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## **House Small Business Committee Rebukes AAIA on ‘Right to Repair’**

Washington, D.C. — At a hearing of the House Small Business Committee, members of Congress and the chairman of the Federal Trade Commission strongly questioned the testimony of the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association and seemed unconvinced that the so-called “Right to Repair” legislation was necessary.

At a recent patent hearing AAIA’s vice president, Government Affairs, said, “With the cost of gasoline escalating at unprecedented rates, car owners still have access to the most affordable and convenient vehicle service industry in the world thanks largely to the fact that car owners have a choice as to where they have their vehicle repaired and with what parts. There are very few other products that boast such a strong market for the service of that product and many motorists take for granted the fact that they can take their car anywhere they want for service and purchase replacement parts that meets their price and quality needs.”

Lowe’s testimony at today’s hearing caused some members, including Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (R-Ga.), to question AAIA’s reasons for supporting the legislation and ask, “Has AAIA or its distributor members filed complaints with the National Automotive Service Task Force?” The FTC chairman had already confirmed that they had received no vehicle service information complaints and stated that the FTC had encouraged such a voluntary industry solution as the NASTF. In response to a question from Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), Federal Trade Commission Chair William Kovacic said “that the automotive sector today – compared with years past – offers better choices for the consumer for automotive repair.”

Automakers, auto dealers and independent repairers have urged proponents of the so-called “Right to Repair” legislation to redirect their energies and resources to work within the cooperative framework of the National Automotive Service Task Force (NASTF).

Since its initial introduction in 2001, the “right to repair” legislation has been rejected by the U.S. Congress and state legislatures in Florida, Oklahoma, Maine, New York, Nevada and New Jersey, and most recently Massachusetts. A majority of legislators agree that the voluntary agreement, put in place in 2002 and overseen by the U.S. Congress, is preferable to legislating a solution in search of a problem.

Historically, about 75 percent of post-warranty vehicle service and repairs are performed in non-dealer shops. The auto industry views these non-dealer shops as important players in providing service to their mutual customers, the driving public. Just as motor vehicles have become more complex, the servicing of them has also become a high-technology business requiring skilled, trained technicians and a sizeable investment in diagnostic and repair equipment.

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