



**TESTIMONY OF
THE AUTO BODY ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT (ABAC)
BEFORE THE
INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
JANUARY 31, 2013
OPPOSING
HB-5072, AAC AUTOMOTIVE GLASS WORK**

The Auto Body Association of Connecticut (ABAC), a statewide trade association of professionals dedicated to the advancement of the collision repair industry, through safe quality repairs for Connecticut consumers, respectfully submits the following comments opposing HB-5072 as currently drafted:

The Auto Body Association of Connecticut (ABAC) opposes HB-5072 as currently drafted. As written, the impact of this legislation will not serve the public well and does not protect consumers or small businesses engaged in glass or auto body repair work. Furthermore, amending the existing "anti-steering" statute for motor vehicle repair shops, which are licensed and regulated by the Department of Motor Vehicles, to try to make it work for glass shops, which are licensed and regulated by the Department of Consumer Protection, does not make sense, will only lead to confusion within the industries, and could potentially lead to future erosion of the protections afforded auto body repair shops by Connecticut's strong anti-steering law.

The language offered in Section 2 (lines 33 to 41) of the bill, specifically the implications of the word "unless" in line 38 and the clause that follows, will weaken consumer protections by allowing insurers to more aggressively steer business to their contract shops engaged in the glass repair business. Steering is a major problem for this state's motoring public. The proposed bill would actually encourage and potentially legitimize steering in the glass industry, and could potentially recognize insurers as having involvement in the repair process, either in glass or collision repair, along with a host of other concerns.

While we are empathetic to the needs of the independent glass shops and all-too-well understand their plight, HB-5072 as currently written is not the way to address their issue, and again, will only cause confusion and weaken existing protections. Rather, in the alternative, the ABAC suggests HB-5072 be redrafted in such a way to provide the glass shops their own protections in a new or different section of statute in order to avoid confusion and potentially weakening of the anti-steering statute (38a-354) for motor vehicle repair shops.

The ABAC stands ready and willing to work with the Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Committee to help address our concerns and to continue to protect consumer interests and provide an insurer-influence-free, competitive marketplace for Connecticut's small businesses. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.