



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**REPRESENTATIVE BOB YOUNG**  
**HOUSE DISTRICT 36**

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee,

First, let me say thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of HB 408, a bill to amend sections of the revised code regarding the sale of catalytic converters. For too long, our laws have been overlooked on the sale of used catalytic converters to scrap metal dealers and recyclers, thus leaving a vacuum to allow for a tsunami-like wave of catalytic converter theft across Ohio and our country.

Catalytic converter theft has been on the rise for many years, but has increased incredibly over the past two years. In knowing the statistics on this, and then becoming a victim of this crime myself, I became motivated to upgrade our laws here in Ohio and protect Ohioans from this crime.

There have been numerous other groups reach out to me and let me know their stories as well. The Ohio Tire and Automotive Association, who represents retail repair establishments, has let me know that many of their stores have had customer's catalytic converters stolen after repairing another portion of their vehicle just because it was parked in their lot overnight. Local auto dealerships are now hiring overnight security details to monitor their lots due to catalytic converter theft. U-Haul Ohio has had an incredible amount of catalytic converter thefts from their vehicles. In speaking with a representative from U-Haul it's their most costly maintenance expense. In the last year U-Haul Ohio has had over 1200 catalytic converters stolen from their vehicles in just four major metropolitan markets.

One of the main reasons this is on the rise is due to the precious metals that protect our environment inside this component of the car's exhaust system. The purpose of the catalytic converter is to change the harmful compounds from an engine's emissions into safer gases, such as steam. It normally contains metals such as platinum, palladium, and rhodium. As of Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>, the price of rhodium was \$13, 977.26 per ounce. And since catalytic converters are easily extracted from the bottom of the car with a simple cordless saw, this has become a lucrative crime of opportunity.

While some may make this argument, trust me when I say that catalytic converter theft is not a victimless crime. The individual who has had a converter stolen, even with insurance, may have to pay \$2,000 or more out of pocket to have this replaced. Some people who simply cannot afford to get their converter replaced may simply decide to forgo it and simply do a "straight pipe" where the exhaust goes straight from the engine into the air. The victims who are most vulnerable to this crime are the people who drive a less expensive car and can afford the repair.

**Committees:**

Transportation & Public Safety  
Technology & Innovation  
Economic & Workforce Development  
Public Utilities

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Current law simply states a scrap dealer or recycler may purchase catalytic converters from the public as long as they only purchase “one per person per day” and keep the proper documentation. A business entity can sell an unlimited amount of converters to a scrap dealer or recycler with little or no documentation on where the converters originated from.

HB 408 seeks to change this portion of law by categorizing catalytic converters as “special purchase articles”. Special purchase articles are items that when sold to scrap recyclers, or any entity, are only allowed to be purchased by the entity if the seller provides proof of ownership. If the person is scrapping a car with catalytic converter attached and they show the title to said car that would suffice under the bill. Also, if the person possibly has a receipt from a repair showing they have proof the converter in question was removed and replaced from their vehicle that would suffice as well.

The seller who knowingly attempts to sell a catalytic converter without proof of ownership would have to be refused by the buyer, such as a scrap recycler. Or, said recycler would then be charged with receiving stolen property and/or complicity of the theft. The person selling would then be charged with theft, receipt, and/or complicity of theft of a stolen catalytic converter with enhanced penalties.

I again appreciate your time in discussing this bill and this crime that has been plaguing Ohio. I appreciate your support, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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