



**Automotive Service Association
of Ohio**

**Senate Transportation, Commerce and Labor Committee
Proponent Testimony on HB 429
May 18, 2016**

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Cafaro and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in support of HB 429. My name is Matt Dougher and I am the Executive Director of the Automotive Service Association of Ohio, Inc. (ASA Ohio). ASA Ohio represents independent automotive service businesses throughout the state. Our members work hard to properly service their customers and support their communities. I'm here today to urge you to support HB 429, which would allow the automotive repair industry to qualify for the Incumbent Workforce Training Voucher Program.

The automotive repair industry has changed significantly over the years. One change that shouldn't be surprising is that vehicles today are so much more complicated than in the past. These complex vehicles require technicians to receive more training than ever before. Additionally, as older technicians are beginning to retire we will need to ensure that the new generation of employees are adequately trained to properly repair these high tech vehicles.

There are a number of training opportunities available to automotive repair technicians. Many of our members ensure that their technicians receive ASE or I-CAR certification. Obtaining these certifications are vital to developing young technicians; nevertheless, paying for the training can be expensive for the individual technician and their employer. It should be of no surprise that the impact of these training costs are especially challenging to Ohio's small independent repair facilities. If a repair shop of four employees sends one technician to receive training, not only is the repair shop paying for this training, but it just lost a quarter of its workforce. Nevertheless, many of us in the industry make this sacrifice because of the long-term benefits to the technician, the company, and our customers. The technicians benefit because they learn skills critical for career development, business owners benefit because they have a better trained workforce, and our customers benefit because they are assured their vehicles are being repair by qualified technicians.

The Incumbent Workforce Training Voucher Program was designed to include Ohio's automotive sector, yet the automotive repair industry is not eligible to apply. If made eligible, this program would be a resource that would be extremely helpful to our industry, especially for smaller independent repair shops. It is also important to note that the Development Services Agency will begin accepting applications for next year's program in the fall of 2016. We urge

you to pass this legislation prior to breaking, in order to allow Ohio's automotive repair facilities to participate in the program in 2017.

On behalf of ASA Ohio, I ask for your support of HB 429 and will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Sincerely,

Matt Dougher
Executive Director
Automotive Service Association of Ohio, Inc.