



## **Proponent Testimony HB 328**

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice Chairman Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 328.

The Ohio Insurance Agents Association (OIA) is the collective voice of 1,200 independent agencies that employ nearly 11,000 Ohioans. We promote, progress, and protect the profession and the guidance only independent insurance agents provide. Independent insurance agents are trusted advisors to Ohio citizens and businesses and are responsible for servicing 85% of the commercial policies and 44% of the personal policies in the state. Independent agents offer many types of insurance – auto, health, home, life, and business insurance – from many different companies to match consumers with the best choices for their particular needs.

We are writing today in support of HB 328. We have seen across the nation a staggering increase in the theft of catalytic converters. With the rising costs of precious metals, the theft of catalytic converters has become a lucrative crime. The National Insurance Crime Bureau announced that its data showed a 1,215% increase from 2019 to 2022 in catalytic converter thefts. Furthermore, to get a replacement installed costs can be thousands of dollars for the parts and labor, which puts a burden on consumers and the insurance industry who handles these claims.

HB 328 is a step in the right direction as it seeks to put measures in place to lessen this sharp increase in thefts we've been seeing. Making catalytic converters a special purchase article, prohibiting motor vehicle salvage dealers from purchasing individual parts and establishing the catalytic converter theft task force. These are all excellent steps to protecting Ohioans.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to support HB 328 and to the sponsors Representative Roemer and Representative Plummer for bringing forward this important legislation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me.

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