been an increase in the private property towing rate for 20 years, but since the bill's inception, there have been so many changes and so many amendments, the bill does no good for anyone. It just creates more regulations and adds another committee. It confuses the public, the towors, and everyone involved.

I am asking the committee and the entire House to please do the right thing. Do away with the entire bill, which has developed a life of its own, or amend the bill to include only eliminating the Ohio Revised Code section 4513.611, which was added in SB 274. The rest of the bill, we can survive without. The court system can handle the "bad apples" of the towing community as it is able to handle the "bad apples" of other industries.

It is imperative this is done as soon as possible, so that my business, as well, as other towing businesses are able to continue doing business in the state of Ohio.

Thank You,  
Jim Shriner