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STATEMENT
OF
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WASHINGTON, D.C. REPRESENTATIVE
AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE ASSOCIATION

BEFORE THE
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

FEBRUARY 22, 2011

Good morning, my name is Bob Redding. I am the Washington, D.C. Representative for the Automotive Service Association (ASA). ASA is the oldest and largest national trade organization in the automotive industry with the distinction of serving only those businesses that perform service and repairs for the motoring public. ASA's Board of Directors is made up of independent automotive repair shop owners, small business men and women from all over the United States.

ASA has been involved in the Right to Repair legislation debate for a decade at the state and federal levels. Since 2002, we have seen Right to Repair bills introduced in the Congress each session. No committee in Congress has ever passed the legislation despite many hearings in multiple committees. Up to seven states each year have seen Right to Repair legislation introduced. No state has passed the Right to Repair legislation despite more than a decade of activity on this legislation.

ASA originally supported Right to Repair legislation. Our members were concerned about the post-1996 vehicles that were moving out of warranty from the dealership bays to independent repair shops. In the summer of 2002, the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on the Right to Repair legislation. U.S. Senators Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and the late Paul Wellstone (D-MN) had shown the most interest in Right to Repair legislation. Consumer Subcommittee Chairman Dorgan closed the hearing by challenging independent repairers and auto manufacturers to get together and try to come to a voluntary resolve to the service information issues. In September 2002, ASA signed a voluntary agreement with the automobile manufacturers assuring

independent repair shops the same emission and non-emission related service information, training information and diagnostic tools as provided franchised new car dealers. The automakers have kept their commitment.

The National Automotive Service Task Force (NASTF), a voluntary industry organization, has served as a mechanism to share information and resolve issues that arise in the areas of service information, tools and training. In the United States, we have about 500 million post-warranty repair service orders each year. Independent repair facilities repair approximately 75% of these cars. As you have heard today from Mr. Pyle's testimony, the NASTF is designed to address gaps in information that may occur in the repair. ASA and other industry partners have spent a great deal of time and resources on marketing the NASTF to independent repairers, encouraging repairers to contact NASTF if they had difficulty obtaining repair information from their third party information provider or from the automaker websites. In 2008, the total number of service information requests received by NASTF was 44. This is out of 500,000,000 post warranty repairs nationwide. In 2009, we had a total number of 45 requests for information and 65 requests in 2010. No requests to NASTF from Connecticut repairers despite hundreds of thousands of dollars spent marketing NASTF in the aftermarket.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Better Business Bureau have both told the U.S. Congress, in public hearings, that legislation is not needed to address automotive service information issues. The FTC has also told the Congress at two separate hearings that they were not receiving complaints from consumers or repair facilities about the lack of service information.

In the overwhelming majority of repairs, independent repair shops are going to the same information sources they have used in the past, third-party providers. We have an additional option for repairers today, automaker websites. Some independents are choosing to drop their third-party information subscriptions and opt for using automaker sites only. Having a choice for service information is good for our industry.

NASTF continues to advance our industry. We have a process to address secure data issues such as those encountered with key codes. We have an arbitration program in place and a professional staff. Our meetings are open to the public and free. I strongly encourage you to go to the website and see for yourself how NASTF works and how it contributes to our industry. You may view the site at www.nastf.org.

Right to repair legislation is not the answer to our industry's needs. With the increased federal research dollars in clean fuel and clean engine technologies, our repair technicians will need additional, more frequent training. If you want to help our shops, put more resources in state vocational programs that encourage young people to enter our industry and equip them with the skills they need to succeed.

Thank you for allowing me to be here today on behalf of ASA.