**HB 113 Testimony**

Good morning Chairman Green and members of the committee, I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 113. House Bill 113 would prohibit towing services from employing or compensating “spotters.” A “spotter” is defined as a person whose task is to report the presence of unauthorized parked vehicles for purposes of towing, removal, or impounding. Whoever violates this measure would be guilty of a misdemeanor of the third degree.

In researching other states’ laws regarding predatory towing, Maryland had the strictest anti-predatory towing laws in the country. There are five provisions to their laws:

1. Prohibiting towing companies from compensating or employing "spotters" and owners of parking lots;

2. Permitting owners of vehicles to immediately retake their vehicle if they arrive on the scene as the tower is about to remove the vehicle;

3. Requiring photographic evidence of the violation;

4. Setting reasonable and non-excessive fees through statute or rule; and

5. Setting penalties for towing companies or towers who violate the towing laws.

Of these five provisions, a prohibition against compensating or employing spotters is the only provision not included in current Ohio law. Ohio already has provisions prohibiting a towing company from compensating the owner, agent or employee of a parking lot, and has requirements for owners to have a written contract with a towing company for towing services.

No vehicle should be towed for being parked outside of an apartment building because a person is running in and back out to their car for a quick stop. Parking signs are too small and inconspicuous. The prohibition against compensating or employing spotters works to prevent any person or group of people from financially benefiting from excessive towing. Also, towing companies who do not employ spotters are already at a disadvantage to those who employ spotters. House Bill 113 is a necessary piece of legislation to protect citizens from excessive towing and to prevent towing companies financially benefitting from the use of spotters.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of House Bill 113 and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.