

Summary for Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade

Hearing: Examining Legislative Options to Strengthen Motor Vehicle Safety, Ensure Consumer Choice and Affordability, and Cement U.S. Automotive Leadership

Testimony of Bill Hanvey, President and CEO, Auto Care Association

January 13, 2026

1. The Auto Care Association appreciates the commitment of the sponsors of the bills being considered at the hearing and stands ready to work with each sponsor to provide support and comment on how best to make our roads the safest they can be.
2. The Auto Care Association supports the inclusion of H.R. 1566, the Right to Equitable and Professional Auto Industry Repair (REPAIR) Act, in the safety title of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act.
 - a. This legislation is supported by 42 bipartisan cosponsors.
 - b. The REPAIR Act has been thoroughly reviewed and will immediately enhance safety for vehicle owners.
 - c. Vehicle manufacturers are increasingly restricting access to critical repair and maintenance data to owners and independent repair shops, forcing vehicle owners into franchise dealer repair facilities, where costs are, on average, 36% higher and repair wait times are significantly longer.
 - d. Dr. Dunn and the other cosponsors have effectively addressed concerns related to commercial vehicles, intellectual property, cybersecurity, and state laws raised by the manufacturers and the franchise dealers.
 - e. Without the REPAIR Act, the automotive aftermarket will cease to exist in any meaningful way, which in the long term will result in a vertically integrated automotive industry, sending prices skyrocketing, quality plummeting, and eliminating consumer choice.

Testimony of Bill Hanvey
President and CEO, Auto Care Association
Bethesda, Maryland
Before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade of
the Energy and Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
January 13, 2026

Chairman Bilirakis, Ranking Member Schakowsky, and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Bill Hanvey. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Auto Care Association, the nation's only trade association representing the entire supply chain of the automotive aftermarket. On behalf of the more than 525,000 businesses and over 4.9 million employees that comprise the more than \$500 billion automotive aftermarket, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify about various policy proposals related to vehicle safety. Auto Care Association's top priority on behalf of its members, and really all American vehicle owners, is the inclusion of the REPAIR Act in the safety title of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act. First, however, let me touch on some of the other initiatives the Subcommittee is considering today.

The ADAS Functionality and Integrity Act, authored by Representatives Harshbarger, Obernolte, Vasquez and Torres, will ensure that aftermarket businesses have the information they need to properly and safely calibrate advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) in vehicles after modification. Owners should be able to modify their vehicles, like installing a bike rack, without compromising the safety of their vehicle. Research indicates that over 50 million vehicles or trucks are modified or accessorized each year, and with the upcoming mandates that vehicles be equipped with ADAS technology, this legislation is timely and important to both vehicle owners and aftermarket businesses.

The DRIVER Act, recently introduced by Representatives Harshbarger, Weber and Perry, has some important provisions that would ensure improved vehicle safety, including a provision to prevent vehicle owner data from falling into the hands of foreign adversaries of the United States. While the Committee continues to consider the overarching issue of data privacy, it should consider some of the provisions in the DRIVER Act, which would serve to enhance vehicle owner's rights, safety, and autonomy. I commend the authors of the legislation for taking on the issue and our Association stands ready to work with them and the Committee on this legislation as it moves through the legislative process.

Representatives Latta and Dingell have led the effort to develop legislation to ensure that autonomous vehicles can operate safely under a consistent federal framework. While we have not closely reviewed the updated version of the legislation, Auto Care Association supports this effort in principle and believes that federal legislation is necessary to ensure the safety of autonomous vehicles today and in the future. As such, we are prepared to work with all stakeholders to promote such a framework.

The Subcommittee also is considering several other pieces of legislation today that aim to enhance passenger, vehicle, and pedestrian safety, and I would like to commend each of the authors of those bills for their efforts to make our roads a safer environment for everyone. Chairman Guthrie's plan to empower NHTSA to be proactive in its rulemaking on safety standards and provide certainty to businesses on what they can expect in the short and long term from the agency is a welcomed effort. Representatives Dingell and Crenshaw take on the important issue of protecting survivors

of domestic and sexual violence from having their vehicle use turned against them. My Association is ready to work with each sponsor to provide support and comment on how best to make our roads the safest they can be.

While these bills are worthy of consideration for inclusion in the Safety Title, the REPAIR Act represents the most complete and thoroughly examined bill that will immediately enhance safety for vehicle owners. On behalf of our essential industry, I am grateful for the continued support of so many of you who have worked with Dr. Dunn, stakeholders in the automotive aftermarket industry, the business community, the trucking community, and consumer groups to improve this legislation at each step of the process. Dr. Dunn has worked tirelessly with the Subcommittee on this bill from the first hearing on this critical issue last Congress. At that hearing, he promised to engage with all interested parties, and the result of those conversations is the current REPAIR Act, a collaborative effort incorporating priorities of the Members of this Committee, automakers, the aftermarket, and consumer groups.

With 42 bipartisan cosponsors from 22 states and the District of Columbia, from both coasts, and from rural, suburban, and urban areas of America, the legislation before you today is worthy of inclusion in the upcoming safety title of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization legislation. Ensuring safe, affordable, and accessible repair is paramount to highway safety. According to a recent national poll, more than 83% of Americans support the REPAIR Act. Support for vehicle right to repair is strongly bipartisan, with 84% of Republicans and 82% of Democrats supporting the bill.

I have spent the past 40 years in the automotive aftermarket industry, the past ten in my current role, and I can tell you from a lifetime of experience that the advancements in vehicle technology over the decades have enhanced passenger safety, improved fuel efficiency, and created an array of conveniences for vehicle owners. While we should commend our friends in the automotive manufacturing sector for creating best in class passenger and heavy-duty vehicles, the automotive aftermarket, my industry, is essential to ensuring the safety, longevity, and affordability of these vehicles.

Since there have been cars and trucks, there has been an aftermarket performing repairs, manufacturing, selling parts, distributing parts, and ensuring that vehicle owners can choose where to get their vehicles serviced. And over and over, vehicle owners choose the independent aftermarket. In fact, the nation's more than 265,000 independent repair shops have historically performed more than 70 percent of all out of warranty repairs because these shops are reliable, accessible, and affordable to vehicle owners.

The need for the REPAIR Act is critical and real. Over the last ten years, owners have seen threats to their repair choices. Vehicle manufacturers are increasingly restricting access to critical repair and maintenance data to owners and independent repair shops, forcing vehicle owners into franchise dealer repair facilities, where costs are, on average, 36% higher and repair wait times are significantly longer.

Today's vehicles are far more technologically advanced than the vehicles of the past - they are computers on wheels. Today, manufacturers use secure gateways to block access to repair and

maintenance data housed on the vehicle. Today, unlike in the past, manufacturers pull terabytes of vehicle data from their vehicles to manufacturer-controlled clouds over wireless networks. Automakers unilaterally control those clouds and the data housed in them. Not the owner of the vehicle. Not the independent repair shop trying to repair the vehicle. It may be your car, but it is the manufacturers' data, to do with as they choose. And what they choose to do is to monetize this data by selling it to third parties like insurance companies, ticket sellers, coffee shops and fast-food restaurants, or anyone else willing to pay for it. All while restricting the vehicle owner from getting the car repaired anywhere but the dealership.

A 2024 survey of independent repair shops concluded that shops send 1 to 5 vehicles each month back to the dealerships due to repair data restrictions, costing consumers upwards of \$3 billion in added repair expenses. For example, a new model vehicle requires the technician to put the car into dealer “service mode” to complete a simple windshield wiper change. Another new vehicle model requires an Electric Control Module reset (with a dealer code) to change the battery. In yet another vehicle, a repair took more than three months due to the inability of the independent shop to reprogram a tailgate motor after they had installed it, requiring a trip to the dealer to complete the repair. These are just some of the many examples of manufacturers blocking access to repair and maintenance data, and we can expect the issues to get worse as recent models start to come out of warranty. BMW, for example, just filed a patent for a unique screw design that a technician can only remove with a dealer tool.

The REPAIR Act is as critical for commercial vehicles as it is for passenger cars. There are millions of large commercial vehicles on the road. Against that operating population, the franchised dealer

footprint is finite. American Truck Dealers reports approximately 5,600 medium- and heavy-duty truck franchises nationwide. Even assuming every franchise has robust service capacity, that network cannot be the only option for maintaining an aging, high-utilization commercial fleet.

Geography compounds the problem. Dealer locations are unevenly distributed across the country, particularly along rural freight corridors and in remote service regions. In many areas, fleets may have access to only one authorized dealer within hundreds of miles. Relying exclusively on that limited footprint can require long tows, extended downtime, and costly operational disruptions. The commercial aftermarket, including independent repair facilities, mobile service providers, and fleet maintenance operations, fills this gap by providing local and timely service coverage.

Moreover, repair professionals have accessed repair and maintenance data on multi-vendor bespoke trucks for over 100 years. This access occurs either through the centralized control system or by connecting diagnostic tools directly to individual electronic control units. In either case, each component generates and broadcasts its own diagnostic and repair information – it is just a matter of whether the integrator builds a central data access point or separate data access points. In both cases, the manufacturer provides the repair data. There is nothing new or unique about this multi-vendor environment. Allowing manufacturers to cite multi-vendor complexity as a basis for withholding repair data would effectively permit design choices to dictate competition outcomes, contrary to long-standing repair norms in the commercial trucking industry.

The REPAIR Act is pro-consumer legislation that will ensure that vehicle owners can choose where to have their vehicles professionally and safely repaired today and in the future. The legislation

requires that the vehicle manufacturers provide repair, maintenance, and diagnostic data to the designee of the vehicle owner in the same manner, time frame, and for the same cost as it provides the data to themselves, their franchised dealers, or authorized service providers. Let me be clear, nothing in the legislation deals with personal data or any other data that is not relevant to the repair, maintenance, or diagnosis of the vehicle – manufacturers are free to continue to monetize that data set. The REPAIR Act simply maintains the options that vehicle owners have always had in this new, technologically advanced world in which we live.

Over the course of the work on this bill, I believe Dr. Dunn and the other co-sponsors have effectively addressed the concerns raised by the manufacturers and the franchise dealers. I would like to highlight some of those points here. For example, the automakers argue that the REPAIR Act will interfere with their intellectual property rights. The bill, however, now contains explicit language that states that nothing in the Act “limit[s] or expand[s] any law or right relating to intellectual property.” While not required given the various federal statutes that apply to the REPAIR Act and already protect intellectual property, the language in the bill adds a belt to the existing suspenders to ensure the protections are explicit. To further support the point, I am happy to provide a written legal opinion from Seth D. Greenstein, Partner at Constantine Cannon LLP, a firm which has a practice focusing on Intellectual Property and Technology law, confirming that the REPAIR Act does not impact any intellectual property rights currently afforded to manufacturers. I would encourage Subcommittee Members to review this opinion if you have any concerns relating to intellectual property and the REPAIR Act.

This version of the REPAIR Act also addresses the issue of cybersecurity, often raised by the manufacturers. In fact, the manufacturers gained far more control over the impacted data in this version, which requires the aftermarket to receive the repair and maintenance data in the same manner and under the same cybersecurity protections as their franchise dealers, authorized service providers, or themselves. This could mean additional costs for the independent repair shops to comply with this new delivery mechanism, but this change was made to ensure this data is protected throughout the repair process. Because we know the manufacturers are transmitting terabytes of wireless data each year to parties that are paying for the vehicle owners' personal data, they must feel that the transmission is safe and secure. Thus, requiring the aftermarket to receive repair data the same way must also be safe and secure, and I appreciate Dr. Dunn and his colleagues working through this issue together.

Vehicle manufacturers and franchise dealers have spent considerable time and resources fighting the REPAIR Act as well as the state vehicle right to repair laws in Massachusetts and Maine. Voters overwhelmingly passed automotive right to repair in both Massachusetts (75%) and Maine (84%); the automakers, however, have made no effort to comply with the laws in either state. To this day, those voters remain without right to repair, which is why this fight has been brought to Congress. As a member of the Coalition for Auto Repair Equality (CARE), the main advocacy group behind these state initiatives, I speak for the Board when I ask this Committee to include the REPAIR Act in the Safety Title to finally ensure that voters in Massachusetts, Maine, and every other state in the Union can rely on their right to repair their own vehicles.

In addition to protecting the competitive marketplace, which I believe is the underpinning of America's success, ensuring safe and affordable vehicle repair is also an economic issue. Imagine the plumber who has one truck for his or her work and the wait time is three days to get it fixed at the dealership because the plumber's local repair shop cannot access the truck's repair data. That is three days of no pay. The same is true for the independent owner operator truck driver, who may need to wait a week or more to get his or her truck fixed and back on the road, but if he or she could exercise his or her choice to take it to an independent repair facility, he or she could be running the next day. The REPAIR Act has real consequences for working men and women across the country, which is why it has been supported by so many organizations like the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the National Independent Automotive Dealers Association (NIADA), and the National Association of Truck Stop Owners (NATSO).

Equal access to repair and maintenance data is critical to a thriving independent aftermarket and consumer choice and affordability. The independent repair shops in your congressional districts are cornerstones in their communities. They provide jobs for your constituents, training opportunities for aspiring technicians, and reliable service for your constituents who need their vehicles to drive to their jobs and get their children to school and daycare. Without the REPAIR Act, the automotive aftermarket will cease to exist in any meaningful way, which in the long term will result in a vertically integrated automotive industry, sending prices skyrocketing, quality plummeting and eliminating consumer choice.

The independent aftermarket is an essential economic engine in every state across the nation. The REPAIR Act eliminates an existential threat to these jobs and the economy, while ensuring a robust

ecosystem of repair options. Consumers and fleet owners will be able to select their repair facility of choice and have access to a variety of aftermarket parts. Independent repair shops will continue to be able to provide timely and quality repair and maintenance choices to their customers.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today, and I look forward to your questions.