

February 8, 2025

**Maryland House of Representatives Committee on Economic Matters
230 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401**

Hello, my name is Tod Moore, and I am a manager of Grassroots and Advocacy for the Auto Care Association. Chairman Wilson and members of the Economic Matters Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important topic.

We are a national trade association comprised of more than 3000 member companies and affiliates that manufacture, distribute, and sell motor vehicle parts, accessories, services, tools, equipment, materials, and supplies. The Auto Care Association is the voice of the auto care industry – a \$516 billion plus industry comprised of more than 4.7 million American professionals. In Maryland, our industry includes 42,117 jobs, generates \$6.7 billion in economic activity, and provides \$2.7 billion in wages.

HB 843 protects a vehicle owner's right to have their vehicle fixed at the repair shop of their choice, as well as access the same critical repair and maintenance data. Today, the vehicle manufacturer maintains exclusive rights to that information and decides who, when, and for what cost such information will be provided.

Advances in automotive technology since 2013 are now raising new challenges for access to in-vehicle data that did not exist previously. Car companies are building proprietary firewalls around their on-board diagnostic systems. This results in independent shops having to request authorization from the manufacturer before accessing critical repair data.

These restrictions will only get worse as the vehicles continue to transmit terabytes of data that can be monetized by manufacturers. An independent survey concluded that 51% of independent repair shops send up to five cars each month to the dealer for repair; they are restricted from performing the repair. 63% of shops surveyed reported experiencing a restriction on repair data daily or weekly.

Without a vibrant aftermarket, vehicle owners will have fewer choices and less competition for better services, leading to higher repair costs and limited options for maintenance. A 2020 study found that, on average, repairs at franchised automotive dealers cost 36.2% more than those performed by independent shops. Allowing consumers to choose local repair shops instead of traveling farther to dealerships saves both time and money. When repairs are more affordable and accessible, people are more likely to get them done, keeping vehicles safer on the road. As inflation strains household budgets, promoting competition and lower prices in Maryland is more important than ever.



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Right to repair is an existential issue for the automotive aftermarket and for consumer choice.
We appreciate your attention to and consideration of this important issue.