

Randal H. Ward, CAE, President
11245 Chantilly Parkway Court
Montgomery, AL 36117-7585



334.834.1848
800.239.7779
f 334.834.1818
www.aaas.us

April 22, 2008

The Honorable Hank Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives
1133 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Please Co-Sponsor H.R. 5638

Dear Representative Johnson:

On behalf of the Automotive Aftermarket Association Southeast (AAAS), I strongly urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 5638, a critical bill recently introduced by your colleague, Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.). This important legislation will preserve competition in the automotive aftermarket parts and repair industry, providing protection for millions of consumers.

H.R. 5638 would amend Title 35, U.S. Code (Patents) to provide design patent exemption for alternative repair parts used for the purpose of repairing a vehicle to its original appearance.

For your constituents already feeling the squeeze from soaring gas prices during daily commutes, this proposed legislation will help to keep the costs of repairs down by guaranteeing the availability of affordable, quality alternatives for vehicles following collisions. H.R. 5638 is a win for consumers in Georgia and for the state's aftermarket industry, which in 2007 employed more than 62,000 hard-working Americans and represented annual sales in Georgia of approximately \$7.9 billion.

The availability of quality replacement parts in the aftermarket industry provides a tremendous benefit to American consumers—these parts are typically 26 to 50 percent less expensive than those issued by manufacturers, saving consumers up to \$1.5 billion a year. Elimination of this competition through the enforcement of design patents on specific replacement collision parts will increase the price of items your constituents need after even the most minor of fender-benders and threatens to raise the price of insurance premiums for all consumers.

Please help to preserve a 60 year tradition of free markets and fair prices in the replacement collision parts industry by co-sponsoring H.R. 5638. In the interim, I would be delighted to talk with you about how H.R. 5638 can safeguard consumers' rights and competition—in essence, the American way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randal H. Ward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Randal H Ward, President
Automotive Aftermarket Association Southeast

"A Trade Association Representing the Automotive Parts Manufacture, Distribution, Service & Repair Industry"