

BROAD & JAMES

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Thank You Chairman for allowing me to speak on Senate Bill 194.

My brother and I own Broad & James Towing. We have been in business in Columbus for 45 years. Our father started the business as a shell service station at the corner of E. Broad St and James Rd in 1973. The business has evolved into a large towing and auto repair business, with 38 employees. I am here representing not only Broad & James Towing, those 38 employees, but all towers in the State of Ohio.

We are forced to send 3 certified mailings to owners and lienholders of vehicles we have impounded from private property. This is expensive and a waste of our resources. It is a nightmare keeping track of these mailings. If a vehicle is towed for a police department, the police department is required to notify the owner and lienholder by certified mail only once. The State of Ohio sends only one letter requesting verification of insurance before cancelling someone's driver's license. There is no reason for us to notify someone three times that we have impounded his/her vehicle.

Last month, Broad & James Towing spent \$6,500 on certified mail. Approximately half of that was spent sending 2nd and 3rd mailings for private property impounds. If the Ohio Congress passes this bill, it will save Broad & James over \$3,000 per month in mail costs and another \$3,000 in employee costs. Most of the cars we impound from private property are junk and not worth repairing. They are abandoned, left in disrepair, and with expired plates. That is usually the reason owners and lienholders do not pick them up, no matter how many times you notify them.

If someone's car gets impounded, they know their car is missing. If he/she wants to find the car, there is a big sign, required by law, posted on the property with the phone number and address of the location the vehicle was towed. Furthermore, the towing company is required to notify the police of the impound and the location where the vehicle was towed from and to. If the car is worth retrieving, he/she normally recovers it immediately.

Should the owner fail to retrieve their car within 3 days, the towing company must submit a title request to the Ohio BMV for the owner and lienholder's information. Once the BMV returns that information, the towing company must send a certified letter to the owner and lienholder. These letters to the owner and lienholder cost approximately \$15 to mail. If the owner or lienholder does not retrieve the vehicle after receiving the letter stating he/she will lose the vehicle, almost never will the owner or lienholder pick up the vehicle after receiving a second or third letter, stating the same thing. This costs the tower an additional \$30 in mail costs and \$30 in employee costs. In addition to the actual postage cost, the amount of money we spend on payroll for each letter is approximately \$10 to \$15, about equal to the amount we spend on postage. We, the tower, must pay someone to write and process the letters, and to take the certified letters to the post office. You should see the dirty looks and snide comments when we get in line at the post office with a stack of certified letters. These looks and comments come from both the postal workers that must process these certified letters and from the customers forced to wait in line behind us.

We ask the State of Ohio to pass HB 384, a simple bill to save our businesses from throwing away tens of thousands of dollars each year. An expense we are burdened with because we are ridding properties of junk vehicles.

Thank You, Jim Shriner