Proponent Testimony on House Bill 71 before the Ohio House Transportation & Public Safety Committee

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Good morning Chairman Green, Vice Chairman Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the committee. My name is Joe Cannon and I am the Vice President of Government Relations for the Ohio Automobile Dealers Association. On behalf of our over 830 franchised motor vehicle dealer members, I am here today to express our support for House Bill 71. This legislation would make failure to display a front license plate a secondary offense.

It's no secret the issue of one plate versus two plates has been around for some time. We understand there are strong feelings on either side of the debate, and for that reason we have historically been an interested party. Recently, though, we have heard from dealers regarding challenges with the two plate system in the following areas:

Commerce

For our Ohio border area dealers, selling both new and used cars into other states is a common occurrence. Dealers in Cincinnati often sell vehicles into Kentucky and Indiana while dealers in Toledo sell to many customers in Michigan as examples. Their manufacturers assess performance on sales effectiveness that spans state lines. Oftentimes though, dealers in Ohio lose out on a sale to a border state customer because that customer does not want to buy a vehicle with a front plate bracket drilled into the bumper when their home state does not require a front plate. The customer would ultimately remove the bracket only to find two holes drilled into the front of his or her new vehicle. As result, our dealers lose sales.

Border area dealers have also contacted us regarding the inability to dealer trade with dealers in our contiguous states, all of which require only one plate. These vehicles with holes drilled in the front bumper are simply not as marketable across state lines as vehicles that do not require a bracket where holes need to be drilled into the front of the vehicle.

In addition, our manufacturers are producing many vehicles now that are not conducive to drilling holes to mount a license plate bracket. Furthermore, many of today's vehicles also include sensors on the front that make drilling holes into the front bumper problematic. It becomes challenging to locate the holes while not upsetting or covering the safety sensors on the front of the vehicles that assist with things like parking, adaptive cruise control and automatic safety braking. As a result, there is additional time and personnel expense required in order to prep these vehicles for

delivery to customers. Attached please find a few examples of photos as well as the directions one manufacturer provides in how to do this on their vehicles. I think you'll find it to be more complicated than one would first think and it's only getting worse as additional safety and convenience features become more and more prevalent.

Customer Requests

Lastly, dealers regularly hear from customers requesting them not to attach the front plate to their vehicles. At that point dealers are put into a corner – making their customers happy at the time of purchase or face potential customer angst if they are later pulled over without a front plate that the dealer did not install.

In closing Mr. Chairman I want to emphasize that we aren't anti-law enforcement. On the contrary, many of our dealers partner with law enforcement throughout the state on issues important to the communities in which our dealerships are located. Frankly, any business with as much inventory parked outside ($20 or $30 million in many instances) would want to maintain a good relationship with their local law enforcement. Our interest in this issue stems solely from the commerce and customer concerns that I have discussed. As I indicated, we understand the strong sentiment on each side of the issue, which is why we believe the bill you have before you is a fair compromise.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I will be happy to entertain questions.