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Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 165
Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
December 13, 2023

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 165.

Catalytic converter theft is on the rise in Ohio, as many of you have probably heard from your constituents and communities. A year ago, Ohio police reported that in a 14-month period, as many as 13,000 catalytic converters had been stolen in one theft ring alone.¹ These converters are valuable and serve an essential environmental function to vehicles, but are unfortunately easy for potential thieves to access. Once thieves have removed the catalytic converter, they can sell the part at a scrap yard and make a significant profit.

This legislation addresses the issue in several ways:

- Categorizes a catalytic converter as a “special purchase article” in the Revised Code, therefore requiring scrap metal dealers or other entities purchasing the converter to obtain proof of ownership from the seller. This proof of ownership must include:
 - If the seller owns the car, the car’s title or registration along with a repair receipt indicating replacement of the catalytic converter and the car’s make, model, year, and vehicle identification number;

¹ <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/crime/2022/09/15/six-arrested-in-theft-of-13000-catalytic-converters-in-central-ohio/69497324007/>

- If the seller is a motor vehicle collision repair operator, the operator's registration certificate along with a receipt indicating replacement of the catalytic converter and the make, model, year, and vehicle identification number.
- Expands the authority of the Ohio Department of Public Safety to ensure unlicensed scrap yards, or other businesses acting as scrap yards and thus skirting current law, are operating lawfully.
- Requires the Department to ensure local law enforcement is reacting appropriately to catalytic converter theft, and allows for retribution assessed for the theft of catalytic converters to go back to the law enforcement agencies responsible for investigating the crime
- Partners with pending bipartisan legislation from Senator JD Vance, should his bill pass, to prohibit the sale of converters that do not have a vehicle identification number matching the title presented²
- Requires the Attorney General to create the Catalytic Converter Task Force under the Organized Crime Investigations Commission to assist law enforcement in investigating and prosecuting this crime

These steps are crucial to preventing the theft of catalytic converters and empowering local law enforcement to go after those who break the law. Thank you again for your time and attention. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

² <https://www.vance.senate.gov/press-releases/part-act/>