

Testimony of Tamara Jackson
In Opposition to
SB 3- An Act Concerning the Licensing of New and Used Car Dealers
Transportation Public Hearing
Legislative Office Building,
Hartford, Connecticut
March 2, 2016

Good Afternoon, Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, Senator Boucher, Representative O' Dea, and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Tamara Jackson. I am the President Dealer principal of Jackson Chevrolet in Middletown. I am here today to speak in opposition to SB 3, An Act Concerning the Licensing of New and Used Car Dealers.

One of the arguments I hear from Tesla and their supporters is that Connecticut car dealers do not want to sell Electric Vehicles (EVs). This is entirely untrue.

All Connecticut auto dealers are fully committed to selling EVs. We invite legislators to visit dealerships and see the many different kinds of vehicles we have on our lots. With Connecticut's new EV rebate program that began last May, CHEAPR, Connecticut dealerships sold more EVs in 2015 than we have ever before. People are seeing how the EVs are reasonably priced, look good, are good for the environment, and they can travel many miles.

Dealerships helped to design the CHEAPR program. We have and continue to promote CHEAPR at a number of different events around the state. The President of CARA Jim Fleming received the prestigious U. S. Environmental Merit Award last year from the EPA his work with DEEP and dealers on CHEAPR and clean energy issues. We were so pleased to see what a great successes the program has been and how more money was added to CHEAPR in November.

What's this bill really all about? Tesla need for an exception to the franchise law because they sell electric vehicles doesn't compute to me because we are already selling electric vehicles through the franchise system under numerous manufacturer's brands in Connecticut today. Tesla could do the same as quickly as it would take to sign a dealer agreement. I agree wholeheartedly that we must work together with the manufacturers to reduce our carbon footprint. We are proud to sell the Chevrolet Volt and are anxiously awaiting the Bolt which will transact at an attractive and accessible price point and is said to be in the 200 mile range. Pretty Exciting. The Bolt is also on display right now in front of the LOB, hope you will take a look at this high tech affordable family electric vehicle.

Tesla says they will add jobs – ones that appeal to young people... If Tesla were to enter into franchise agreements as other manufacturers do, those jobs would still be created. Manufacturers spell out what they require of their Dealers, separate buildings and exclusive staffs are definitely within that scope. If you take a look at the some of my team members who came here with me today, you will see that young people are entering this field today under the Chevrolet brand. The retail automotive industry has evolved significantly in just the last few years and young people are quickly seeing that they can have successful, fruitful and professional careers with us.

Tesla has publicly indicated that they will utilize the franchise system and from the sounds of it already have that ball rolling in some states. One reason they will need to utilize the system is that no manufacturer would be able to carry the cost of any appreciable amount of grounded inventory – that’s just one of the many things we Dealers do – we take on the risk of those carrying costs.

Utilization of the franchise system is inevitable because it works for consumers and makes sense for manufacturers. Let’s work together to bring Tesla into Connecticut under the current law.

The EVs being sold today in Connecticut are from many different manufacturing labels: BMW, Audi, GM, Ford, Honda, Toyota, Volvo, and Mercedes have all arrived with an EV or will soon be here with their version that will sell through dealerships in Connecticut. If Tesla is having trouble selling their car it is because it is not priced for the average person at \$100,000 with all the bells and whistles. The GM Bolt, priced around \$30,000 and with a driving distance of 200 miles, combine that with the massive dealership and marketing network of GM, this EV is about to go mainstream. Connecticut dealers are able and ready to meet this demand.

The technicians that work at our dealerships are trained to work on different cars that are sold. This includes the EVs we sell. Our technicians know how to replace parts, fix pieces, work on computers and have the car working again. They also know how to work with the manufacturers on any recalls and warranty issues. We do this well. The system Tesla wants to set up will not do this. Consumers will be hurt.

Many dealers across the state also offer charging stations to customers and visitors. Charging stations that all different kinds of EVs use. With all the charging stations around the state, Connecticut’s range anxiety is very low.

I urge you not to pass SB 3. This is bad legislation and it really is not necessary to pass in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time.