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HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING

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Erie, Pennsylvania

DEBRA ENGELSKIRGER

Court Reporter · Notary Public

2645 Wolverine Drive

Erie, PA 16511

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1 JOHN DAVIES: Good morning. This is the third in
2 series of Public Hearings that the House of
3 Representatives of the Commonwealth are holding on
4 House Bill 562, Printer's No. 589. I'll have the
5 representatives identify themselves and their
6 districts. I understand there are two that will be
7 here late, and when they arrive I'll have them
8 identify themselves to dispel any concerns that
9 were brought up yesterday. We did read into the
10 record the time and place of the public notice,
11 as far as the press was concerned, to dispel any
12 concerns that it was not properly advertised by the
13 Chief Clerk as required by the Sunshine Provisions
14 of Pennsylvania law.

15 Gentlemen, if you will identify yourselves
16 and your districts, then we'll go on with the
17 first of the people to testify.

18 MERLE PHILLIPS: I'm Merle Phillips, 108th
19 District.

20 CARL BOYCE: Carl Boyce, 3rd District, and I wish
21 to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to welcome
22 the committee to Erie County.

23 JOHN DAVIES: Thank you, sir.

24 THOMAS TIGUE: I'm Tom Tigue, 118th Distirct,

1 which includes parts of Luzerne, Lackawanna, and
2 Monroe Counties.

3 JIM MARTINI: Jim Martini, Executive Director of
4 the House Transportation Committee.

5 PAUL LANDIS: Paul Landis, Executive Director of
6 the House Majority Transportation Committee.

7 JOHN DAVIES: Okay. With that we'll start with
8 Mr. Gene Beeman of the Office of Budget
9 Administration Division program and planning
10 evaluation.

11 GENE BEEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, good morning. I have
12 essentially the same testimony that I gave yesterday. I would
13 like to hit the highlights of our study and others that we
14 reviewed in doing our study, which has become the basis for the
15 proposal for an annual inspection as opposed to semi-annual.

16 Let me begin by saying, my purpose here is really not to
17 argue the point of semi-annual versus annual; that is, from value
18 point of view I have no concern about it whatsoever. My purpose
19 here is simply to inform the committee and its guests of the
20 evidence that has been generated since the late '60's, when
21 concern among the research community began to be manifest as
22 the result of a chart I'll show you later.

23 All auto inspection systems currently in place, and those
24 which have been in place and have been revoked, are based really

1 on two assumptions. There is an explicit assumption that a large
2 portion of serious accidents occurring on our highways are due
3 to mechanical malfunction, out of tolerance, vehicle components,
4 or out and out failures. The assumption, I think, further states
5 that these failures, malfunctions, and out of tolerance conditions
6 on automobiles are primary causes, rather than contributory or
7 of lesser importance.

8 In addition, it is assumed that inspection systems, whether
9 they're privately owned, inspection systems such as Pennsylvania
10 or state owned, or just merely random, have the capability to
11 intercede in the automotive fleet and detect these malfunctioning
12 components and remove them. The inference being thereby
13 reducing the serious traffic accidents, some portion of them.

14 Now, the implicit assumption in all of this is that regardless
15 of the stringency and the frequency of motor vehicle inspections,
16 somehow those are all worth the cost. That is to say a semi-
17 annual inspection ought to give twice the benefit that an annual
18 inspection does, and that it ought to justify its two-fold cost
19 as well. And the same goes for stringency; that is, the number
20 of components that are actually inspected at each interval.

21 Most of the semi-annual states that retain a semi-annual
22 inspection system, that is, began quite early. Pennsylvania's,
23 of course, began in 1929. We've had it for nearly fifty years.
24 But until 1968, '69, and the early '70's, no real credible

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1 research was done to demonstrate whether inspection systems
2 actually do mitigate the incidence of serious motor vehicle
3 accidents. And furthermore, that is justified in part by a real
4 lack of requirement. The National Highway Traffic Safety
5 Administration has published data such as these for several years
6 during those forty or fifty years up until '68 and '70.

7 So you see, the evidence seemed incontrovertible. The states
8 with PMVI consistently had a lower fatal accident rate per hundred
9 million vehicle miles than did those without inspection systems.
10 The yellow line is the national average. You can see they
11 differentiate themselves even from the national average.

12 So the evidence was clear. If we were to include the years
13 beyond this or in back of this, let's say, prior to 1955, you'd
14 see the same kind of differentiation. Those states with long-held
15 inspection systems tend to have lower fatality rates per hundred
16 million vehicle miles; those without tend to have higher.

17 In the early '60's, and in the case of states without
18 inspection systems, the trends began to change rather dramatically.
19 First of all, the national average began to skid downward. Both
20 groups of states followed roughly. But then in 1960 or
21 thereabouts, the states with inspection systems, long-standing
22 inspection systems, the rate of accidents actually began to
23 climb towards the national average. And about the same time,
24 those states without inspection systems, their rate began to slide

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1 towards the national average. And in the late '60's the lines
2 converged and oscillated around the national average. If we were
3 to extend this chart to the present, we would see a continuance
4 of that trend, absolutely unabated. All trends are slightly
5 downward, and the states with and without long-standing inspection
6 systems tend to go above and below, taking their turn alternately
7 above and below the national average fatality rates.

8 This called into question the every efficacy of a large -- what
9 is a large expenditure of public funds on inspection systems. And
10 as a result, a large volume of very credible and sophisticated
11 research began to come out of universities, and government, and
12 other private sources as well.

13 I'd urge you gentlemen not to believe any single study. There
14 is no single study that is definitive on this question or any
15 other social question. I think what you have to look for, and
16 what we looked for, was a preponderance of conclusions of credible
17 research that tended to converge, that tended to agree.

18 Now, beginning in the late '60's, the initial research tried to
19 get at vehicle condition, and whether there was any difference
20 among the states with regard to the integrity of vehicles. Period.
21 No inferences were made about the accident rates in those areas.
22 And indeed, the first two or three studies that came out, which
23 we've cited in our study, did seem to find some differences in
24 more stringent inspection states and states with higher inspection

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1 frequency. However, the samples were extremely small. Three
2 states and the District of Columbia in one case, and only four
3 cities in another. Very very small samples from which to
4 generalize about national trends.

5 Furthermore, the ultra-system study, which was brought up
6 yesterday, which tried to test the differences between vehicle
7 condition among Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and California,
8 Washington, D. C., the differences were extremely small. In fact,
9 we regarded them negligible for all practical purposes. Although
10 they were statistically significant differences, they were very
11 very small.

12 I mentioned yesterday that close on the heels of these two
13 studies was one of the most notable studies in the field, really;
14 the study done by Indiana University in 1972. Their investigations
15 were in-depth, on-site investigations of actual accident
16 situations and evaluations of the car and driver after the
17 accident occurred. Their findings included that about two to
18 three percent of those accidents that they researched, about a
19 hundred and fifty-one, found that vehicle component failures were
20 definite or probable causes of the accident.

21 And I noted yesterday that the State Police data or the
22 Department of Transportation data, when they assigned causal
23 factors to every accident in the state, a maximum of three
24 thousand factors, tend to come out with a primary assignment.

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1 Not an exclusive assignment, but a primary assignment of vehicle
2 component failure or malfunction. There are other causes mixed
3 in, of course, there always is. But since there was some
4 confusion about this yesterday, I would like to ask my associate,
5 Dave Warfel, to come up and walk you through the process of
6 assigning those causal factors, so we can get a better handle on
7 the mix of causes in any given accident. Is that all right with
8 you, Mr. Chairman?

9 JOHN DAVIES: Yes. Shall we hold the questions
10 till the end?

11 GENE BEEMAN: Please do. I have some more.

12 JOHN DAVIES: Okay.

13 DAVE WARFEL: Thank you. I'd like to expand a little bit upon
14 the Pennsylvania accident statistics particularly, since that's
15 the state this Bill is concerned about.

16 When we did the study, we took basically the Pennsylvania
17 accident data from 1969 to 1978. This data is collected by the
18 accident investigators at the scene of the accident. In most
19 cases, local, state police. And the information is recorded on
20 standard accident report forms, sent to the Department of
21 Transportation, who tabulates it and prints out various reports
22 based on the information.

23 As Gene has mentioned, and we certainly will agree, that
24 accidents do have many factors. It's hard to determine what is

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1 the principle cause of any accident. We, in our study, and
2 in many of the other national studies, classify accidents into
3 three major areas, or three major areas of factors; human-type
4 factors, environmental factors. Environmental factors, of course,
5 would deal both with weather conditions and also conditions of
6 the roadway. Most reports consider things like deer running onto
7 the highway as environmental factors. And then, of course, there
8 are vehicle factors which are concerned basically with the various
9 mechanical components.

10 In terms of the Pennsylvania data, the accident investigators
11 can record up to three total possible causal factors on these
12 reports. They don't necessarily have to report three. They can
13 report one, two, or three. It can be in any of the three areas
14 or all in one area. So the data that we have from '69 to '78
15 in terms of -- we keep citing our two to three percent. It's not
16 really two to three percent of all accidents, but two to three
17 percent of all accident causal factors listed on these accident
18 reports are listed as vehicle factors. The remainder are listed
19 as either human or environmental factors.

20 In 1974 through 1976, more or less to see how -- I'm not
21 really sure of the reasoning behind it, but the decision was
22 made for the on-site accident investigator to try to assign one
23 principle cause, if he had to pick it out. This information was
24 collected in addition to the standard way of collecting the

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1 information, which was listing up to a possibility of three.

2 We looked at the 1974 to 1976 data. What this essentially
3 did was give us a one to one correspondence between accidents,
4 and these accidents are fatal accidents, injury accidents, and
5 property damage accidents, in the sum of all three, which are
6 considered just total accidents.

7 So from '74 to '76 the information was described as the
8 principle causal factor, the cause of the accident. When this
9 data was analyzed, this data also came out in the two to three
10 percent range. This can be interpreted as in two to three percent
11 of all the accidents in those three areas, vehicle factors were
12 the cause.

13 They discontinued this in '77, and probably for some very
14 good reasons. The on-site accident investigators were a little
15 uncomfortable with assigning just one cause, and that was
16 probably appropriate on their part. And from '77 to the present
17 now, they still go up to the maximum of three.

18 The data that was cited yesterday and is in our study,
19 basically from '77 to '78, which were the last two years we
20 reported on our study, it does appear that approximately eighty
21 percent of all causal factors identified in Pennsylvania accidents
22 are human-factor related. They are human factors. It could be
23 unattentiveness of the driver, drunken driving, talking to the
24 passenger -- there are many many listed on the reports. Seventeen

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1 percent of all causal factors listed in the accidents in '77 and
2 '78, approximately, were environmental factors. Possibly hitting
3 pot holes, deer running out, slippery roads, other types of
4 weather related things. And three percent, again, of all vehicle
5 causal factors listed were the vehicle factors. This two to
6 three percent range that we found in Pennsylvania, for, again,
7 fatal, injury, property damage accidents, and a combination of
8 all three, is similar to the two to three percent range found in
9 the Indiana study, which most researchers agree is a very good
10 sampling and can, indeed, be generalized to the national accident
11 profile. So our figures in Pennsylvania are very similar. I will
12 return to Gene now.

13 GENE BEEMAN: I think we have to emphasize once again that these
14 aren't exclusive causes, that both in the Indiana study and
15 Pennsylvania data, there is a mixture of causes in this two to
16 three percent.

17 As the chart shows, though, and on page three of the
18 testimony there is a duplicate of the chart, the fatal accident
19 rates seem to be behaving independently of the existence of motor
20 vehicle inspection systems in those states. And this led to a
21 great quantity of research that I think is very very credible,
22 because it takes into account other factors which are thought to
23 be widely to be conducive to or at least associated with an
24 accident level in the state.

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1 Per capita income, percentage of rural travel, general
2 accident deaths in the population, general tendency of the
3 population to get involved in accidents, vehicle miles traveled,
4 some kind of exposure measure, as well as environmental factors,
5 such as weather, road condition, and traffic safety related type
6 expenditures made by public jurisdiction to the states; these
7 tend to be through the states generally, very very heavily
8 associated with the level of accidents in the state. That is,
9 they tend to explain the level of accidents in the states. And
10 it's no different for Pennsylvania.

11 What our study does, is employ nine of the most powerful of
12 these variables, and they include most of the ones I just mentioned,
13 and allow them to have their effect, which is considerable.
14 Between forty and eighty percent of the accident variation among
15 the states is accounted for by these variables alone.

16 Now, the remaining forty to twenty percent of accident
17 variation is -- some of it is a random component, which many
18 researchers believe to be very large and unpredictable, and which
19 indeed probably accounts for much of the variation of accident
20 levels in the states throughout the years, when per capita income
21 and et cetera, don't change very much, and the presence or
22 absence of inspection systems.

23 So what we did was allow these variables to have their
24 effect and then hold them constant, to see what the residual

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1 variation, see what portion of the residual variation could be
2 accounted for by semi-annual and annual and no inspection
3 presence. And our research agrees with the half dozen or so
4 studies that we cite in our literature review. There can be no
5 consistent association of motor -- the presence of motor vehicle
6 inspection systems with that remaining -- with those remaining
7 differences. That is to say the presence or absence of motor
8 vehicle inspection systems don't account for any of the residual
9 difference at all. Which someone said is the same thing as saying
10 MVI has no effect.

11 One other study was mentioned yesterday, which we ran across
12 citations for, but didn't read exactly, but we have the gist of.
13 That is the Johnson study done in Alabama, where they found that
14 inspected vehicles tended to have had nine to twelve percent
15 fewer accidents than do those vehicles that weren't inspected.
16 Well, in the citation that we read and small summaries that we
17 read, we didn't like the looks of it so we didn't include it in
18 our literature review for this reason. Number one, it wasn't
19 related to accidents, as many of the members pointed out yesterday.
20 But farther than that, it was a peculiar process of research.
21 What Mr. Johnson did was ask for volunteers to have their
22 automobiles inspected. Now that right away is a flag to most
23 researchers. There is what we call a self-selection bias. Those
24 people in the population, those people who were asked, that

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1 actually brought their cars forward, had them inspected, were
2 probably more safety conscious in the first place, than those
3 who didn't. So Mr. Johnson created two groups. One of which he
4 asked to have their cars inspected. The other group was composed
5 of the general population. He just went out and selected people
6 and their cars and examined general accident trends from there.
7 It's quite likely, we suspect that those people who brought their
8 cars forward to have them inspected voluntarily had fewer accidents
9 in the first place, without inspections. Their accident histories
10 generally were better. So based on that suspicion, we didn't
11 include it.

12 Getting to our study, I mentioned the variables that we
13 included, and I'd like to spend at least just a minute or so
14 telling you the kinds of measures that we used for accidents and
15 why we selected -- why we would like to talk about fatal accidents,
16 as well as combined injury and fatal accident rates, severity
17 rates.

18 We used six measures of accident occurrence or accident
19 risk. We took fatal accidents, which I think is a better measure
20 of the risk than fatalities, since more than one fatality can
21 occur from a single accident. We used fatal accidents for against
22 million vehicle miles, for ten thousand vehicles registered, and
23 for hundred thousand population. And we did the same thing for
24 combined measure of fatal and injury accidents. That's a total of

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1 six accident measures that we used these variables against.
2 And in only one case, and for one particular year of our three
3 year study, did there turn up to be a significant difference
4 accounted for by PMVI. It would have to be the random inspection
5 seems to be significantly lower. But because it consistently
6 didn't come out that way through the six measures and through
7 the three years, we were, I think, conservative in saying that
8 there is no effect, there just isn't any difference.

9 The last section of our study dealt with the application of
10 Pennsylvania's motor vehicle inspection system. As you gentlemen
11 know, the price is fixed in the market place, but the components
12 to be inspected are a matter of regulation promulgated by the
13 Department of Transportation. The regulations include components,
14 which if examined one hundred percent, totally, the State Police
15 vehicle inspection team agrees, would take about an hour to an
16 hour and a half to look at all the components. It is their
17 contention further that most inspection stations, not all, most
18 take generally thirty to forty minutes to inspect an automobile.
19 Given shop rates, what they are, ten to fifteen dollars per hour,
20 and given that inspections cost nine to twelve dollars, depending
21 on the area of the Commonwealth you're dealing with, we suspect
22 that all components are not being looked at. And furthermore,
23 that individual inspectors are making priority decisions on which
24 components to look at. And there is no assurance that I have, and

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1 that the driving public ought to have, that the correct, that is,
2 the most safety sensitive components are being looked at as a
3 matter of priority clear across the Commonwealth. No assurance
4 whatsoever.

5 That is the last point. I'm open for questions, if you have
6 any.

7 MR. DAVIES: Before we go ahead with questions, I
8 would ask that the representatives that arrived
9 since the testimony began identify themselves,
10 because they may have some questions they want to
11 ask. For the record we just have to have that
12 proper identification.

13 THOMAS MURPHY: Tom Murphy, Pittsburgh.

14 ROBERT BORSKI: Bob Borski, Philadelphia.

15 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Joe Steighner.

16 HARRY BOWSER: Harry Bowser from Erie County.

17 RON GAMBLE: Ron Gamble, Allegheny County.

18 JOHN DAVIES: A little bit of reminiscing from
19 yesterday, the statistician from Altoona claimed
20 that all of those factors just can't be taken into
21 consideration, so they don't compute. So he took
22 that over -- I better not, because I'll be over
23 simplifying. But he took that basic chart and
24 says there it is, it speaks for itself, I don't

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1 care what variables or what else you put in, that's
2 it. And that's the account. What's your resolve
3 to that or what's your pleasure to that particular
4 point, or it can't be addressed or it can be
5 addressed?

6 GENE BEEMAN: It most certainly can be addressed, sir. That
7 gentleman fell into the same trap that the National Highway
8 Traffic Safety Administration did; up until 1968. They looked at
9 the two lines above and below the national average and they just
10 happened to pull out with non-PMVI states and PMVI states. This
11 distinct difference was clear and certainly evidenced for three
12 years. The trends, however, began to change, irrespective of
13 motor vehicle inspection systems. And that kind of reasoning
14 works when you have that clear separation. But when you have
15 this intermingling as you've had for the last dozen years or so,
16 it simply doesn't explain anything. As a matter of fact, in
17 several of the last dozen or so years, inspection states had
18 higher fatality rates per hundred million vehicle miles than
19 those that didn't have inspection systems. Are we then to
20 conclude that inspection systems actually precipitate accidents?
21 We have to. If we have nothing else to explain the trends.

22 Since that time these perturbing variables that you
23 gentlemen referred to, have been found consistently to be
24 powerful explainers of these perverted, if you will, trends. It

1 explains why non-PMVI states happen to surmount in a given year,
2 PMVI states. But furthermore, beyond that, there is a natural
3 fluctuation in an accident, due to weather, due to changes in
4 attitudes, due to driving habits, due to gasoline shortages, due
5 to speed limit enforcements, due to speed limit reductions, all
6 sorts of things influence accidents. And there is this natural
7 variation that occurs every few years, or every year. It's never
8 the same in two years. So we have to know to what extent this
9 natural variability is exceeded. It is my suspicion, even for the
10 gentleman that presented the chart yesterday, that the difference
11 between semi-annual states and annual states was insignificant.
12 Without ever having analyzed it, the line was so flat, I bet if
13 we took it and did a statistical test on it, we would find the
14 difference insignificant. In other words, you're supposed to
15 expect that much variation. In 1981 it could be absolutely
16 reversed. So his chart proves nothing, except coincidence.

17 JOHN DAVIES: Then in addition, from the testimony
18 yesterday then, by the former director of safety,
19 and also the deputy secretary Hias, I think was he
20 intimating, or is there some factor of correction
21 or factor of differential in the whole thing by
22 the actual accuracy of the states reporting? He
23 was intimating in California's records and so
24 forth and so on, seemed to be that much better

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1 than those of other states. He seemed to
2 indicate that to some degree that maybe Colorado
3 maybe at one time had a little bit more validity
4 than some of the other reported. Do you have any
5 indication of that in your study, or isn't that
6 within your perview of --

7 GENE BEEMAN: I tell you, we thought about this a good deal. I
8 tell you our line of reasoning. We believe that for property
9 damage accidents, given the revisions and the threshold of damage,
10 that is thought by several states to be significant, be reportable,
11 given that fluctuation, we couldn't use property damage accidents
12 in this study. So, therefore, we opted for fatal accidents,
13 accidents in which at least one fatality occurred, and accidents
14 in which at least one injury occurred. We think that reporting
15 across the state is pretty consistent for these two particular
16 measures. I suspect that very very few people are killed or
17 injured on the highways that it doesn't go reported. That's my
18 suspicion. I think it's well founded. We have no direct
19 evidence that there is recording variation among the states for
20 these two measures; however, I have no affirmation by all fifty
21 states that they do, in fact, report them all. A few don't get
22 reported, especially the minor injuries. But it's so large.
23 Pennsylvania has over a hundred thousand injury accidents per
24 year. Ten thousand doesn't make any difference. It's so large.

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1 And I suspect zero, or very very close to zero, fatal accidents
2 don't get reported.

3 JOHN DAVIES: All right, gentlemen, in addition,
4 Representative Peterson, a member of the committee,
5 is also with us now, so I think we have everybody
6 accounted for. Gentlemen, any questions?

7 MERLE PHILLIPS: Mr. Beeman, do you believe that
8 the accuracy of reporting the actual cause of the
9 accident is correct? Is there some area there of
10 maybe that the actual cause of accidents would be
11 not listed? I'm speaking of a malfunction against
12 whatever you have, environmental, human err, that
13 there would be some in there that would --

14 GENE BEEMAN: In Pennsylvania?

15 MERLE PHILLES: That's correct.

16 GENE BEEMAN: I don't have much doubt that a malfunctioning
17 component was on the automobile that was in the accident. I
18 think that portion of the reporting system is probably, for all
19 intents and purposes, quite accurate. The interpretation of
20 whether that particular malfunctioning component was involved
21 and the extent to which it was involved in the accident, I really
22 can't say. I don't know whether the data is valid or not. I
23 only can say that the University of Indiana, in their study, which
24 I have every reason to believe is the very best done in the nation

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1 had a team of inspectors on site at every serious accidents at
2 a hundred and fifty-one picked-at-random serious accidents. They
3 came up with essentially the same figure. That gives me some
4 confidence in the validity of assignment of causal factors in
5 Pennsylvania. I can't go beyond that. I have no first-hand
6 evidence.

7 JOHN DAVIES: Any other questions?

8 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Mr. Beeman, towards the end of
9 your testimony you made a statement that close to
10 fatal accidents failed to be reported. Were you
11 referring just to the figures you gave as far as
12 fatalities were concerned? (sic)

13 GENE BEEMAN: Close to zero?

14 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: I guess more specifically, what
15 I'm asking is if someone is injured, and six months
16 later passes away because of that accident, is that
17 included in the figures?

18 GENE BEEMAN: I have no ideas. I would guess persons injured
19 on the scene, where it's obvious that they were injured as a
20 direct result of the accident, are listed. Those which develop
21 physical maladies later, six months later, I suspect are not
22 listed. That's my suspicion.

23 DAVE WARFEL: I think I can shed some light on that. For our
24 study, the definition of a fatality, of course, of which we use

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1 fatal accidents by the Federal Government, follows the injury up
2 to one year after the accident. So if a person dies within one
3 year of the accident, and all the reporting requirements are
4 followed in that particular state, that person will be listed as
5 a fatality of an automobile accident. That's standard across the
6 nation:

7 JOHN DAVIES: Gentlemen, anything over here?

8 THOMAS MURPHY: Mr. Beeman, the testimony yesterday
9 broke up basically into two areas. One is that
10 the statistics seems to indicate that we don't
11 need semi-annual inspections. And the experience
12 of mechanics who work with cars seems to indicate
13 that we do. Can you reconcile the differences?

14 GENE BEEMAN: No, sir, I can't. Inspection mechanics see a lot
15 of deteriorated parts, brake linings worn out. That to me proves
16 nothing. Brake linings do wear out. They are designed to wear
17 out. The fact that they have them in their possession indicates
18 nothing. I can change my own brake linings and bring one in also.
19 The inference that worn out brake linings would be left by an
20 irresponsible motorist to the point where he was in danger of
21 not stopping in time is merely an assumption with absolutely no
22 basis in fact that I know of.

23 THOMAS MURPHY: You're suggesting, in fact, your
24 statistics prove the opposite, that people where

1 there aren't inspections must be getting their
2 cars fixed, if the accident --

3 GENE BEEMAN: By inference we believe that, yes.

4 THOMAS MURPHY: How do you reconcile then, Mr.
5 Miller, I believe it was, who kept statistics of
6 inspections he did, and that a very high
7 percentage of the cars needed safety work done
8 on their car? That seems to belay the information
9 that you have that cars are maintained properly
10 without inspection.

11 GENE BEEMAN: Yeah, it does. I have no reason to dispute Mr.
12 Miller's testimony. I believe that he did find that many problems
13 with cars. If I'm correct, and John, correct me if I'm wrong,
14 that the latest research done by the Department of Transportation
15 doesn't indicate the repair incidence is quite that high. It's
16 around thirty-six percent, not as high as seventy, as Mr. Miller
17 indicated.

18 Number two, Mr. Miller can't make an inference on how those
19 repairs, if undone, would have resulted in accidents. And that's
20 what we're interested in.

21 THOMAS MURPHY: Do you have any information on
22 nonfatal or noninjury causing accidents?

23 GENE BEEMAN: No, I don't. We did not measure that, because of
24 the problem of threshold values for property damage accidents

1 recording among the states.

2 THOMAS MURPHY: Thank you.

3 JOHN DAVIES: Any other questions? Thank you very
4 much. We'll call on Mr. John Pachuta, Director
5 of the Bureau of Traffic Safety, Pennsylvania
6 Department of Transportation.

7 JOHN PACHUTA: Thank you, Honorable Chairman, members of the
8 Transportation Committee, good morning. I am John Pachuta. I'm
9 currently the Director of the Bureau of Traffic Safety Operations
10 for the Department of Transportation for Pennsylvania. I'd like
11 to thank you first of all for this opportunity to again testify
12 in regard to House Bill 562. And if you will bear with me, I'll
13 attempt to paraphrase my earlier testimony.

14 The department, as you know, embraces the concept proposed
15 in this legislation that would reduce our current vehicle
16 inspection requirement from twice a year to once a year. I
17 believe the statistical evidence presented by Mr. Beeman and
18 presented in the January, 1981 report entitled Motor Vehicle
19 Inspection by the Office of Budget and Administration is both
20 clear and valid. Annual periodic motor vehicle safety inspection
21 will not adversely affect highway safety in Pennsylvania.

22 I might add here that I've been professionally involved
23 in highway safety for all of my professional career, and formerly
24 as an investigator for the Federal Government as a university

1 researcher and with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.
2 I can attest to the rigorous studies undertaken by the
3 statisticians in the Office of Budget and Administration, and
4 the arguments that they present regarding the validity of the data
5 and so forth, are very familiar to me. And I can say that they are
6 qualified to make those statements and they are correct.

7 Under the current administration of Secretary Larson, we
8 believe the department has strived to produce a safe and
9 efficient transportation system and our commitment to service
10 is one which we've mentioned several times, and I feel has been
11 evidenced in our actions to date. We recognize the changing
12 conditions of transportation needs of the people and have acted
13 in the past to change the old standards and practices which are
14 not longer effective. We have maximized federal aid to highways,
15 we've improved road maintenance and we've provided better service
16 for the tax dollars invested by the citizens. We believe that
17 annual periodic motor vehicle inspections will provide a cost
18 effective highway safety program for this Commonwealth.

19 The basis of periodic motor vehicle inspection goes back to
20 several Federal Mandates which produce the eighteen highway
21 safety program standards of which periodic motor vehicle
22 inspection is standard number one. We in Pennsylvania have had
23 periodic motor vehicle inspections since 1929, in order to reduce
24 the number of motor vehicle accidents caused by unsafe or

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1 defective vehicles. The OBA report shows that our existing
2 procedure has outgrown its usefulness, and it accrues more cost
3 to Pennsylvanians than benefits. One of the things to note in
4 regards to the study is that it is a comparison between those
5 states which may or may not have periodic motor vehicle inspections.
6 So that if, in fact, the reported criteria for vehicle defects in
7 accidents is incorrect, or if several of them are missed, or if
8 there is a low reporting, that low reporting is probably present
9 in those states with or without motor vehicle inspection. And
10 even if there were no reporting whatsoever of vehicle defects
11 contributing to motor vehicle accidents, a strict comparison
12 between those rates in the various states would still show that
13 the annual inspection program will not statistically degrade our
14 highway safety program in Pennsylvania.

15 Our program must address the needs of this state of
16 Pennsylvania in operating a statewide program, as I do from the
17 bureau, we must base our decisions on statistics, not gut feeling,
18 as has been evidenced by many of the people testifying here. Gut
19 feeling is a grand thing, but when you're talking about an
20 operational program with a multi-million dollar budget, you can't
21 base your decisions on that gut feeling. You must have the
22 evidence. And whether there are small perturbations within the
23 statistics, the gross measures must be adhered to, and we must
24 take those things into account when we apply them in order to

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1 administrate the programs, such as periodical motor vehicle
2 inspection.

3 That evidence points to several changes needed in our system.
4 The first of which we are now working on, and that is a revision
5 of the inspection laws and regulations. We have vehicles that are
6 now equipped with longer wearing, less failure ridden components.
7 And the length and maintenance intervals that you have on a newly
8 purchased car are evidence of this fact. Dual braking systems,
9 longer wearing brake linings, improved tires with wear indicators,
10 on-board vehicle monitoring systems are part of the reasons that
11 we've considered changing our regulations.

12 The inspection mechanic was formerly the only person that
13 would advise the vehicle operator of the condition of the vehicle
14 and he would do that twice a year. Now we have many other inputs
15 to the vehicle operator with warning devices and so forth, that
16 does not require the vehicle inspection mechanic to bring these
17 items to the operator's attention.

18 Our existing regulations have been developed over many many
19 years, and they, quite frankly, include items which are not
20 directly safety related. In recognition of this fact, they are
21 currently working on the revisions of the regulations to
22 concentrate them on critical safety components, as it should be.

23 According to the Vehicle Equipment and Inspection Regulation
24 Manual, a complete inspection, as reviewed by OBA, would take

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1 about one and a half hours, and yet routinely, these passenger
2 car inspections are taking thirty to forty-five minutes. So as
3 Mr. Beeman stated, inspection stations are doing their own
4 streamlining and their own priority organization of the regulation.
5 We in the department must revise the rules in a more realistic,
6 safety-conscious way, to assure the safe ridership of the traveling
7 public.

8 Today you will hear the statement that more extensive and
9 expensive repairs will be necessary to repair defective components
10 under an annual inspection system. According to the OBA report,
11 vehicle repair costs are not expected to be any greater on any
12 annual inspection cycle. Many of the components that are found
13 defective in inspections already require complete replacement
14 when discovered. Many cars fail to pass inspection because of
15 lighting or electrical system failures. Their failure requires
16 complete replacement and does not cause accelerated wear on other
17 parts. It's true that worn break pads or linings could damage
18 other portions of the braking system. However, the current
19 method for determining remaining life of brake pads and linings
20 could be changed to conform to annual inspection cycles, so as
21 to avoid this type of problem. The idea that minimum break
22 lining thickness measurements should be changed, causing good
23 linings to be discarded, is incorrect. Break lining wear is
24 use related. And since our inspection period is not tied to

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1 vehicle usage, as would be the case if inspection was based on
2 mileage and type of driving. We do not propose to increase these
3 standards.

4 Even if the contention concerning more expensive repairs
5 were true, even if the present inspection process resulted in
6 better maintained cars in Pennsylvania, the point is, quite
7 frankly, irrelevant. The Department of Transportation is not in
8 the business of telling the public how to maintain their vehicles.
9 We are in the business of traffic safety. As a result, state
10 vehicle inspection is intended solely to identify and correct
11 worn out or defective equipment that could lead to highway
12 accidents. Anything else is the individual citizen's
13 responsibility.

14 You will hear a variety of reports regarding a number of
15 vehicles requiring repair under the current program, along with
16 cost figures for these repairs. The TS-431 report form, which is
17 submitted by every inspection station in the Commonwealth to the
18 Bureau of Traffic Safety Operations, reviewed by bureau personnel,
19 and for the last eighteen months those vehicles requiring repair
20 under the inspection program, averaged about thirty-six percent.
21 The average statewide cost for those repairs, including the
22 inspection fee, was forty-nine dollars, with approximately a
23 fifteen dollar increase in the urban areas.

24 While we're on the subject of cost, I'd like to mention that

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1 insurance rates have been mentioned in previous testimony. And a
2 study by an insurance research analyst for the Commonwealth
3 stated that the probability of the inspection period change
4 causing an increase in insurance rates is remote to the point of
5 nonexistence at this time.

6 I would like to describe a couple of the changes we intend
7 to make under House Bill 562. First, passenger cars and light
8 trucks would be affected. Heavy trucks would still be inspected
9 semi-annually, along with transit vehicles, school buses, and
10 emergency vehicles. Motorcycles, as mentioned the other day, are
11 only inspected once a year now. So the intention that a change
12 in motorcycle regulations is incorrect.

13 Secondly, we plan to coordinate the inspection of vehicles
14 with the staggered registration renewal program. Before a
15 vehicle can be registered or its registration renewed, that
16 vehicle must pass inspection. Because most of the vehicle
17 inspections would expire the same time as the registration, as
18 opposed to once every three months. The inspection station
19 work load would be more evenly distributed through the year.

20 Under the annual inspection program as proposed in House
21 Bill 562, we believe there will be a dramatic reduction in
22 motorist inconvenience and cost while maintaining the present
23 levels of traffic safety. It is estimated that in Pennsylvania,
24 six point eight million automobile and small truck owners would

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1 save more than sixty million dollars a year in inspection fees
2 alone. Our administrative burdens would also be lessened, which
3 would result in reduced operating costs for the department.
4 Additionally, we believe that security controls to eliminate or
5 at least decrease the use of stolen or forged inspection
6 certificates would be greatly enhanced.

7 The department believes that annual inspections will provide
8 a major step in reducing unnecessary government regulations,
9 reduce motorist expense and inconvenience, while not adversely
10 affecting the present levels of traffic safety.

11 There is a matter of clear separation of issues which you
12 gentlemen must deal with. In the department we can separate the
13 issue and it's very easy for us, because we can say the OBA
14 report, the other data from accident records, shows us that
15 safety is not affected. That is our concern. We can endorse
16 one year inspections.

17 Most of the arguments you hear against once a year
18 inspection are from consumers or their representatives, station
19 owners and so forth. They are saying that costs may be higher
20 for repair work, further degradation of equipment will occur.
21 That is a matter for the public as far as consumer costs,
22 maintenance and so forth. We're the Bureau of Traffic Safety
23 Operations. We are not the Bureau of Automotive Maintenance
24 Assurance. If we were the Bureau of Automotive Maintenance

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1 Assurance we would specify periodic maintenance programs as we
2 do for our own Department of Vehicles. But we do not need to do
3 that. It is not our charge. Our charge is to assure the
4 traveling safety of the public. Therefore, we can embrace, and
5 by the statistical evidence do embrace once a year safety to
6 assure the safe highways in Pennsylvania.

7 Thank you, and I'd be glad to entertain any questions you
8 might have at this time.

9 JOHN DAVIES: I think some place along the line
10 in the last -- or just yesterday, let's forget
11 Harrisburg -- there has been a message from the
12 industry saying that possibly there isn't enough
13 exchange or input by the industry into some of the
14 programs or program studies and changes in
15 regulations and so forth by the department. And
16 I don't know if I read one of them correctly. One
17 could have been with the after nadir of the brake
18 system. You heard that testimony. Do you seem to
19 think that there could be improvements on those
20 things brought about by the State of Pennsylvania
21 rather than allowing it to the standards of the
22 Fed? For example, the warning system was held
23 under kind of a close look, and he didn't seem --
24 that particular gentleman didn't seem to think it

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1 was effective. Another one was the bit about the
2 brake fluid and also the matter of the hose. Do
3 you think those standards or anything such as that
4 type of equipment can be dealt with by the
5 department on a state level rather than on the Fed?

6 JOHN PACHUTA: There is generally -- it's been deferred to the
7 Federal Government for vehicle equipment manufacturing standards.
8 Federal motor vehicle safety standard programs is in place and
9 is not preempted by the states. I do not believe we would be
10 ready or willing to do that, to set a standard for the material
11 included in brake linings, that type of thing. That is within
12 the responsibility of the Federal Government, it's left there with
13 good reason, as a program such as that would require extensive
14 clauses. But to -- so we defer those things to the Federal
15 Government. However, we can specify, you know, what is allowed
16 as a minimum as opposed to material. And we do that in the
17 inspection regulations.

18 I might add that those inspection regulations are developed
19 in cooperation with industry representatives through the use of
20 our inspection advisory panel, a board which the department
21 convenes, admittedly on every regular basis depending on the
22 business at hand. Those people represent various factions in the
23 automotive sales and repair industry. They have reviewed our
24 proposed change in regulations and do endorse them in regards to

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1 the streamlining. You obviously hear from several members of
2 that board and so forth where they stand in regard to annual
3 inspections.

4 JOHN DAVIES: The only reason I was saying that
5 is because I think some of our programs, for
6 example, the state is always prided itself in the
7 open mind regulations, air quality, Pennsylvania
8 Agricultural Stamp for years, and still has been a
9 belt wearer for the nation. Maybe should we be
10 looking at those particular standards, I guess, in
11 saying let's upgrade them for Pennsylvania and
12 try to improve in those well above the federal
13 standards. I take it from what you're saying,
14 you're saying no. Maybe I'm hoping for something
15 more out of this than just a concern about the
16 inspection. But you don't seem to think that would
17 be feasible.

18 JOHN PACHUTA: I don't think it would be feasible, for a number
19 of reasons. First, our preemptions to require more stringent
20 requirements for vehicles to be sold in Pennsylvania would be
21 very difficult to enforce and so forth with vehicles brought in
22 from out of state.

23 Secondly, the preemption of the Federal Government
24 standards would be difficult, at best, and quite frankly, it would

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1 be an extremely expensive operation to put in place, since
2 anything of that nature where you would be calling upon a
3 manufacturer to place more stringent standards on vehicles
4 manufactured for sale in Pennsylvania, would have to be backed up
5 by the most flawless research, that we know it's guaranteed to be
6 in court for several years. So I would hesitate to undertake a
7 program of that nature, and rather defer it to the Federal
8 Government.

9 JOHN DAVIES: You don't seem to think that we're
10 so damn far down the pipe with the other changes
11 that have been instituted since let's say the '70's
12 that we would be able to reverse that trend and
13 we're locked in.

14 JOHN PACHUTA: I think we're relatively locked in and I believe
15 that the standards in place under the Federal Motor Vehicle
16 Safety Standard Program are good standards. And the mechanisms
17 by which we can impact those standards through the comments and
18 so forth, to the proposed regulations by the Federal Government
19 has been effective. And I do not believe there is a need to
20 change that mechanism at this time.

21 JOHN DAVIES: Not to give a black eye to any
22 particular one group or anything else, it seemed
23 to be also intimated by some of the testimony
24 that there are some guys out there that either for

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1 promotional sales or something like that, are
2 advertising inspections at three ninety-five, come
3 in and get them, and possibly as a loss leader or
4 other stuff, and that really inspection is not
5 taking place.

6 JOHN PACHUTA: That very well may be true, as in any system on
7 a statewide basis there are those that go around the procedures.
8 As Captain Rickert will explain, as the police charged with
9 enforcing the program and insuring that the inspection stations
10 and their mechanics provide accurate and truthful records and
11 inspections of vehicles. So I defer comment to him on that. But
12 it has been my experience in the bureau that practically no matter
13 what we do, there will be someone to suspend that. And, in fact,
14 while we say that we will hope to, for instance, reduce the number
15 of stolen or forged stickers, I am certain that before we go to
16 press and have delivery of our first whatever we get under this
17 program, there will be a plant someplace in the state cranking
18 out forged certificates before we even have ours out. But that's
19 the society we live in, and I'm afraid I can't comment on that.

20 JOHN DAVIES: All right, I guess I'll have to hold
21 for the captain then. Gentlemen?

22 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: John, to use your wording, I have
23 a gut feeling, and I think I have my facts
24 correct, concerning page four Section 4 of the Bill,

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1 which concerns the fee charged, you testified
2 yesterday, and again today, that the department,
3 and correct me if I'm wrong, the department intends
4 to experience a savings of funds if we go from
5 twice a year to once a year. . Is that correct?

6 JOHN PACHUTA: That is correct. We expect a savings in certain
7 areas of the department. I might add that depending on how the
8 process is implemented in tying this to registration, there can
9 be a modest increase in the cost as well in other operational
10 areas. But in my bureau, in the Vehicle Inspection Division, I
11 do believe we should be able to reduce costs there, while motor
12 vehiclists may feel that their costs will go up.

13 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: What was the fee charged
14 Pennsylvania motorists in June of 1980 for
15 inspection?

16 JOHN PACHUTA: As far as supplying a sticker to the station to
17 sell?

18 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: No, what it costs the motorist.

19 JOHN PACHUTA: The motorist? Over the last eighteen months I'd
20 say that it held fairly standard at about ten dollars for the
21 inspection.

22 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: That included the station
23 charge though, right?

24 JOHN PACHUTA: That's correct. Now, I mentioned the forty-nine

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1 dollar average, and that was the cost of repairs and inspection
2 for those vehicles, that thirty-six percent, that required some
3 repair under the inspection cycle.

4 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: What was the fee that the state
5 charged the motorist?

6 JOHN PACHUTA: The fee that the state charged the motorist was an
7 annual fee of two dollars, one dollar per inspection.

8 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: In June of 1980?

9 JOHN PACHUTA: Yeah, I would say. We charged one dollar to the
10 station for the stickers. Was that prior to the implementation of
11 Senate Bill --

12 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Prior to that.

13 JOHN PACHUTA: Then it was twenty-five cents. I'm sorry.

14 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: So in June of 1980 the
15 Commonwealth's fee was twenty-five cents?

16 JOHN PACHUTA: That's correct.

17 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Today what is the fee for
18 inspection?

19 JOHN PACHUTA: One dollar.

20 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: With the implementation of this
21 Bill, what would that fee be per inspection?

22 JOHN PACHUTA: Two dollars.

23 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: So from June of 1980, if we
24 would pass this Bill and become law, in September

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1 and October we would go from twenty-five cents to
2 two dollars for inspection?

3 JOHN PACHUTA: That's correct.

4 JOHN DAVIES: That was easy today.

5 HARRY BOWSER: John, there's been concern that if
6 we go to once a year that parts would be replaced
7 sooner than under the twice a year. Did I get from
8 your testimony that the standards will not be
9 changed under the once a year?

10 JOHN PACHUTA: It is our intent not to change the standards.
11 However, I may add that the inspection regulations and so forth
12 are put forth in the Pennsylvania Bulletin for comment by the
13 public. When we revise the inspection standards we will publish
14 them for comment. If the comment is overwhelming, and, in fact,
15 perhaps we'll have to have hearings afterwards, and the evidence
16 is overwhelming that it is the desire to increase that standard,
17 then, of course, we will reply to that. It is not our intent
18 to increase the standards at this time.

19 HARRY BOWSER: You've apparently got some research
20 on this. Brake linings is one thing that's been
21 a big thing. Do you feel that present standards
22 on that would last the average motorist for an
23 entire year?

24 JOHN PACHUTA: That's the difficulty, in that we say we are going

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1 to last the average motorist. We feel that it would be a
2 disbenefit to change the standard when it is so tied to vehicle
3 usage, and since we do not inspect based on vehicle usage. And,
4 in fact, a vehicle inspection today only says that that vehicle
5 is safe when it leaves -- as you back it out, that's the end. It
6 could change radically if you pass the inspection now and you
7 proceed to go on vacation in the mountains and drive and use your
8 brakes very hard for the month and put twelve thousand miles on
9 in the next month, you know -- Our statement that that certificate
10 means you're safe for six months is really not true. That
11 certificate of inspection means you are safe at that time. The
12 conditions could change radically the next day. So to change our
13 standards based on that would be false. We do intend to keep the
14 same standards and say that you are safe at that time. We would
15 like to change the consumer information portion so that perhaps
16 the station could better inform the vehicle owner of say the
17 remaining brake life. Or, if you will, clearly give the
18 measurement and perhaps even some explanation be required to say
19 this means that you have so much, three thirty-seconds of a
20 brake lining left, depending on how you drive this may or may
21 not wear out before your next inspection, you should watch for
22 these signs that indicate that it is worn and so forth. But
23 since it's so tied to vehicle use, not only miles, but type of
24 use, it would be inappropriate for us to increase those standards

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1 at this time.

2 HARRY BOWSER: What right do the State Police have?
3 What rights do they have now? Obviously if they
4 see a car going down the road with a wheel flopping
5 they can stop and do something about it. Do they
6 have the right to presently stop and give a quick
7 inspection to a car?

8 JOHN PACHUTA: It is my understanding that that could be done
9 under the Vehicle Code, but I'm not certain on that.

10 HARRY BOWSER: Things are difficult to see at a
11 glance. Now, the tires, if we saw a car stopped,
12 they can guess at that time maybe it's unsafe. I
13 know there is a standard on that one, but can they
14 stop and check a tire?

15 JOHN PACHUTA: I believe that's so. Captain Rickert, could you
16 make a routine vehicle stop on site for defective equipment?

17 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Any police officer.

18 HARRY BOWSER: Any police officer can do that?

19 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Any police officer.

20 HARRY BOWSER: But it's not a standard practice
21 for you to stop and give a car a going over in
22 the state?

23 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Not usually, sir. It all depends.

24 HARRY BOWSER: Thank you.

1 JAMES MARTINI: John, getting back to follow up
2 a little bit on Representative Steighner's question
3 what happens to the money you collect for stickers?

4 JOHN PACHUTA: It goes to the motor license fund, as I understand
5 it. It is not directly used to support the activities of
6 providing a vehicle inspection program.

7 JAMES MARTINI: What money is provided for the
8 vehicle inspection program, if it is the case that
9 the money doesn't --

10 JOHN PACHUTA: As I understand it, and I am not a budget
11 specialist, the budget for the bureau is provided through the
12 motor license fund. The bureau also puts money into the motor
13 license fund. Whether it's a one-for-one trade or not -- Well,
14 I'm fairly certain it is not a one-for-one trade, because our
15 operating equipment does not approach the amounts that may be
16 collected for other fees. But there are other operations that
17 are not supported, such as insurance division, where we insure
18 the maintenance of no-fault insurance for operators, the
19 suspension revocation process of maintaining the bureau and so
20 forth. Those are not, so to speak, money makers. So I would
21 imagine some of the fees offset the operation of those activities.

22 JAMES MARTINI: Well, the next obvious question
23 would be, are, in fact, the monies generated by the
24 inspection process, money makers, as you call them?

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1 JOHN PACHUTA: As are the processes generated through the vehicle
2 registration fees and so forth. They are all required to offset
3 the operation of the entire department.

4 JAMES MARTINI: Okay. But specifically, the
5 question is, the monies generated from the
6 inspection stickers, do they cover its entirety,
7 more than the inspection process?

8 JOHN PACHUTA: Yes, I believe so. You see, that motor license fund
9 also contributes to the operation of the State Police and so forth.
10 So all the fees come in from vehicle registration, inspection,
11 restoration fees for suspensions and all those things are thrown
12 into that pot and then redivided to cover operations such as the
13 rest of the department, for instance. Since all bridges aren't
14 toll bridges, the bridge division and design must be paid for, the
15 design of the bridges. And they're not money makers, so to speak.

16 JAMES MARTINI: We've had testimony from them
17 yesterday and it was eluded to earlier this morning
18 that you don't know what the cost is going to be
19 to your department if you go to once a year.

20 JOHN PACHUTA: No, I don't know the total cost to the department.

21 JAMES MARTINI: Okay. But the question would be,
22 if there is a savings, why would you retain the
23 cost of inspection at two dollars per inspection
24 rather than one dollar per inspection?

1 JOHN PACHUTA: As I understand, that was placed in the Bill to
2 assure the same level of monetary input or income -- I hesitate
3 to use that term, it sounds as though you're in the business of
4 making a profit -- but to maintain the level of income, if you
5 will, of the department for the many purposes for services the
6 department must provide as part of that stable and predictable
7 income.

8 JAMES MARTINI: I would agree. Your answer is very
9 reasonable, but it would seem that --

10 JOHN PACHUTA: If we were to cut the cost of the stickers to
11 strictly what it cost us to operate the sticker program, then in
12 essence what we would be doing is cutting some other portion of
13 the department's activities, because that money is used to operate
14 other areas of the department. In fact, yes, it could be cut
15 considerably if it was strictly to pay -- if it was a stand-alone
16 unit and it had to survive on its own income there would be a
17 difference in charge, although I do not know what it would be.

18 JAMES MARTINI: One other question. The
19 standards had to be arrived at through some
20 systematic approach. I mean someone didn't just
21 pick out a year, one thirty-second would be
22 satisfactory for the brake lines, et cetera.

23 JOHN PACHUTA: Um-hum.

24 JAMES MARTINI: Evidently someone looked at an

1 average driver, and, of course, there are
2 extremes, some drive fifty thousand, some drive one
3 thousand, it would seem it would be common sense
4 that if you're going to have an inspection program
5 at all and you've set standards, that if you're
6 going a double length of time that you would change
7 the standards some way.

8 JOHN PACHUTA: That's true in one respect. However, you must
9 realize that many of the standards are quite old, and there were
10 some linings shown here yesterday on a vehicle that had lasted
11 some twenty-six thousand miles from the original equipment and so
12 forth. These materials last longer than they did previously,
13 and many of these measurements and so forth are from previous
14 years where linings wore much quicker, where vehicles were heavier
15 and required more braking energy to accelerate, and quite frankly
16 we just found changing times, plus a variety of patterns of
17 driving that we now see as far as personal travel is concerned
18 by many citizens of the Commonwealth that we do not really feel
19 that there will be a need to increase at this time.

20 JAMES MARTINI: Has the department looked at a
21 system which would incorporate maybe once a year
22 inspections or an and/or type situation, ten
23 thousand, fifteen, twenty thousand miles.

24 JOHN PACHUTA: Personally, my feelings are that a time and usage

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1 inspection program would be the best, but you can imagine that it
2 would be virtually impossible to regulate by mileage the inspection
3 program such as that. In other words, how would we know when the
4 vehicle is expired, how would we know when it needed inspection,
5 how would we enforce the inspection program? In essence, it would
6 be impossible to do so.

7 JAMES MARTINI: I agree there would be problems in
8 enforcing it. However, the State Police, as
9 Captain Rickert testified yesterday, are responsible
10 for the enforcement of the inspection system. But
11 no one really inspects the inspectors. It's
12 totally on their own.

13 JOHN PACHUTA: Well, that's not necessarily true. The State
14 Police, in qualifying the inspector before he's allowed to do
15 inspections, test the inspector's --

16 JAMES MARTINI: That's true, but still, who
17 or how the inspection is performed or, in fact,
18 when the inspection is performed, is entirely up
19 to the driver and the inspection station.

20 JOHN PACHUTA: That's correct. There are some eighteen thousand
21 inspection stations in the Commonwealth. And to adequately police
22 those to the fact that you want to look over the shoulder at
23 various inspections, I believe the State Police, with the limited
24 manpower that they're able to devote to it, are doing an incredible

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1 job. But I would not state that it was all that is needed at
2 this time.

3 JOHN DAVIES: Yes, John?

4 JOHN PETERSON: John, a lot has been said here this
5 morning, and I guess at the other hearings, about
6 the change in fee from a quarter to a dollar that
7 happened last year. Is it your opinion that when
8 it was a quarter that that quarter covered the cost
9 of the State Police of implementing this system of
10 the department of issuing the stickers, of making
11 the stickers? It seems impossible to me -- I
12 haven't seen any figures, but it seems impossible
13 to me that we license inspectors, we license the
14 stations, we monitor them, the State Police have
15 people assigned to it on a full-time basis state
16 wide, and we have the bureau in Harrisburg and
17 the other offices that we used to have that sold
18 the stickers -- You know, I can't believe that a
19 quarter paid for all that.

20 JOHN PACHUTA: Nor can I, but unfortunately I do not have figures
21 on the total cost of the operation and I would hesitate to say
22 that a quarter or a dollar or two dollars, or even ten dollars,
23 would cover the cost, because I just do not know. And that's
24 something I will try to do before Valley Forge, is try to

1 determine some of the total operating cost, but there are many
2 hidden costs, as you say. That operation of being within the
3 department also incurs many overhead costs, personnel costs and
4 so forth that are hidden. I mean, you know, I have clerks on
5 my staff that are keeping the records for the clerks in the
6 inspection division staff. So it's a sum total with all the
7 hidden costs could be quite high. And, in fact, two dollars might
8 not be enough to cover the sum total cost of that operation.

9 JOHN PETERSON: It's my opinion that any licensing
10 function in state government should pay for
11 itself and should not be subsidized by gasoline
12 taxes that people feel they're paying to build
13 roads, and I think that's the fact we should come
14 up with.

15 JOHN PACHUTA: Then I will pursue that, of course, but that is
16 a very valid point. It's very difficult to delineate between
17 the many many functions that all divisions and bureaus, as well
18 as the department, carry out, to clearly delineate the cost per
19 item. We try to put our piece in and we certainly take our piece
20 back out of the motor license.

21 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Does not the fee now bring in
22 seven million dollars a year, the one dollar fee?

23 JOHN PACHUTA: Well, it would be twice that, since these people
24 must be inspected twice a year.

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1 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: So fourteen million dollars
2 annually?

3 JOHN PACHUTA: That's correct.

4 PAUL LANDIS: John, driving up here I had a
5 conversation with my wife and she asked a question
6 I couldn't answer, maybe you can. When a car is
7 inspected and it is found to need brakes, is it a
8 requirement that the person who inspected it do
9 the repairs in that shop, or can another mechanic
10 in that shop do the repairs who is not licensed?

11 JOHN PACHUTA: No, in fact, you could take the car home and do
12 it yourself and bring it back. So there's no requirement that
13 the inspection mechanic himself do the repairs.

14 JOHN DAVIES: Any other questions? Thank you,
15 sir.

16 JOHN PACHUTA: Thank you.

17 JOHN DAVIES: Even though these fellows got their
18 act together on the fee, we're running behind time,
19 so I don't know what it is. I guess the Chairman
20 is too windy or something. Captain Russell C.
21 Rickert, Safety Service Division, Pennsylvania
22 State Police.

23 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Honorable Chairman, members of the Transportation
24 Committee, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I am Captain

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1 Russell C. Rickert, representing the Bureau of Patrol of the
2 Pennsylvania State Police. I wish to give you an overview of the
3 department's responsibilities and participation in the motor
4 vehicle inspection program.

5 The Commonwealth's motor vehicle inspection program is
6 administered through a cooperative effort in the Pennsylvania
7 Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania State Police.

8 The responsibility of the State Police in this program is
9 primarily to supervise the vehicle inspection program in all 67
10 counties of the Commonwealth.

11 The actual field duties in the program are the responsibility
12 of those State Police members assigned to the motor vehicle
13 inspection program and designated as inspection station
14 supervisors, commonly referred to as garage inspectors.

15 There are currently sixty-seven troopers serving in this
16 capacity on a full-time basis. There are an additional fifty-
17 five troopers who are assigned as alternates. The latter only
18 serve in this capacity when the permanently assigned supervisor
19 is on leave or must be absent from his primary duties for other
20 authorized reasons; in addition, the alternate must perform
21 garage inspector duties at least four days per month.

22 The following is a summary of the most prominent vehicle
23 inspection program activities performed by the garage inspector:

24 A. Official inspection stations are visited at least once each

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- 1 year. These visits are unannounced, at which time the
2 station is checked for sufficient and proper tools, qualified
3 mechanics, accurate record keeping and an exact inventory
4 of, and sufficient security for the inspection stickers.
- 5 B. When an application for establishing an official inspection
6 station is submitted, supervisors conduct a complete
7 investigation to determine whether the applicant meets the
8 appropriate requirements.
- 9 C. Station owners and mechanics are provided assistance in making
10 application for certification as an inspection station owner
11 or inspection mechanic. This is accomplished by the
12 supervisors consultations on requirements, procedures, et
13 cetera. The applicants are also tested for their ability to
14 inspect a vehicle in conformance with regulations.
- 15 D. In addition to the annual station visits, supervisors conduct
16 unannounced unscheduled periodic visits to insure
17 conformance with requirements of the statutes and regulations.
- 18 E. Citizen complaints regarding faulty inspections are
19 investigated by the garage inspector. These investigations
20 are performed to ascertain if vehicle code laws or inspection
21 regulations have been violated, which can result in subsequent
22 prosecution.
- 23 F. School buses are inspected annually prior to the start of a
24 new school year. This inspection is in addition to the

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1 present semi-annual inspections and is performed by the
2 garage inspector. There are currently 18,000 school buses in
3 Pennsylvania. School buses are also spot checked during the
4 school year by the garage inspectors.

5 G. When a vehicle is reconstructed (kit cars) it must be
6 submitted to a garage inspector for verification that they
7 safety requirements are met as per regulation.

8 While these are the primary duties directly related to the
9 motor vehicle inspection program, there are other indirectly
10 related duties that are performed by the garage inspectors. These
11 include duties such as dealer investigations, visits to junkyards
12 and visits to official speedometer testing stations.

13 In conclusion, I wish to thank the Committee for the
14 opportunity to present this statement of the State Police
15 responsibilities in the Commonwealth's vehicle inspection program.

16 JOHN DAVIES: I only saved one for you, Captain,
17 and that is, do you think that from the testimony
18 that has been given, there is anything to the fact
19 that the three ninety-five special on inspection is
20 in some instances really not a comparable or valid
21 inspection, as was claimed by one of the gentlemen
22 yesterday, and inferred by some others in testimony
23 so far.

24 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Sir, I think maybe this might be best answered

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1 by a special order promulgated by the Pennsylvania State Police
2 in 1978, the subject being inspection fees. It has been brought
3 to our attention that from time to time the subject of setting
4 fixed inspection fees is brought up by inspection station owners
5 and operators at their various meetings and functions. I don't
6 know if you're aware, but they do have regular inspection meetings
7 in the different counties and groups. The practice of price
8 fixing is a violation of the Federal Anti-Trust Laws. All
9 inspection supervisors and alternates shall refrain from engaging
10 in any discussion pertaining to a fixed fee for official inspection.
11 You may wish to relate it to going to a doctor. The doctor wants
12 to charge you two bucks for a house call and the other one wants
13 to charge you twenty-two; there's nothing that would say that the
14 doctor charging you two dollars is treating you any different than
15 the doctor charging you twenty-two.

16 JOHN DAVIES: Any questions over here?

17 HARRY BOWSER: Captain, how long have you been in
18 the State Police?

19 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Twenty-eight years.

20 HARRY BOWSER: How long have you been off patrol
21 and in an office?

22 CAPTAIN RICKERT: 1965.

23 HARRY BOWSER: We've heard many many comments
24 throughout the state about the physical condition

1 of our State Police. I just want to compliment
2 you. You look to me to be in terrific physical
3 shape and compliment you for being that way.

4 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Thank you.

5 THOMAS TIGUE: Captain, let me get your personal
6 opinion, as Paul put this seed in my head. Do
7 you think it would improve the inspection system
8 if a car is refused inspection, if we made it part
9 of the Bill that that car must be brought back to
10 the same inspection station?

11 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Would you repeat that?

12 THOMAS TIGUE: For instance, I bring my car in to
13 you to be inspected.

14 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Yes.

15 THOMAS TIGUE: And you reject it, I don't have to
16 take it back to you.

17 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Oh, no.

18 THOMAS TIGUE: So what I'm saying is, do you think
19 it would help if we made it part of the Bill, the
20 fact that if you rejected it, for me to get the
21 car inspected I would have to bring it back to you.
22 The reason I'm saying this is, if you have a
23 conscious repairman who will not inspect a car,
24 and it was brought up before, we're all concerned

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1 about the lick 'em stick 'em inspection, that if
2 you're conscious enough to go over the car and find
3 that there are, in fact, defects, you have to write
4 a slip, et cetera. Is that correct?

5 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Conversely, sir. If I give you a rip off and
6 you believe I'm giving you a rip off, I'm supposed to lock you
7 in by law? Again, to me it's a matter of free choice, sir.

8 THOMAS TIGUE: What I'm saying is not to make a
9 person go to that garage to have things corrected,
10 but to have the car inspected. For instance, if I
11 bring my car to your garage and you reject it, I
12 can go home, I can go to K-Mart, I can go to my
13 brother-in-law, I can go to whomever I want to get
14 the repairs accomplished. But I must come back to
15 you to get it inspected. I'm not saying you must
16 do the repairs.

17 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Offhand I wouldn't see anything really bad, but
18 again, I personally tend to hate to restrict it. If they would
19 tell me that I need a light or a fix or whatever I would need,
20 and I could fix it myself, and for some reason or other I didn't
21 want to run way back to whomever I went to, if I wanted to take
22 it anywhere, I don't see anything really wrong, except that you
23 are again restricting the public's right of free choice. I don't
24 see anything really wrong with it, but that one thing would sort

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1 of stick in the back of my head.

2 TROOPER HILE: If I could add one thing to that, sir, I'm Trooper
3 Hile of the State Police. And quite often we, the car garage
4 inspectors, get into confrontations exactly the scenario you're
5 portraying, in that a person will be told by an inspection
6 mechanic that he must have a certain item replaced. That person
7 will then voluntarily go to another inspection station and they
8 will say -- again, it's an interpretation of the regulation by
9 two sets of mechanics -- will say, "No, this part is still good."
10 So you can see what I'm eluding to in regards to your question.
11 You are locking that person in, back to that original mechanic
12 who said that part is not good. He goes to have it worked on
13 some place else, they say it doesn't have to be done. What does
14 the consumer do then, or what does the citizen do?

15 CAPTAIN RICKERT: That's what I meant by the first part of my
16 statement.

17 THOMAS TIGUE: Let me ask you one other question.
18 Does anyone inspect State Police vehicles?

19 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Does who inspect State Police vehicles?

20 THOMAS TIGUE: Anyone. Who inspects State Police
21 vehicles?

22 CAPTAIN RICKERT: State Police mechanics or out in the stations
23 where we don't have our own mechanics. An official inspection
24 station.

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1 THOMAS TIGUE: They must have a sticker?

2 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

3 THOMAS TIGUE: The other thing is, maybe you or
4 the Trooper can answer it, what is the preventative
5 maintenance schedules, that obviously you have
6 high performance engines and run those cars much
7 harder than normal wear, but do you have a set
8 system of maintenance or --

9 CAPTAIN RICKERT: No, only for oil changes, lubrications, et
10 cetera. Nothing that -- pull wheels or check mileage or anything
11 like that, no, sir.

12 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Captain, I would assume that
13 twenty-eight years experience you've just about
14 seen it all on the highway. From a personal
15 standpoint, do you support once a year inspections?

16 CAPTAIN RICKERT: We have no way -- no way could we not support
17 it. We have no data. Our data and everything that we have goes
18 right along. There's no way that I could come before you and
19 testify if you asked me to. There's no way. All our data
20 indicates the same thing.

21 RON GAMBLE: Captain Rickert, the State Police
22 budget, I'm just guessing, but in memory, is
23 about a hundred thirty-four million or somewhere
24 near there. Do you have any idea what portion of

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1 that is utilized in your inspection program? Do
2 you have any data, any figures on your costs of
3 running the inspection system?

4 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Just might be able to help you a little bit.
5 I'm sorry, sir, I thought we may have had it, but I really don't,
6 sir.

7 RON GAMBLE: Do you think it's broken up? Does the
8 department keep any records as to what that is?

9 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Yes, sir.

10 RON GAMBLE: You would have those figures, you
11 could have them?

12 CAPTAIN RICKERT: They're available, they're always submitted to
13 the House under the program budget. It would be during the
14 budget hearings. They're submitted to the department.

15 RON GAMBLE: We'll check on that. I've always
16 been amazed that most licensing in the state is
17 done by the Department of State through different
18 licensing bureaus they set up. I've always been
19 amazed that this inspection system was for some
20 reason given to the State Police. I never could
21 understand why through the Civil Service tests and
22 so forth we didn't have a bureau of people with a
23 mechanical background and management mixed together
24 that would run our inspection system. I guess I

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1 questioned what our thoughts were, how it ever
2 got to be the duty of the State Police to operate
3 our inspection system.

4 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Right now we're pretty high priced.

5 RON GAMBLE: Yeah. I mean do you think it would be
6 advisable to look at having the inspection system
7 be put under the Department of State in a separate
8 bureau and not be a function of the State Police?
9 Would that be possible?

10 CAPTAIN RICKERT: It's possible, really possible. I don't see
11 any problem with that.

12 RON GAMBLE: I mean it seems to me we have people
13 trained in criminology, very well trained, very
14 high priced, and this just seems to me -- I've
15 never understood why this mechanical type
16 inspection system was given to a law enforcement
17 agency rather than a licensing bureau.

18 CAPTAIN RICKERT: We questioned that ourselves.

19 JOHN DAVIES: Isn't that a throw back from when
20 they had the motor vehicle they made that change?

21 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Pardon?

22 JOHN DAVIES: When the motor vehicle -- that
23 interim when you had the change between the State
24 Police and they made a different identification,

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1 and wasn't there something that -- one of the
2 reasons why it stuck there? What's what I was
3 led to believe.

4 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Yeah, from what I understand, it's the same
5 situation with the driver's examination. I think Pennsylvania
6 is one of six states that has a law enforcement of State Police
7 giving driver's tests. Most other states, when one checks,
8 usually they're public safety departments, they have their own
9 divisions and the police are used strictly for police functions.
10 But again, that's at the pleasure of the Commonwealth.

11 JOHN DAVIES: That's the explanation I had been
12 given. I don't know whether that's correct or not.

13 RON GAMBLE: Captain, I see that there are sixty-
14 seven troopers serving as garage inspectors and
15 fifty-five alternates. I heard yesterday from a
16 garage owner that they're not being inspected
17 enough, and it was sort of strange hearing it from
18 a garage owner. Do you feel that you do have
19 enough manpower to effectively inspect the garages
20 with these numbers?

21 CAPTAIN RICKERT: No, sir.

22 RON GAMBLE: Is it close?

23 CAPTAIN RICKERT: No.

24 RON GAMBLE: It's not even close. So we really

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1 can't do a good monitoring job with the manpower
2 we have.

3 CAPTAIN RICKERT: You hit it right on the head, sir.

4 JOHN DAVIES: Any other questions? Thank you, sir.

5 JOEL WEISBERG: Mr. Chairman, I'm Joel Weisberg. I'm here with
6 our automotive service council witness again today. With the
7 Chair's permission I'd like to make a couple comments today before
8 we have our prepared testimony. As you all realize, I've had a
9 running discussion with Mr. Beeman concerning the statistics and
10 reports that have come in and yesterday we had a little discussion
11 concerning the Indiana report. I can assure you, and if you look
12 at your book I'm sure you know, I did not make up the six percent
13 figure, just'as he did not make up the two percent figure. Both
14 of them happened to be in the Indiana report, and what seems to be
15 happening is that the state is giving us the reports they want to
16 give us and telling us the other ones aren't good enough. They
17 acknowledge there are some others, but look at the ones we want
18 to look at, and then within the reports they're saying, "Gee,
19 the Indiana report is good, but look at the figures we want to
20 take out of the Indiana report, ignore the figures we don't want
21 to take out of the Indiana report." What I find most strange
22 from what I've heard today is, we were told that the gentleman
23 from Altoona who testified yesterday, you'll recall it was said
24 that he was making the same mistake that the National Highway

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1 Traffic Safety Administration had made until 1968. Which
2 appeared to say that after 1968 the National Highway Safety
3 Administration changed its opinion on once or twice a year
4 inspection. And, in fact, you'll find the office of Budget
5 Administration report replete with statements that the National
6 Highway Traffic Safety Administration no longer supports twice
7 a year inspection. However, what they haven't told you is that
8 the latest information available to the Secretary of Transportation
9 is a letter to the Secretary of Transportation, to Secretary
10 Larson from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
11 written at the request of Secretary Larson, which was received by
12 the Secretary in August of 1979, which cites some of the exact
13 same studies we've heard from the office of Budget Administration,
14 which letter clearly and specifically and unqualifiedly says
15 twice a year in the Pennsylvania system. That letter says, and I
16 have a copy right here in my hands, says, "Do vehicle defects
17 cause accidents? Yes. Six to twelve percent. Do vehicle
18 inspections reduce the number of defects? Yes. Thirty-three
19 to fifty percent." They cite some of the same reports. And
20 they conclude by saying, and I'm not going to read all of it,
21 I believe the writer from the National Highway Traffic Safety
22 Administration, these reports contain substantial valid support
23 for periodic motor vehicle inspection, particularly for the
24 strong inspection program which Pennsylvania is now conducting.

1 It's the latest information from the National Highway Traffic
2 Safety Administration going over the same reports and coming up
3 with an entirely different conclusion than our own office of
4 Budget Administration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our speaker
5 has his testimony.

6 ALLEN PARKER: Good morning. Before I begin my testimony, I would
7 like to introduce Mr. Ed Jerge, who would help me field questions.

8 My name is Allen H. Parker, 2866 West 26th Street, Erie,
9 Pennsylvania. I am owner and partner in Parker's Garage, of the
10 same address. I have been a full time automobile mechanic since
11 1955. I am a certified Pennsylvania inspection mechanic. I am
12 certified by both CARS and NAISE. I am a member of the Mechanical
13 Shop Craft Committee at Erie County Vo Tech. Also, I am a past
14 president of Automotive Service Councils of Pennsylvania, Inc.

15 Addressing the problem of annual inspection versus semi-
16 annual inspection certainly is a complicated and vocal issue.
17 Saving the motorists of Pennsylvania 60 million dollars a year is
18 certainly a commendable objective. However, I do not believe
19 that can be accomplished by eliminating semi-annual inspection.
20 The Pennsylvania semi-annual inspection program was developed as
21 a safety program and has evolved into a safety-preventive
22 maintenance vehicle inspection program (PMVI). I understand the
23 supporters of annual inspection are looking at safety and are not
24 concerned with PMVI. That's unthinkable. The two are

1 inseparable-- you can't have one without the other.

2 With a semi-annual inspection program many vehicle defects
3 can be detected before they become major problems. If anyone
4 does not agree with that reasoning, they should talk to any
5 fleet maintenance supervisor. Even the Federal Government and
6 military uses such a program.

7 I do not know what the proposed standards would be on an
8 annual inspection program, whether the brake lining thickness
9 would remain the same or would be increased and likewise the
10 tread depth on tires. In my opinion, the consumer stands to
11 loose either way. If the lining thickness and tread depth remain
12 the same his vehicle could be rubbing the rivets and running on the
13 cords by the next inspection, or if the lining thickness and tread
14 depth are increased he could be forced to replace the brake lining
15 and/or tires that are not worn out.

16 Due to the cost of new vehicles and the interest rate
17 motorists are not buying new cars. I have noticed that trend
18 for the last two years. Our customers have come to depend on us
19 as many other motorists depend on other mechanics to provide
20 them with a safe and dependable car through Pennsylvania State
21 inspection and a PMVI program. To change to an annual program
22 would be a disservice to the Pennsylvania motorist.

23 I think it would be in order to mention a problem that is
24 applicable to the northern counties of Pennsylvania and probably

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1 extends into Ohio and New York. Every summer the docks at the
2 Erie Harbor are piled high with salt to be spread on the highways
3 by PENNDOT crews so motorists can speed to their destinations
4 and are not hampered by slippery roads. That salt certainly
5 takes its toll on frames, bodies and suspension parts. I have
6 inspected vehicles in one period with badly rusted frames and
7 rejected them at the next campaign because the frame was broken
8 in that six month period. An annual inspection is definitely
9 not enough for a car that is badly rusted especially if a "do it
10 yourselfer" has worked on it and believe me they are increasing
11 all the time.

12 The "do it yourselfer". Now there is a good reason for twice
13 a year inspection. On some cars I've seen I don't think that's
14 enough. You'd be surprised how many inspections we do where we
15 find something goofed up like primary and secondary shoes reversed
16 or primary on one side and secondary on the other or brake springs
17 not correctly hooked or self adjusters froze up or wheel cylinders
18 and calipers froze up or head light sealed beams off one-third of
19 a turn or tie rod ends not adjusted or pieces of steel scabbed
20 over holes in the frames. The list is endless and some are quite
21 amusing, but some are quite dangerous and you may wonder how the
22 guy kept from piling it up.

23 I understand that House Bill 562 will exempt school buses
24 from annual inspection, that they must be done twice a year.

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1 Hurray for the kids in the bus, but what about that second car
2 that Mom drives. That seems to be the one that hauls the kids
3 to school, to music lessons and the like, while Dad drives the
4 newer car to work. I'll bet that old second, that most families
5 have, logs more miles than those school buses ever do. I think
6 safe vehicles are more important than the ten to fifteen bucks
7 that people will save for that second sticker every year.

8 I've been in this business long enough to know that some
9 people will not repair their vehicle even if it is a major safety
10 item until they are forced to do so.

11 In closing, I would like to ask "Why must we change from a
12 successful safety -- PMVI program that does work?" I agree, the
13 program does need some changes and enforcement could be better.
14 You and I both know that stickers are just sold from time to time.
15 Even legitimate stations do not apply standards equally. Why
16 can't we have a State Police garage supervisor assigned to
17 inspection on a full time basis? Items like this are the things
18 that people remember and gripe about. They forget about the times
19 when defective items were found that could have prevented an
20 accident and that's what the program is all about.

21 JOHN DAVIES: Gentlemen, any questions? Ron?

22 RON GAMBLE: Do you think that once a year car
23 inspection will result in profit, more net profit
24 or less net profit to you and the majority of the

1 vehicle inspection stations?

2 ALLEN PARKER: To me personally I don't think it will make any
3 difference. To some of the rest of them, I think it will make a
4 difference.

5 RON GAMBLE: It will result in a net loss, more
6 net loss or more net profit?

7 ALLEN PARKER: More net profit ultimately-

8 RON GAMBLE: Once a year inspection will make more
9 money for the vehicle inspection operators, some
10 of them?

11 ALLEN PARKER: I would rather see it the other way, the once a
12 year inspection will cost the consumer more.

13 RON GAMBLE: It will cost the consumer more, but
14 it will make more money for the inspection station
15 owners?

16 ALLEN PARKER: I can't say. I don't know.

17 RON GAMBLE: If it does one it should do the
18 other. I heard yesterday and I know I'm going to
19 hear today, it seems that the only ones that seem
20 to be really concerned about safety are those who
21 are vehicle inspection station operators or parts
22 of organizations. And I just can't understand why
23 the entire one side of this issue is from the
24 inspection station operators and their whole story

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1 is safety. I do like to hear that, but there are
2 an awful lot of people out there who find the major
3 concern with the system the way it is now is the
4 fact that those who inspect by and large are those
5 who net a profit by fixing the car. And I would
6 like to ask you, how do you feel about the
7 consumer's worry that they are being ripped off?
8 Do you think that if we revamp this whole system
9 and had state inspection stations and the repairs
10 had to be done by someone else, do you think there
11 would be more credibility to the entire system?
12 It's my understanding that that's the way it is in
13 some other states; where the car's inspected is not
14 where it's repaired.

15 ALLEN PARKER: Well, I understand that Florida just did away
16 with this inspection, and I think New Jersey also did. And I
17 don't know how it will affect the credibility of a garage just
18 by eliminating state inspection.

19 RON GAMBLE: What I'm getting at, I think the polls
20 that I have seen show that the consumer, the driver
21 out there, by and large is for once a year
22 inspection. And I think that some of his main
23 concern is that he has been getting ripped off by
24 the guy that is inspecting and repairing his car.

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1 And that -- I know that that's just isolated
2 cases, I'm not saying that the whole system is
3 corrupt. That would be ridiculous. But I do
4 know that there are some out there. And I think
5 that the bottom line on these surveys, and the
6 reason for the results of these surveys is simply
7 that they will only have to face the piper once
8 a year instead of twice.

9 JOEL WEISBERG: If I may, I'd like to correct on the record on
10 the statement made as to who has been testifying for twice a year
11 and testifying on the safety issue. In fact, if you go through
12 all the hearings we've had so far and the witnesses, you will
13 find the State of Pennsylvania and the AAA testifying for once
14 a year. Testifying for twice a year you have found not only the
15 inspection people, but you have also found the League of Women
16 Voters, you have found the representative from Pensy Leasing who
17 has nothing to do with the industry, saying safety twice a year.
18 You found a representative from a school district out in Berks
19 County who who has come in and said we not only want our school
20 buses inspected twice a year, but we want more. The unbiased
21 testimony, the testimony from other than the State of Pennsylvania
22 that's been before this committee and other than the industry
23 has been for twice a year, not for once.

24 RON GAMBLE: I believe by and large though, it is

1 from the industry. And I did talk to the lady
2 that testified yesterday from the League of Women
3 Voters. And I asked, had they polled their
4 membership and she said they had not, that it was a
5 committee that had concerns with certain parts of
6 the inspection program. That's all I have.

7 HARRY BOWSER: That copy of a letter from Dr.
8 Larson is dated 1979?

9 JOEL WEISBERG: That's correct.

10 HARRY BOWSER: It always interests me how those
11 copies get out. How did you get that? Did Dr.
12 Larson give that to you?

13 JOEL WEISBERG: I believe, and I may be wrong, but I believe
14 that before this Budget Administration report came out, that
15 this letter was distributed by the Department of Transportation
16 at a meeting of the inspection advisory committee. As I say,
17 before this report was ever done, sometime, I think I've had it
18 since sometime in 1979, shortly after it was written to the
19 secretary.

20 HARRY BOWSER: It may or may not have been
21 distributed. You said you believe.

22 JOEL WEISBERG: I'm almost certain. I've had it for almost two
23 years, so it's hard to remember how I first received it.

24 HARRY BOWSER: But it was handed out someplace?

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1 JOEL WEISBERG: It was handed out someplace. I'm virtually
2 certain that it was not gotten from some surreptitious means.

3 HARRY BOWSER: You probably have some friends in
4 department.

5 JOEL WEISBERG: I would hope so. But it was not accomplished
6 that way.

7 JOHN DAVIES: All right, any additional questions?
8 I don't know who you are, sir. so for the record,
9 would --

10 NINO CUZZOLA: I'm an inspecting mechanic and I just want to make
11 answer to a comment that he just made. That the only ones
12 interested in this once a year inspection seems to be the people
13 that are in the automotive industry and the inspecting mechanic.
14 Most naturally we are interested in that once a year, because
15 he fails to realize that once an automobile is inspected, that
16 that there inspecting mechanic has an obligation and a
17 responsibility for that car until that car comes back for another
18 inspection. And you fail to realize the responsibility that this
19 mechanic has. Now, once you go to once a year and a car is
20 brought in to an inspection mechanic and that car is inspected,
21 and it just passes, and the gentleman here, he says -- asked
22 the officer here, is it the consumer's obligation to bring that
23 car back to that inspection station? No. Right now it isn't.
24 Once that car is inspected, then he can turn around and take it

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1 out and have any back alley mechanic fix it or anybody that has
2 a fix-it manual to fix it, and yet he can go out and get that car
3 sticker put on, and then he turns around -- if there's an
4 accident and that car is picked up on an accident and the officer
5 goes there and checks that accident and there's a default in
6 that inspection, who do they go after? The inspecting mechanic,
7 whether it's one month, whether it's two months, or whether it's
8 a year. So I think you men back here are failing to realize one
9 thing. It is the obligation of the inspecting mechanic.

10 JOHN DAVIES: Now, if there are additional comments
11 remaining I'll add you as a speaker at the end, sir.
12 I was just opening it for the -- I thought you had
13 a question relative to that testimony. So that we
14 do have time here, we'll put it on at the end.

15 RON GAMBLE: Mr. Chairman, maybe you can correct
16 me. I thought, or as John, the Director of Traffic
17 Safety is still here, I thought I heard this
18 morning that when a car is inspected, that it has
19 to pass the inspection right then and there and
20 what happens after is irrelevant. And you're
21 saying that you're responsible till the next
22 inspection?

23 NINO CUZZOLA: Till the next inspection.

24 RON GAMBLE: Did I hear something contrary to that

1 this morning?

2 JOHN DAVIES: Wait a minute, gentlemen. Let's go
3 by the book now.

4 NINO CUZZOLA: Let's get into the conversation here, because
5 there's a lot of stuff involved here. It's a man's livelihood
6 involved here. And you're talking -- you're failing to realize
7 one thing. The safety of the consumer as well as the mechanic's
8 profession.

9 JOHN DAVIES: We have more than one question in
10 this, sir. I want to get to the legalities and
11 the proper rule and what the interpretation by the
12 department is and by the State Police. John?

13 JOHN PACHUTA: The liability is one in which if it could be
14 proven that at the time of inspection that the part was defective,
15 then the inspection mechanic is responsible. In other words, if
16 for instance, the inspection took place today, and tomorrow we
17 find those people dead in lovers lane because of an exhaust leak,
18 it would have to be shown that at the time of inspection the parts
19 were defective, the exhaust system was defective. Then it would
20 be a faulty inspection. If, however, the person gets the
21 inspection sticker today, and goes out and changes the tires
22 back to his wife's car, because he borrowed them for inspection,
23 that is not the inspection mechanic's liability, nor is any
24 accident that follows as a result of that. So it would have to

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1 be shown that at the time of inspection the part was faulty,
2 which is a matter for police investigation and modern criminology
3 techniques. So it is not, per se, that that inspection mechanic
4 is not liable for the operation of that vehicle for the next
5 six months by signing that certificate of inspection. He does
6 nothing more than say that at the time of inspection the vehicle
7 was in compliance with regulations.

8 JOHN DAVIES: Captain? I'm sorry, I thought you
9 had something to say. Mr. Packer?

10 MR. PACKER: Mr. Chairman, the issue of liability is rather
11 interesting. In 1979 or 1980, I think it was 1979, the general
12 assembly enacted a sovereign immunity law that restricted the
13 suit by a citizen against the State Government to bait hearings.
14 One famous of which is the pot hole that you must notify the
15 department twenty-four hours before you break your axle and
16 crack your spine, otherwise you have no grounds for suit against
17 the Commonwealth. That liability would prevent any owner of an
18 automobile from bringing suit against the department for
19 inconsequential or incorrect standards that are applied to the
20 automotive mechanic when he conducts the inspection. The
21 consequences of which is, it leaves the automobile mechanic
22 barren, alone in civil suit for any reason whatsoever.

23 JOHN DAVIES: Barren and alone in civil suit, but
24 not where the product itself, sir, if there is

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1 supposed to be liability there, that can be
2 pursued in civil suit by itself, as I understand
3 it. So that there again the difficulty of the
4 burden is placed upon the individual that is to be
5 done in civil litigation. So that we do actually
6 have three different standards that apply. In
7 fact, if we research, it will be more than three
8 different standards. Any others?

9 We'll take a break for lunch and we'll try
10 to get started as early as possible.

11
12 (Thereupon a recess was taken.)
13

14 HERBERT PACKER: Gentlemen, let me thank you and give you a cheery
15 good afternoon from the beautiful City of Erie and thank you
16 again for another opportunity to present our views on behalf of
17 the Pennsylvania Automotive Wholesalers Association. I have not
18 submitted a written text of my testimony, only because you have
19 already received from various members of our body who have
20 testified at previous hearings, the essence of what I want to
21 say. I simply want to repeat it for those members present who
22 may not have been able to make the meeting in Harrisburg on
23 July 16, or the meeting in Monroeville yesterday. And I want
24 to make just three quick points and I will stand for questions,

1 obviously.

2 First of all, we do oppose passage of House Bill 562. And
3 we have several reasons for doing so. Let me turn to point one.
4 The first point that we have is that the law should not be
5 changed. We strongly believe that the method, the system of
6 automotive inspection can be vastly improved, tightened up, if
7 you will. We believe that cosmetic requirements of the present
8 system can be dropped, such things as dome lights and body rust
9 spots where they don't count, small window cracks where they will
10 not interfere with the vision of the driver. Much of that, we've
11 been told by attending these hearings, is under protest right now.
12 And we herald that, we laud the department for doing so.

13 We do, however, have a reasonably, we think, reasonably
14 good suggestion to offer to the committee and to the department.
15 And it begins with a question. Why not relieve the State Police
16 of supervision of the periodic motor vehicle inspection program?
17 We have nothing against the State Police, except to believe that
18 they're expert policemen and should be employed in police work,
19 and leave automotive inspection and supervision of inspection
20 stations to men who are qualified as highly more competent
21 professionals. We're told, incidentally, that the State Police
22 are willing to give up this program. And it said, furthermore,
23 we say, it doesn't seem fair to ask a State Police Trooper who
24 has been trained in the art and sciences of police work, to act

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1 as an erstwhile mechanic and to certify the competency, the
2 efficiency and the honesty of another man trained in the field
3 of automotive mechanics. Why not explore, we say, within this
4 subcommittee and within the overall House Transportation
5 Committee, the possibility of outside, third party supervision
6 of the entire PMVI program. There is a precedent, Mr. President
7 and members of the committee, already existing in State Government
8 for this third party supervision. The division of industrialized
9 and mobile housing within the Department of Community Affairs
10 presently has a third party inspection system for all factory
11 built housing. The third parties -- I can't name them all, but
12 I can name several, U.S. Testing Company, Pittsburgh Testing
13 Company, organizations such as that, and they do exist in the
14 field of automotive inspections and mechanics. We say that the
15 system, incidentally, works beautifully for the division of
16 industrialized mobile housing and we think that it could work
17 very well for the Department of Transportation, and we strongly
18 urge that that idea be given serious consideration.

19 Our point number two, and I was discussing this with Gene
20 Beeman just a moment ago, and that is it may come as a surprise
21 to you, it certainly did to me, that there is a myth existing in
22 the repair of automobiles. And that myth is that foreign cars
23 and American built compacts and subcompacts are less expensive
24 to repair. Nothing could be further from the truth. In

1 testimony given by Mr. Lock; which was submitted in writing to
2 the committee or will be, I stand corrected, he submitted a list
3 of prices of just the component parts of the automotive exhaust
4 system, and it will shock you, I hope, as it did me, to find that
5 the American built compacts and subcompacts and foreign built
6 compacts and subcompacts, those parts, the tail pipe, the
7 resonator, the muffler jacket, are twice as expensive as those of
8 conventionally built American automobiles.

9 And then finally wrapping up, we say that by all means,
10 safety is the name of the game. We believe it in Pennsylvania
11 Automotive Wholesalers Association, and we urge you again, please
12 to give serious consideration to the possibility of tightening
13 up the present inspection system, of absolutely doing anything
14 within your power, restore public confidence in that system, and
15 to keep it at the semi-annual level, leaving the annual issue to
16 further deliberation by the general public. I will at that point
17 end my testimony. Gentlemen, I stand for questions if I'm able
18 to answer them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 JOHN DAVIES: Any questions at all?

20 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Did I understand you correctly
21 that you were saying comparable parts in American
22 made compact cars are more expensive than
23 comparable foreign small cars?

24 HERBERT PACKER: No, sir, I said American built compacts and

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1 subcompacts and the parts thereof and the parts for foreign built
2 compacts and subcompacts together, are approximately on the
3 average, twice as expensive as the replacement parts for
4 conventionally built American automobiles, such as my LTD wagon
5 or a Chevy Capris or a Chevelle. Once you drop down to a compact
6 and subcompact level, miniaturization takes its toll in terms of
7 replacement parts. And that's something this committee should be
8 aware of in deliberating the issue of whether to go annual or
9 retain our semi-annual inspection system.

10 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Is there any change in the labor
11 charge for a small car as compared to an LTD wagon?

12 HERBERT PACKER: I cannot answer that factually. I can answer it
13 subjectively. I do believe that the labor time would be slightly
14 more intensive with regard to compacts, but I can get the answer
15 factually for you, Representative Steighner, and I will do so.

16 JOHN DAVIES: Also, the input I have was that I
17 think their time charges go longer for labor on
18 the work they have to do to a small car and the
19 work they have to do on a regular car. I don't
20 know whether that's the clearance that they have
21 to work with or whatever, but do your people have
22 a record of such?

23 ALLEN PARKER: I don't know about our organization. I can only
24 state for myself, we don't differentiate between foreign car

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1 labor and domestic car labor.

2 JOHN DAVIES: We're talking about the time. You
3 go strictly on a time basis, and your price is the
4 same. But what we're saying is, don't the dealers,
5 when they bring them in and they have a job time
6 sheet that they use in the replacement of it, those
7 are all put out by the manufacturer. Don't those--
8 Doesn't that time criteria for labor seem to
9 exceed the norms for the American made regular
10 sized car and larger?

11 ALLEN PARKER: No, I don't think so.

12 JOHN DAVIES: I stand corrected then.

13 ALLEN PARKER: The labor rate on some foreign cars, I notice the
14 dealership is higher, like in a Porsche. A Rambler might be
15 twenty dollars an hour, a Porsche might be twenty-three, a
16 Mercedes might be twenty-eight.

17 JOHN DAVIES: Okay. Then we'll show the record
18 to indicate that and then we'll check it further
19 to see whether the manufacturer themselves have
20 some comment to that end or the dealers themselves
21 have any comment.

22 HERBERT PACKER: Let me ask just one question. I do have with me
23 price comparisons for several of those parts, if you would like
24 me to get it or just to bring it to you afterwards, I will do so,

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1 or I can read them off right here. It's not very long. As you
2 wish.

3 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: Afterwards would be fine.

4 JOHN DAVIES: Any other questions?

5 Is Mr. James R. Brown here today? Mr. Brown,
6 the secretary and general manager of the Erie
7 County Motor Club. Mr. Brown?

8 JAMES BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

9 I am Jim Brown, general manager of the Motor Club. We have
10 offices in the Erie area, Corry, North East, and Girard. We
11 represent about thirty-two thousand AAA members in Erie County.

12 I am glad to be here today on behalf of the Motor Club to present
13 our view on the once a year motor vehicle safety inspection
14 proposed in House Bill 562.

15 The Motor Club has taken a close look at the Commonwealth
16 semi-annual motor vehicle safety inspection and was the first
17 major organizations along with our State organization, the
18 Pennsylvania AAA Federation in 1979 to call for reducing this
19 inspection to once a year.

20 The efficacy of the periodic motor vehicle inspection system
21 has been the object of many highway safety studies, as reported
22 in the Wall Street Journal. It says, "Objective highway safety
23 studies have indicated for years that auto safety inspections
24 operated states have little bearing on highway safety." Human

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1 factors are by far the dominant cause of accidents.

2 This fact is supported by a recent study conducted by the
3 Indiana University Institute for Research in Public Safety, which
4 found that human factors were definite causes in eighty-five
5 percent of the accidents, and vehicle factors were definite causes
6 in only six percent of the accidents. In January 1981 the Office
7 of Budget and Administration, of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 released its own study of the motor vehicle inspection system.
9 The OBA found that eighty percent of the causal factors in all
10 motor vehicle accidents in 1978 in Pennsylvania could be
11 classified as human factors, seventeen as environmental factors,
12 and only three percent as vehicle factors. The OBA study went
13 on to say: "Semi-annual motor vehicle inspection is not a
14 cost-effective means of controlling motor vehicle accident rates.
15 In fact, this study confirms the findings of several others which
16 have concluded that accident rates among states with annual and
17 semi-annual inspections are essentially the same as those in
18 states with no vehicle inspection programs after basic
19 socioeconomic, demographic, environmental and highway differences
20 are taken into account." The 1980 report by Mark Crain, conducted
21 for the American Enterprise Institute, is one of these.

22 At this point Pennsylvania is one of only six states that
23 have twice a year safety inspections, twenty-two states have
24 annual inspection, five states have random, eighteen states have

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1 none.

2 It is the conclusion of the OBA study -- and the Erie County
3 Motor Club Pennsylvania AAA Federation concurs -- that if vehicle
4 inspection standards, procedures and requirements were related
5 as closely as possible to the mechanical components and conditions
6 most often implicated in vehicle defect accidents, the
7 effectiveness of the PMVI program would likely be enhanced. When
8 the OBA examined the three percent of the vehicle accidents
9 related to vehicle causal factors, they found that brake failures
10 accounted for 0.9% of all listed accidental causal factors,
11 followed by tires 9.7%, steering 0.3%, and lights less than 0.1%.
12 Miscellaneous other vehicle failures accounted for 0.9%. Over
13 the ten year period from 1969 to 1978, the state found, apparently
14 only a relative small proportion of Pennsylvania motor vehicle
15 accidents, approximately three percent are caused by vehicle
16 factors.

17 Thus the study concludes--and we concur--that an annual
18 inspection cycle would be no less effective than the semi-annual
19 inspection cycle currently used in Pennsylvania because of the
20 small percentage of traffic accidents related to vehicle defects.
21 It is our belief that an annual inspection for cars and light
22 trucks geared to the key vehicle components would not have any
23 detrimental effect on vehicles and, therefore, on highway safety.
24 The key vehicle components would be the brake system, tires,

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1 steering and lights.

2 Among the principal benefits gained by reducing the inspection
3 frequency for cars and light trucks would be a cost saving to the
4 motoring public. It is estimated by the OBA that Pennsylvania
5 motorists would save approximately sixty-one million dollars a
6 year in inspection fees alone, i.e., the charges by inspection
7 garages just for looking over one's car, and an additional
8 sixteen million dollars in time and travel costs. That is a very
9 significant amount of money.

10 Another benefit from going to annual instead of semi-annual
11 inspection would be to save the state over a million dollars a
12 year in administrative costs, according to the OBA study.

13 It is argued by proponents of the semi-annual inspection
14 system that repair bills will escalate as a result of an annual
15 inspection program. According to the OBA, the vehicle repair
16 costs are not expected to be any greater than an annual
17 inspection cycle because under the present system most defective
18 components already require complete replacement when discovered.
19 By this we mean things like tires, brake linings, brake drums
20 when scored, and headlights.

21 The opponents of once a year inspection will tell you that
22 anything less than twice a year is unsafe, that cars can't last
23 a year without inspection, that Pennsylvania motorists are going
24 to wind up the losers if we depart from our semi-annual system.

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1 It needs to be said in response to this, however, that this
2 argument is being made chiefly by those who stand to gain
3 financially from the current system, i.e., the inspection station
4 industry. The statistics that we have seen, many of which are in
5 the OBA report and some of which are included as an appendix to
6 these remarks as developed by us, do not show states to have any
7 better safety record for having two inspections as opposed to one
8 inspection or even random inspection. So the system in
9 Pennsylvania may be a good one for maintenance but does not
10 prove itself as necessary for safety. And safety is what the
11 program is all about.

12 Indeed, we should not confuse an annual safety inspection
13 program with preventive maintenance. The purpose of a safety
14 inspection program is to inspect those items which are related
15 to the safety of the vehicle; maintenance, on the other hand,
16 is a personal and variable thing, depending on the individual's
17 preference and the amount and type of driving he does. We should
18 not continue the system of letting a program, intended solely to
19 identify and correct worn out or defective equipment that could
20 lead to highway accidents, be also a catch-all program for general
21 maintenance. The latter is something that the motorist should
22 take care of on his own--this we know only too well from our own
23 emergency road service that each club offers. The motorist of
24 course has the option, but not the obligation, to combine

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1 maintenance work with the required safety inspection.

2 In conclusion, we support House Bill 562 as a proposal whose
3 time has come and urge you to act favorably on the bill.

4 JOHN DAVIES: Did your organization conduct any
5 survey of your membership the way the West Penn
6 organization down in Allegheny County or in that
7 area testified?

8 JAMES BROWN: No. We didn't put anything in the magazine as
9 far as a survey. I think West Penn did. And we just tried to
10 feel the pulse of our membership. We've had a couple articles
11 in our magazine that we're favoring safety inspection once a year.
12 And all of the comments we have had from our members, just reading
13 the article, as I said, we didn't have a survey, have been
14 favorable.

15 JOHN DAVIES: Then that wouldn't be a fair
16 question, because -- Okay. I'll forget that one
17 then. Gentlemen?

18 JOSEPH STEIGHNER: If I could just follow up on
19 Chairman Davies' comment, you said that all the
20 comments you received from the article were
21 favorable.

22 JAMES BROWN: That we had at the club, yes. We didn't make a
23 survey, as I said. We had a statement in the mortorists magazine,
24 the monthly one, saying we favored once a year inspection. The

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1 comments -- I didn't keep track of them. You're not going -- I'm
2 not talking about a thousand comments, just from an article.
3 You're probably maybe talking thirty or forty, at the most, that
4 I got personally at the office.

5 JOHN DAVIES: Any other questions? Thank you very
6 much.

7 JAMES BROWN: Thank you.

8 JOHN DAVIES: Harold Orton?

9 HAROLD ORTON: All I would like to say is that as of last week
10 we had sixty-six of our school buses inspected by the State
11 Police. And when they inspect buses they are strictly inspected.
12 And when we get these buses on the road September 1st, we would
13 like to see and be sure that all the vehicles and cars coming
14 towards our buses which are stopped letting students out, are in
15 good, safe order. In other words, I'm for two inspections, our
16 district is for two inspections a year to insure the fact that all
17 those vehicles and cars that are coming towards our buses on the
18 highway are able to stop, will not have any steering failure and
19 run into our buses or our students going across the street.
20 That's all I have to say.

21 JOHN DAVIES: When you say your district, you're
22 speaking for both the administration, the school
23 board and --

24 HAROLD ORTON: That's correct. I talked to the secretary of our

1 school board before I left to come down here and their feelings
2 are the same as ours. I've been a mechanic now with the school
3 district for about twenty years. And we realize how many
4 different things can go wrong with any vehicle.

5 RON GAMBLE: Was there a resolution passed by the
6 school district, or just word of mouth?

7 HAROLD ORTON: Just word of mouth.

8 RON GAMBLE: And the majority or all of them --

9 HAROLD ORTON: Just the secretary of the school board is the only
10 one that I talked to before I came down here.

11 RON GAMBLE: And she talked to all the board
12 members?

13 HAROLD ORTON: Not that I know of, sir.

14 RON GAMBLE: You talked to the secretary. Okay.

15 HAROLD ORTON: Because we just got the information about this
16 hearing and we wanted to come down and see what was involved and
17 just so that we weren't behind on anything.

18 JOHN DAVIES: We certainly thank you for your time,
19 because someone from Berks County representing the
20 same position you have and some other materials will
21 go to Harrisburg on the same subject.

22 HAROLD ORTON: I like to see hearings like this take place and
23 we just wanted to come down and see what was involved so we would
24 have firsthand information on it.

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1 JOHN DAVIES: Thank you for your time. We'll go
2 to the order. We're at that time. We're looking
3 for anyone else.

4 THOMAS TIGUE: Is there anyone here who can answer,
5 or perhaps we can find the statistics ourselves,
6 that would show the number of accidents of
7 comparatively speaking of school buses against
8 private automobiles or fleet vehicles, something of
9 that nature? Does anyone know of any study that
10 would be done according to that or any statistics
11 that would be available?

12 JOHN DAVIES: I'm sure that the Department of
13 Education would have something in cooperation with
14 the Department of Transportation. I've seen some
15 figures but I don't want to say what they are.
16 We'll certainly look for you.

17 NINO CUZZOLA: My name is Nino Cuzzola and I'm here on just my
18 behalf, because I just -- by accident I heard that this meeting
19 was taking place today. And I'm surprised not to see any other
20 mechanics here. I don't think they were properly notified that
21 this type of an inspection hearing was taking place. But in as
22 much as I want to talk about being an inspector for forty years,
23 I've been in the mechanical business for forty years. I've been
24 inspecting cars for a little over thirty years. And I know what

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1 the motoring public is like. Now I can look at each one of you
2 gentlemen right here. How many of you know how to fix your own
3 automobile? You do? You're a rarity. How many of you know
4 Pennsylvania compared to Florida? That's all level land, no
5 hills, no nothing in any other part of our states throughout our
6 country. You take Pennsylvania. It's one exception. We got --
7 the weather here is unpredictable. It goes from one extreme to
8 the other extreme. We have hills that's beyond -- you take
9 Allegheny County. You can start up at one top of a hill and I
10 guarantee by the time you get down at the bottom of the hill you
11 won't have any more brakes. And each and every one of you
12 individuals, I think some of you are about my age, and you can
13 look back on the products that this country used to put out, the
14 automobiles we used to have. I remember a time when a car used
15 to bump a fender, you used to have to get a welder to come out
16 with a heating torch to put that fender where it belonged. And
17 they had frames under it you couldn't believe. They had straight
18 axels. They had many safety features in those days that you don't
19 have today. You take a look at some of your automobiles that are
20 put on the road today, no frames, hit broadside you might as well
21 forget it, you're gone, at twenty-five or thirty miles and hour.
22 Years ago you could go down the street, you get hit at fifty
23 miles and hour, put a little dent in it but you could drive it
24 away. Today I guarantee it if you get hit, either broadside or

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1 partial front end, you don't have a car. It's a total.

2 So then the majority of the people, the legislators, I grant
3 you they're out there to make bills, they want to satisfy the
4 general public, but the general public to save a dollar sometimes,
5 are penny-wise and dollar-foolish. I know as an inspector, I
6 inspected cars for thirty some years and I had generations of
7 families, from the grandfathers, son, right down the line, that
8 served with me for a good many years. I've heard remarks about
9 gouging. I never try to gouge my customer. But yet you have
10 that there consumer that would come in on the last day of
11 inspection and his car is almost a physical wreck. And I guarantee
12 you he's the type of guy who will pay you a twenty dollar bill
13 just to put the sticker on. He wouldn't want you to inspect it.
14 He's the guy after you do fix his car he's going to come out
15 and say, "You gouged me." And he's hollering like mad. I've

16 I've been working in the past nine years -- seven years, for
17 the Pennsylvania Dealers Association. I covered almost fifteen
18 counties. And I go from one garage to the other. And I know
19 each inspection, each dealer that represents his community. He's
20 out there to give them a public service. He's not out there to
21 gouge, he's out there to give them the best service he can. But
22 yet he does -- he's not given credit for it.

23 Today the mechanical profession -- it takes a good many years,
24 as many years as I've been in it, I learn something new with every

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1 new car that comes out every year. I had to buy tools in order
2 to repair that car. But yet you talk about the safety features
3 now. They tried one inspection a year, many years ago. And if
4 you look back in the state -- I can't tell you the exact date,
5 but a good many years ago they changed it to once a year and
6 they found it didn't work. And yet they want to bring it back
7 to this point. Now they want to save the state money. Yet the
8 state is not losing any money.

9 Sure, they go to one inspection a year. They don't save the
10 consumer anything. Instead of one dollar for a sticker they
11 charge the mechanic two dollars for that sticker. That there
12 mechanic is required to hold so many inspection stickers there
13 per campaign. If he don't, when the state trooper does go in
14 there, which I don't resent that the state troopers have that job,
15 they shouldn't have that job. Because there's a lot of qualified
16 mechanics, some are semi-retired or some of them who would take
17 a job like that and do a better job than that state trooper. I
18 don't have nothing against them, but they were trained to go out
19 there on the highway for many other things other than mechanical.
20 I know they can check, they can come in the garages -- they
21 inspected my books many a time. Yet they'll come in and they'll
22 tell you -- if I inspected a car and I inspected sixteen in an
23 eight hour period I had a state trooper on my back, because he
24 said, "You're not pulling the right job." And this is what I'm

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1 saying. It isn't the money part that's involved, because Mr.
2 Gamble here told me, he said, "Well, does a mechanic make the
3 same amount of money by once a year or twice a year?" Most
4 naturally he's going to make more money once a year, because all
5 those consumers, customers out there that come in here and only
6 get an inspection once a year and he does come in there, their
7 cars -- the rotors, the calipers, they're totaled. You can take
8 a caliper -- I don't know if you gentlemen know what the rotors
9 system and the brake system on an automobile is like. You could
10 put a set of pads on it this morning, and if you drive it long
11 enough and that piston does kick up, you're going to score that
12 rotor by the end of the day. It will burn it right out. These
13 are the things I want to point out. It isn't the matter of money.
14 If you want to save money to the consumer and you want to be fair
15 with the mechanic, if you want to go once a year, then there
16 should be a limit to this bill. The minute that that car is
17 inspected, then that mechanic should be relieved of that
18 responsibility when that leaves that garage. Because I'll tell
19 you, once that guy -- the way it is today, he inspects that car
20 and he puts his authorized sticker on there, two months from today
21 and he can go four, five hundred miles, he can go a thousand
22 miles. He has an accident and the state trooper inspects it and
23 says that's a faulty brake, they don't go after the consumer, they
24 go after the individual mechanic.

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1 So I'm here to say that I hope to be inspecting more cars
2 in the future, but I want to do a job and do it right. I say
3 the only way I can do it is to keep that two inspections a year.
4 You're doing not only the general public, motoring public a
5 service, you're doing yourself a service. Because you can say
6 your family, your kids are being transported in those vehicles
7 every day, and the only way -- I know he's coming up with
8 percentage rates of how many accidents here, how many accidents
9 there, how many accidents here. It proves one inspection a year,
10 two inspections a year -- it don't make any difference. But
11 there is that possible chance, and it might be yours. And the
12 only way you can -- safety can't be practiced too extremely.
13 So all I say, keep that two inspections a year. Thank you.

14 JOHN DAVIES: Any questions? The only comment
15 that I would have to the once a year in your
16 statement relative to getting rid of that is that
17 you're sincere, and the mechanic inspector now
18 that really does a job, and the fellow that finds
19 the seventy percent and so on and so forth, can
20 document it, as compared to those that are doing
21 the three ninety-five lick 'em stick 'em, is you're
22 going to protect that guy while you're protecting
23 the honest guy if you make that simplistic
24 amendment that you're talking about. It would

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1 have to be much more involved than that. That
2 amendment would, because of the fact
3 that you're then going to protect the bad with the
4 honest dealer or inspector that has right along
5 been doing the job. We had one testify yesterday
6 that wouldn't touch his own car for sixteen days,
7 because it hadn't been inspected. So that that
8 type of individual -- you're protecting the other
9 type of fellow that is doing the lick 'em stick 'em
10 if you went to something as simple as that.

11 NINO CUZZOLA: I have another thing to that. You asked me a
12 little bit ago if I was a certified mechanic. Okay. Each and
13 every one of us that went to that school who are -- I hit and
14 missed that one, too. Now, you get a card and you're certified.
15 That was the biggest farce I ever did see. Because now when you
16 take a mechanic and put him down and you run him through an
17 inspection, okay, and have the schooling, you're judging here
18 and you're not classifying this profession. A mechanic is a
19 mechanic. A backyard mechanic is a backyard mechanic. And
20 you're satisfied. Now, on the certification, this is the kind
21 of laws that should come up. If you're a mechanic, then you should
22 be certified as such. You should be displayed. Your services
23 are being displayed out there offered to the general public and
24 should be honored as such. And this is why I'm saying, before

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1 you amend to one inspection a year, let's do something about
2 the mechanics out there who have -- that are doing a bad
3 inspection before you start going knocking off that safety
4 feature of twice a year.

5 JOHN DAVIES: They spoke of that yesterday, because
6 that very subject came up yesterday about the fact
7 that they had gone to just taking the ten hour
8 course as opposed to the experienced factor. And
9 the department has put back in the experience
10 factor. Now, that doesn't answer all your concerns.

11 NINO CUZZOLA: I took my son out there and I took my test, and my
12 son was just a high school student at the time. And I know he
13 could have passed that test. If he had to go ahead and do that
14 job, he couldn't do it.

15 JOHN DAVIES: We had that testimony yesterday and
16 the department is or has gone back to the
17 experience factor. That's what I'm saying. They're
18 getting rid of that ten hour stamp of certification
19 and I think that anyone that has your time in or
20 anyone that's worth their salt would have that
21 concern. I can see that as an honest concern.

22 NINO CUZZOLA: And another thing though, the thing is the state of
23 Pennsylvania itself and the driving conditions in the State of
24 Pennsylvania, I don't think there's another state that's almost

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1 as equal to the State of Pennsylvania as far as the driving
2 conditions. And I'm not talking even about the pot holes in the
3 State of Pennsylvania. These are the things that have to be
4 cured before you go out and start killing two inspections a year.
5 As long as you have those other hazards going on throughout your
6 state, you're bound to have problems with this inspection. That
7 inspection once a year ain't going to cure it. And you're not
8 going to save the motoring public anything.

9 JOHN DAVIES: Thank you. Any other comments?

10 MERLE PHILLIPS: I have one thing.

11 JOHN DAVIES: Yes, Merle?

12 MERLE PHILLIPS: Before we broke for lunch, I think
13 Attorney Weisburg made a statemeant and I would
14 like to have Mr. Beeman respond to that statement
15 that had to do with the letter to the governor to
16 the information that OBS hands out according to
17 the Indiana report or the six percent. I'm really
18 not clear on that and I would like to see what
19 his response would be.

20 JOEL WEISBERG: It was a letter that -- to clarify it, it was a
21 letter to Secretary Larson. It was sent to Secretary Larson from
22 the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as I recall,
23 at the secretary's request. It's a four page letter. I can give
24 Mr. Landis a copy of that and he can make copies for the group.

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1 MERLE PHILLIPS: I'd like to have Mr. Beeman
2 respond to that.

3 GENE BEEMAN: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,
4 as a matter of policy, adheres to the notion of periodic motor
5 vehicle inspections. That can't be challenged. They do recognize
6 however, that the data, just the aggregate accident figures by
7 PMIV and non-PMVI states is no longer an adequate measure of the
8 effects of motor vehicle inspections. In fact, they say we have
9 totals also that they have said that we can no longer draw
10 conclusions about the efficacy of motor vehicle inspections from
11 the examination of aggregate data. That is what I meant. The
12 gentleman testified yesterday with the spot charts fell into the
13 same interpretation trap that the administration did prior to
14 1968.

15 With regard to the Indiana research, it is true, as Mr.
16 Weisberg comments, that six percent of -- a mechanical failure
17 is involved in six percent of the accidents that they found. Now,
18 I've mentioned two to three and I want to explain the difference.
19 The Indiana study was an on-cite investigation of postaccident
20 circumstances. They had a panel there of physicians, auto
21 engineers, mechanics, and others. They all rendered independent
22 individual opinions about what caused the accident and what
23 factors were involved, the causal chain that produced the
24 accident. In six percent of the cases they could agree that a

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1 vehicle component was involved. That meant that merely that they
2 could agree that it was involved. They didn't make any assertions
3 about it being primary, or they didn't make any assertions about
4 its prepotency with regard to every other factor. So there were
5 an unlimited number of factors that could have been involved, also.
6 The two to three percent is a much smaller core of accidents which
7 they agreed were primarily vehicle component involved. They don't
8 say caused, but they could agree that the vehicle component was
9 striking enough in each of their judgments that it should rank
10 higher than the other causal factors. And it is this two to
11 three percent, this core, that we chose as a similar enough
12 piece of information with the State Police information, to make
13 a corroborating comparison. After all, they assign primary
14 causal factors to the accidents. So that's all I was trying to
15 say. I wasn't trying to diminish the importance of the six
16 percent.

17 JOEL WEISBERG: May I comment, Mr. Chairman?

18 JOHN DAVIES: Yes.

19 JOEL WEISBERG: I think the important issue here is all of us,
20 including me, are under a disadvantage. I have not read all of
21 those reports in total. You have not read, I assume, all of the
22 reports we're talking about in total.

23 JOHN DAVIES: I read a great deal of them.

24 JOEL WEISBERG: I've read some of them, but I haven't read all

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1 of them and most of us haven't. But what you have is, the Office
2 of Budget and Administration taking those reports and putting
3 them together, and coming out with a conclusion that there's no
4 effect. You have the Office of Budget Management coming up with
5 one conclusion. You have the National Highway Traffic Safety
6 Administration taking this same report, and they list them, taking
7 the same reports, and their comment on the Indiana report, which
8 I assume they read in full, is not only six to twelve percent,
9 they say, but a study conducted for the National Highway Traffic
10 Safety Administration by Indiana University, concluded that
11 probable involvement is either positive or severity increasing
12 factors of not that less than fourteen percent they take out
13 of Indiana.

14 So what I'm saying is, you got the same exact data. Maybe
15 they're right. But the National Highway Traffic Safety
16 Administration, in a letter to PENNDOT, says they're wrong. The
17 exact opposite conclusion has to be drawn. That's my point.
18 From the same exact data.

19 JOHN DAVIES: Anything else? Thank you again
20 very much.

21
22 (Hearing concluded at 2:18 p.m.)
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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATION

I, Debra Engelskirger, a Court Reporter and
Notary Public in and for the State of Pennsylvania,
do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcript of my stenographic notes in the
above-captioned matter.

Debra Engelskirger

Court Reporter and Notary Public

DATED: 9-22-81

DEBRA ENGELSKIRGER, Notary Public
Erie, Erie County, Pa.
My Commission Expires Jan. 31, 1983

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
AUGUST 19, 20, 1981**

by

**JOHN A. PACHUTA, DIRECTOR
BUREAU OF TRAFFIC SAFETY OPERATIONS**

Honorable Chairman, Members of the Transportation Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. I am John Pachuta, Director of the Bureau of Traffic Safety Operations for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to testify before this committee with regard to House Bill 562.

I am certain you are aware that the Department embraces the concept proposed in this legislation that would reduce our current vehicle safety inspection requirement from twice yearly to once a year. We believe the statistical evidence in the January, 1981, report entitled Motor Vehicle Inspection produced by the Office of Budget and Administration is both clear and valid. This report concludes that an annual periodic motor vehicle inspection (PMVI) for safety will not adversely affect highway safety in Pennsylvania.

Under Secretary Larson, the Department has continually strived to provide a safe and efficient transportation system to the citizens of this Commonwealth. Our commitment to service is one which I believe is unparalleled in the Department's history. Much of our improvement is a direct result of the recognition of changing conditions in the transportation needs of the people. This has led to a need for change of the old standards and practices which are no longer effective. Changes have been made which I believe we all have been pleased to see. Today's Department of Transportation is a lean, efficient, and effective agency that

has maximized Federal aid, improved road maintenance, and provided better service for the tax dollars invested by the citizens. The proposed annual PMVI will add to this by providing a cost effective highway safety program to insure the safety of our constituency.

Periodic vehicle safety inspection is recognized as a requisite portion of an overall highway safety program. The Highway Safety Act (23 U.S.C. 402 et seq.) and the Motor Vehicle Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.) are basically regarded as the foundations of PMVI. One result of these enactments was the development of 18 Highway Safety Program Standards covering topics from accident investigation and traffic control devices to driver licensing and traffic courts. Standard Number 1 is Periodic Motor Vehicle Inspection.

The purpose, as stated in the Manual for PMVI is "To increase, through periodic vehicle inspection, the likelihood that every vehicle operated on the public highways is properly equipped and is being maintained in reasonably safe working order. . . ."* Pennsylvania has had PMVI since 1929 with the express purpose of reducing the number of motor vehicle accidents caused by unsafe or defective vehicles. The evidence cited in the OBA report that I mentioned earlier demonstrates that the existing procedure has outgrown its usefulness and accrues more costs to Pennsylvania citizens than benefits. We are

*Highway Safety Program Standard 1, Periodic Motor Vehicle Inspection, p. I-1.

obligated to change this situation when the data shows that inspecting a vehicle twice a year is no more likely to improve highway safety than a once a year safety inspection.

Our program must address the needs of Pennsylvanians - both in the highway safety as well as the economical arenas. We believe that an annual inspection as proposed in House Bill 562 will provide such a program. We feel that compulsory annual periodic inspection is essential in minimizing the risks associated with the operation of unsafe vehicles, but any system should not place an undue hardship on the vehicle owner.

Current vehicle inspection laws and regulations in the Commonwealth need revision. Engineering and design enhancements have given us a vehicle mix that is equipped with longer wearing and less failure ridden components. Lengthened maintenance intervals for today's automobiles are evidence of this fact. Disc and self-adjusting brakes, dual braking systems, longer wearing brake linings, brake wear indicators, improved safety glazing, improved traction tires, and longer wearing tires with wear indicators are but a few of these items. Additionally, on-board vehicle component monitoring devices provide the operator with information that previously was only reported to him by the inspection mechanic that he visited twice a year.

The other major input to the formula which logically leads to annual inspection is the general change in vehicle usage patterns which has accompanied higher fuel costs. Since many of the items just listed are designed such that they degenerate through use - that is brake shoes wear out as they are utilized, a reduction in individual vehicle miles of travel results in a decreased wear rate for many components.

Since our existing regulations have developed over many years, they include items which are not directly safety related. In recognition of this fact, we are currently working on a revision to the safety inspection regulations which concentrates on critical component inspection, brakes, tires, steering/suspension, exhaust, glazing, etc., and eliminates many items which are not relevant.

A complete inspection, performed according to the Vehicle Equipment and Inspection Regulations Manual, would take about one and one-half hours. According to the CBA report, Pennsylvania passenger car inspections are routinely done in thirty to forty-five minutes. In other words, inspection stations are doing their own streamlining of the regulations. The time has come for the Department of Transportation to revise the rules in a realistic, safety-conscious way.

Today you will probably hear the contention that more extensive and expensive repairs would be necessary to correct defective components under an annual inspection system. However, according to the CBA report, vehicle repair costs

are not expected to be any greater under an annual inspection cycle. This is because, under the present system, most defective components already require complete replacement when discovered. In addition, very few component failures adversely affect other sound or undamaged vehicle parts.

For example, many cars fail to pass inspection because of lighting or electrical system failures. Their failure, obviously, requires their complete replacement and does not cause accelerated wear on other parts.

It is true that worn brake pads or linings could damage other portions of the braking system. However, the current method for determining the remaining life of brake pads or linings could be changed to conform with the annual inspection cycle. We do not intend to radically alter our standards as you might be led to believe. The idea that minimum brake lining thickness measurements should be changed causing good linings to be discarded is incorrect. As previously mentioned, brakelining wear is use related and since our inspection period is not tied to vehicle usage (as would be the case if the inspection period was based on mileage and type of driving), we do not propose increasing these standards.

Even if the contention concerning more expensive repairs were true, even if our present inspection process demonstrably resulted in better maintained cars in Pennsylvania, the point would be irrelevant. The Department of Transportation has no business telling the public how to maintain their autos. Our concern is safety. State vehicle inspection is

intended solely to identify and correct worn-out or defective equipment that could lead to highway accidents. Anything else is the individual citizen's responsibility.

You will also hear a variety of reports regarding the number of vehicles requiring repair under the current program along with cost figures for this service. In the Bureau of Traffic Safety Operations we randomly sample these items each month, and based upon information submitted by every inspection station on the TS-431 form over the past eighteen months, just under 36% of the vehicles inspected required maintenance. The sampling for this same period revealed the state-wide average inspection cost (both fees and repairs) to be approximately \$49 with the urban areas averaging about \$15 more.

While we are on the subject of costs, a question regarding insurance rates had been raised with respect to this proposed change from twice yearly to a once a year vehicle safety inspection program. A recent study by an Insurance Research Analyst for the Commonwealth stated that the probability of the inspection period change causing an increase in insurance rates is ". . . remote to the point of non-existence at this time".

Now, let me briefly describe two of the changes in the inspection process proposed in House Bill 562. First, only passenger vehicles and light trucks would be affected. All heavy trucks would still be inspected semi-annually, mostly because these vehicles tend to have unusually high mileage.

Transit vehicles, school buses and emergency vehicles would all be inspected semi-annually. The rationale here is that those riding on these vehicles do not have the control over maintenance or close knowledge of the vehicles that the owners of passenger vehicles do.

Second, we plan to coordinate the annual inspection of vehicles with the staggered registration renewal program. Before a vehicle could be registered or its registration renewed, that vehicle must pass inspection. Because most vehicle inspections would expire at the same time as their registrations, inspection station workloads would be evenly distributed throughout the year.

An annual inspection program as proposed in House Bill 552 would result in dramatically reduced motorist inconvenience and cost while maintaining present levels of traffic safety. It is estimated that Pennsylvania's 6.8 million automobiles and small truck owners would save more than \$61 million a year in inspection fees alone. The administrative burden in certain areas of the Department would also decrease resulting in reduced operating costs for the Commonwealth. Additionally, we believe that security control to eliminate the use of stolen or forged inspection certificates would be greatly enhanced.

In summary, the Department believes that annual safety inspection will provide another major step in reducing unnecessary government regulation, reduce motorist expense

and inconvenience while not adversely affecting present levels of traffic safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in regards to House Bill 562.

Testimony of:

JAMES R. BROWN

President-General Manager

Erie County Motor Club

**Once-A-Year Motor Vehicle Inspection
before the Senate Transportation Committee**

**Erie Council Chambers
Erie, Pennsylvania**

August 20, 1981

**Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Transportation Committee: .
Good afternoon. I am James R. Brown, President and General Manager of
the Erie County Motor Club with offices in Erie, Corry, Girard and North
East. We represent 31,700 AAA members in Erie County.**

**I am glad to be here today on behalf of the Erie County Motor Club to
present our view on once-a-year motor vehicle safety inspection, especially
as proposed in HB-562.**

**The Erie County Motor Club has taken a close look at the Commonwealth
semiannual motor vehicle safety inspection and was the first major organi-
zation along with our State PAAAF in 1979 to call for reducing this
inspection program to just once a year.**

**The efficacy of the periodic motor vehicle inspection system has been the
object of many highway safety studies, as reported in the April 8, 1980
Wall Street Journal editorial "Death by Regulation." "Objective highway
safety studies have indicated for years that auto safety inspections
operated states have little bearing on highway safety," the editorial
points out. Human factors are by far the dominant cause of accidents.**

**This fact is supported by a recent study conducted by the Indiana University
Institute for Research in Public Safety which found that human factors were
definite causes in 85% of the accidents, and vehicle factors were definite
causes in only 6% of the accidents. In January, 1981, the Office of Budget
and Administration of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania released its own
study of the motor vehicle inspection system. The OBA found that 80%
of the causal factors in all motor vehicle accidents in 1978 in Pennsylvania
could be classified as human factors, 17% as environmental factors, and
only 3% as vehicle factors.**

The OBA study went on to say: "Semiannual motor vehicle inspection is not a cost-effective means of controlling motor vehicle accident rates. In fact, this study confirms the findings of several others which have concluded that accident rates among states with annual and semiannual inspections are essentially the same as those in states with no vehicle inspection programs after basic socioeconomic, demographic, environmental and highway differences are taken into account." The 1980 report by Mark Crain, conducted for the American Enterprise Institute, is one of these.

At this point Pennsylvania is one of only six states that have twice-a-year safety inspections, 22 states have annual inspection, five states have random, and 18 states have none.

It is the conclusion of the OBA study--and the Erie County Motor Club concurs--that if vehicle inspection standards, procedures and requirements were related as closely as possible to the mechanical components and conditions most often implicated in vehicle defect accidents, the effectiveness of the PMVI program would likely be enhanced. When the OBA examined the 3% of the vehicle accidents related to vehicle causal factors, they found that brake failures accounted for 0.9% of all listed accident causal factors, followed by tires 9.7%, steering 0.3% and lights less than 0.1%. (Miscellaneous other vehicle failures accounted for 0.9%) Over the ten-year period from 1969 to 1978, the State found, apparently only a relatively small proportion of Pennsylvania motor vehicle accidents, approximately 3%, are caused by vehicle factors.

Thus the study concludes--and we agree-- that an annual inspection cycle would be no less effective than the semiannual inspection cycle currently used in Pennsylvania because of the small percentage of traffic accidents related to vehicle defects. It is our belief that an annual inspection for cars and light trucks geared to the key vehicle components would not have any detrimental effect on vehicles and, therefore, on highway safety. The key vehicle components would be the brake system, tires, steering and lights.

Among the principal benefits gained by reducing the inspection frequency for cars and light trucks would be a cost-saving to the motoring public. It is estimated by the OBA that Pennsylvania motorists would save approximately \$61 million a year in inspection fees alone, i.e., the charges by inspection garages just for looking over one's car, and an additional \$16 million in time and travel costs. That is a very significant amount of money.

Another benefit from going to annual instead of semiannual inspection would be to save the State over a million dollars a year in administrative costs, according to the OBA study.

It is argued by proponents of the semiannual inspection system that repair bills will escalate as a result of an annual inspection program. According to the OBA, the vehicle repair costs are not expected to be any greater than

an annual inspection cycle because under the present system most defective components already require complete replacement when discovered. By this we mean things like tires, brake linings, brake drums when scored, and headlights.

The opponents of once-a-year inspection will tell you that anything less than twice-a-year is unsafe, that cars can't last a year without inspection, that Pennsylvania motorists are going to wind up the losers if we depart from our semiannual system. It needs to be said in response to this, however, that this argument is being made chiefly by those who stand to gain financially from the current system, i.e., the inspection station industry. The statistics that we have seen, many of which are in the OBA report and some of which are included as an appendix to these remarks as developed by us, do not show states to have any better safety record for having two inspections as opposed to one inspection or even random inspection. So the system in Pennsylvania may be a good one for maintenance but does not prove itself as necessary for safety. And safety is what the program is all about.

Indeed, we should not confuse an annual safety inspection program with preventive maintenance. The purpose of a safety inspection program is to inspect those items which are related to the safety of the vehicle; maintenance, on the other hand, is a personal and variable thing, depending on the individual's preference and the amount and type of driving he does. We should not continue the system of letting a program, intended solely to identify and correct worn-out or defective equipment that could lead to highway accidents, be also a catch-all program for general maintenance. The latter is something that the motorist should take care of on his own--this we know only too well from our own emergency road service that each club offers. The motorist of course has the option, but not the obligation, to combine maintenance work with the required safety inspection.

In conclusion, we support HB-562 as a proposal whose time has come and urge you to act favorably on the bill.

VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTION - FREQUENCY* AND HIGHWAY FATALITY RATE**

ANNUAL

<u>STATE</u>	<u>1980 DEATHS/ 100,000,000 VMT</u>
Arkansas	3.5
Colorado	3.4
Connecticut (Vol. only)	2.9
Delaware	3.1
District of Columbia	1.6
Florida	3.5
Georgia	3.3
Hawaii	4.0
Indiana	3.0
Louisiana	4.8
Mississippi	4.3

<u>STATE</u>	<u>1980 DEATHS/ 100,000,000 VMT</u>
Missouri	3.4
Nebraska	2.7
New Jersey	2.1
New York	3.8
North Carolina	3.6
Oklahoma	3.3
Rhode Island	1.9
South Carolina	3.8
Texas	4.1
Utah	3.5
West Virginia	4.8

SEMIANNUAL

<u>STATE</u>	<u>1980 DEATHS/ 100,000,000 VMT</u>
Maine	3.3
Massachusetts	2.8
New Hampshire	3.0
Pennsylvania	3.0
Vermont	4.4
Virginia	2.6

RANDOM

California	3.4
Michigan	2.9
North Dakota	2.5
Ohio	3.1
Wisconsin	3.0

NONE

Alabama	3.7
Alaska	3.1
Arizona	5.1
Idaho	4.4
Illinois	3.1
Iowa	3.1
Kansas	3.4
Kentucky	3.2
Maryland	2.4
Minnesota	3.0
Montana	4.9
Nevada	6.3
New Mexico	5.6
Oregon	3.5
South Dakota	3.8
Tennessee	3.2
Washington	3.5
Wyoming	5.3

* Digest of Motor Laws, 1980 - American Automobile Association

** National Safety Council: Accident Facts 1980

TESTIMONY OF
ALLEN H. PARKER
ON HOUSE BILL 562, PRINTER'S NO. 589
BEFORE THE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1981
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

PHONE 814-833-4378
2866 WEST 26th ST.
ERIE, PA.
SINCE 1934



PARKER'S GARAGE • AUTO AIR CONDITIONING • GENERAL REPAIRING • TOWING • WELDING • MOTOR TUNE UP

My name is Allen H. Parker, of 2866 West 26th Street, Erie, Erie County, PA., 16506. I am owner/partner in Parker's Garage, of the same address. I have been a full time automobile mechanic since 1955. I am a certified Pennsylvania inspection mechanic. I am certified by both CARS and NAISE. I am a member of the Mechanical Shop Craft Committee at Erie County Vo Tech. Also, I am a past president of Automotive Service Councils of Pennsylvania, Inc.

Addressing the problem of annual inspection versus semi-annual inspection certainly is a complicated and vocal issue. Saving the motorists of Pennsylvania 60 million dollars a year is certainly a commendable objective. However, I do not believe that can be accomplished by eliminating semi-annual inspection. The Pennsylvania semi-annual inspection program was developed as a safety program and has evolved into a safety-preventive maintenance vehicle inspection program (PMVI). I understand the supporters of annual inspection are looking at safety and are not concerned with PMVI. That's unthinkable! The two are inseparable--you can't have one without the other.

With a semi-annual inspection program many vehicle defects can be detected before they become major problems. If anyone does not agree with that reasoning, they should talk to any fleet maintenance supervisor. Even the federal government and military uses such a program.

I do not know what the proposed standards would be on an annual inspection program, whether the brake lining thickness would remain the same or would be increased and likewise the tread depth on tires. In my opinion, the consumer stands to loose either way. If the lining thickness and tread

depth remain the same his vehicle could be rubbing the rivets and running on the cords by the next inspection, or if the lining thickness and tread depth are increased he could be forced to replace brake lining and/or tires that are not-worn out.

Due to the cost of new vehicles and the interest rate motorists are not buying new cars. I have noticed that trend for the last 2 years. Our customers have come to depend on us as many other motorists depend on other mechanics to provide them with a safe and dependable car through Pennsylvania State inspection and a PMVI program. To change to an annual program would be a disservice to the Pennsylvania motorist..

I think it would be in order to mention a problem that is applicable to the northern counties of Pennsylvania and probably extends into Ohio and New York. Every summer the docks at the Erie Harbor are piled high with salt to be spread on the highways by PENNDOT crews so motorists can speed to their destinations and are not hampered by slippery roads. That salt certainly takes its toll on frames, bodies and suspension parts. I have inspected vehicles in one period with badly rusted frames and rejected them at the next campaign because the frame was broken in that 6 month period. An annual inspection is definitely not enough for a car that is badly rusted especially if a "do it yourselfer" has worked on it and believe me they are increasing all the time.

The "do it yourselfer". Now there is a good reason for twice a year inspection. On some cars I've seen I don't think that's enough. You'd be surprised how many inspections we do where we find something goofed up like primary and secondary shoes reversed or primary on one side and secondary on the other or brake springs not correctly hooked or self adjusters froze up or wheel cylinders and calipers froze up or head light sealed beams off 1/3 of a turn or tie rod ends not adjusted or pieces of steel scabbed over holes in frames. The list is endless and some are quite amusing, but some are quite

dangerous and you wonder how the guy kept from piling it up.

I understand that HB 562 will exempt school buses from annual inspection, that they must be done twice a year. Hurray for the kids in the bus, but what about that second car that Mom drives. That seems to be the one that hauls the kids to school, to music lessons and the like, while Dad drives the newer car to work. I'll bet that old second, that most families have, logs more miles than those school buses ever do. I think safe vehicles are more important than the 10 to 15 bucks that people will save for that second sticker every year.

I've been in this business long enough to know that some people will not repair their vehicle even if it is a major safety item until they are forced to do so.

In closing, I would like to ask "why must we change from a successful safety --FMVI program that does work?" I agree, the program does need some changes and enforcement could be better. You and I both know that stickers are just "sold" from time to time. Even legitimate stations do not apply standards equally. Why can't we have a State Police garage supervisor assigned to inspection on a full time basis? Items like this are the things that people remember and gripe about. They forget about the times when defective items were found that could have prevented an accident and that's what the program is all about.



Allen H. Parker

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

BY

**RUSSELL C. RICKERT, DIRECTOR
SAFETY PROGRAM DIVISION
BUREAU OF PATROL
PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE**

HONORABLE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, GOOD MORNING. I AM CAPTAIN RUSSELL C. RICKERT, REPRESENTING THE BUREAU OF PATROL OF THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE. I WISH TO GIVE YOU AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTICIPATION IN THE MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM.

THE COMMONWEALTH'S MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM IS ADMINISTERED THROUGH A COOPERATIVE EFFORT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE POLICE IN THIS PROGRAM IS PRIMARILY TO SUPERVISE THE VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM IN ALL 67 COUNTIES OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

THE ACTUAL FIELD DUTIES IN THE PROGRAM ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE STATE POLICE MEMBERS ASSIGNED TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM AND DESIGNATED AS INSPECTION STATION SUPERVISORS, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS GARAGE INSPECTORS.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY SIXTY-SEVEN (67) TROOPERS SERVING IN THIS CAPACITY ON A FULL-TIME BASIS. THERE ARE AN ADDITIONAL FIFTY-FIVE (55) TROOPERS WHO ARE ASSIGNED AS ALTERNATES. THE LATTER ONLY SERVE IN THIS CAPACITY WHEN THE PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED SUPERVISOR IS ON LEAVE OR MUST BE ABSENT FROM HIS PRIMARY DUTIES

FOR OTHER AUTHORIZED REASONS; IN ADDITION, THE ALTERNATE MUST PERFORM GARAGE INSPECTOR DUTIES AT LEAST FOUR (4) DAYS PER MONTH.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE MOST PROMINENT VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTOR:

- A. OFFICIAL INSPECTION STATIONS ARE VISITED AT LEAST ONCE EACH YEAR. THESE VISITS ARE UNANNOUNCED, AT WHICH TIME THE STATION IS CHECKED FOR SUFFICIENT AND PROPER TOOLS, QUALIFIED MECHANICS, ACCURATE RECORD KEEPING AND AN EXACT INVENTORY OF, AND SUFFICIENT SECURITY FOR THE INSPECTION STICKERS.
- B. WHEN AN APPLICATION FOR ESTABLISHING AN OFFICIAL INSPECTION STATION IS SUBMITTED, SUPERVISORS CONDUCT A COMPLETE INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE APPLICANT MEETS THE APPROPRIATE REQUIREMENTS.
- C. STATION OWNERS AND MECHANICS ARE PROVIDED ASSISTANCE IN MAKING APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION AS AN INSPECTION STATION OWNER OR INSPECTION MECHANIC. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE SUPERVISORS CONSULTATIONS ON REQUIREMENTS, PROCEDURES, ETC. THE APPLICANTS ARE ALSO TESTED FOR THEIR ABILITY TO INSPECT A VEHICLE IN CONFORMANCE WITH REGULATIONS.
- D. IN ADDITION TO THE ANNUAL STATION VISITS, SUPERVISORS CONDUCT UNANNOUNCED UNSCHEDULED PERIODIC VISITS TO INSURE CONFORMANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATUTES

AND REGULATIONS.

- E. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS REGARDING FAULTY INSPECTIONS ARE INVESTIGATED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTOR. THESE INVESTIGATIONS ARE PERFORMED TO ASCERTAIN IF VEHICLE CODE LAWS OR INSPECTION REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED, WHICH CAN RESULT IN SUBSEQUENT PROSECUTION.
- F. SCHOOL BUSES ARE INSPECTED ANNUALLY PRIOR TO THE START OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR. THIS INSPECTION IS IN ADDITION TO THE PRESENT SEMI-ANNUAL INSPECTIONS AND IS PERFORMED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTOR. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 18,000 SCHOOL BUSES IN PENNSYLVANIA. SCHOOL BUSES ARE ALSO SPOT CHECKED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR BY THE GARAGE INSPECTORS.
- G. WHEN A VEHICLE IS RECONSTRUCTED (KIT CARS) IT MUST BE SUBMITTED TO A GARAGE INSPECTOR FOR VERIFICATION THAT THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS ARE MET AS PER REGULATION.

WHILE THESE ARE THE PRIMARY DUTIES DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM, THERE ARE OTHER INDIRECTLY RELATED DUTIES THAT ARE PERFORMED BY THE GARAGE INSPECTORS. THESE INCLUDE DUTIES SUCH AS DEALER INVESTIGATIONS, VISITS TO JUNKYARDS AND VISITS TO OFFICIAL SPEEDOMETER TESTING STATIONS.

IN CONCLUSION, I WISH TO THANK THE COMMITTEE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THIS STATEMENT OF THE STATE POLICE RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S VEHICLE INSPECTION PROGRAM.

**Testimony on Pennsylvania's Motor Vehicle Inspection
System Before the Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Transportation Committee, Subcommittee on Highway Safety**

Representative John S. Davies, Chairman

**BY: Gene G. Beeman
Office of Budget and Administration**

Thank you Chairman Davies and the members of the House Subcommittee on Highway Safety, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you regarding the research which has become the basis for the proposal that Pennsylvania change the frequency of its auto inspection program from a semi-annual to an annual cycle. My purpose here is not one of exhortation, but rather to inform the Committee, and its guests, of the research which has been done on motor vehicle inspection programs. I will explain the study done by the Office of Budget and Administration in January, 1981 as well as several others completed over the last dozen years.

Background

Motor vehicle inspection programs were implemented on the basis of two assumptions; explicit and implicit. The explicit assumption was that some substantial number of serious motor vehicle accidents were caused by mechanical failures and/or out of tolerance mechanical components, and that a state mandated inspection system would correct these difficulties - thereby reducing accidents. The implicit assumption was that the inspection process was worth the cost. I use the word assumption here because prior to the late 1960's there was no systematic and credible research done to demonstrate the effectiveness of vehicle inspection as a traffic safety program.

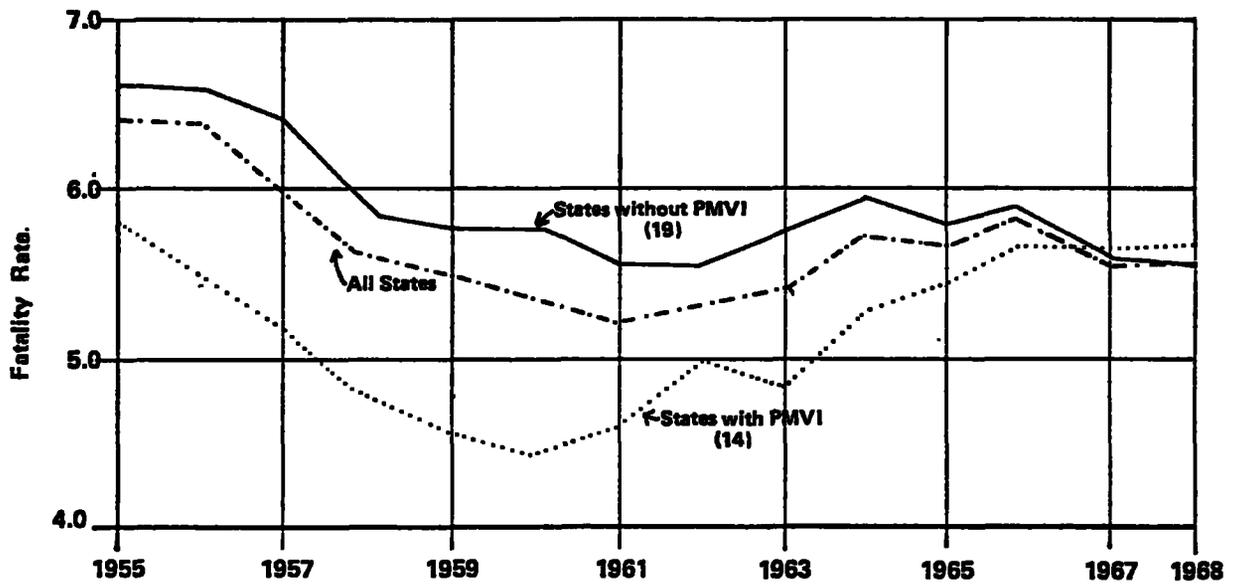
As the exhibit shows, until the latter portion of the 1960's the evidence seemed incontrovertible. The states which had periodic motor vehicle inspection (PMVI) programs showed lower fatality rates than did those without the program. In fact, states having a PMVI program had a group average fatality rate consistently below the national average, while the states without inspection systems showed rates consistently above the national average. However, the trends began to change. The distinct separation between the states with and without PMVI began to erode. The states without vehicle inspection, as far back as the late 1950's, began to converge with the national average fatality rates. By the early 1960's the fatality rates of states with vehicle inspection programs began a rather abrupt upward trend toward the national average. The states having PMVI were actually experiencing an increasing fatality rate! Then, in 1966 just before the trends would converge wiping away the fatality rate differences between the states with and without inspection, the Congress passed the Highway Safety Act requiring each state to begin periodic motor vehicle inspection. If the exhibited time series were continued up to the present, the trends for both groups of states remain essentially together; alternately passing above and below the national average. All trends show a moderate yet persistent decline.

But, with the passage of the Highway Safety Act, and with the disappearance of the differences in traffic safety between the states, a wave of reasonably sophisticated research was not long in coming; from independent sources as well as government. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) itself produced a well designed study in

MOTOR VEHICLE FATALITIES PER 100 MILLION VEHICLE MILES

1955-68

FATALITIES BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE



1968; but before doing so it concluded that the contention that PMVI is associated with reduced motor vehicle fatalities no longer could be supported by a simple analysis of aggregate fatality rates.

Clearly - factors other than, or in addition to, the presence or absence of motor vehicle inspection are involved.

Other Research

Before conducting its own analysis, the Office of Budget and Administration examined a number of previous studies on PMVI effectiveness. Other research efforts fall into three major areas: the relationship between inspection and motor vehicle condition; studies on the relationship between vehicle defects and accidents; and those seeking to define the relationship between PMVI and auto accident rates.

PMVI and Motor Vehicle Condition

Two major studies (McCutcheon and Sherman, 1969 and Ultra systems under contract to NHTSA) reviewed with regard to PMVI and vehicle condition lend support to the position that motor vehicles in PMVI jurisdictions have lower vehicle defect rates than those in jurisdictions without vehicle inspection, and that fewer vehicle defects are found in those jurisdictions with more frequent inspections.

Conclusion - These findings should not be generalized since in each study only four jurisdictions were sampled. In addition, the differences, in most cases, were small and component outages were confined, in the large majority of cases, to the least safety sensitive equipment.

Vehicle Defects and Accidents

Likely the best research done on identifying human, environmental and vehicle factors causing or contributing to vehicle accidents, was by

the Indiana University Institute for Research in Public Safety published in 1973. Human factors alone were identified as the cause in 50 to 54 percent of all accidents. Human factors alone or in dominant combination with environmental or vehicle factors were thought responsible for 85 to 97 percent of all accidents. In contrast, vehicle factors acting alone were identified as definite or probable causes in 2 to 3 percent of all accidents. Please bear in mind that these data involve all accidents - not just serious accidents.

Conclusion - This study is very well done and the results can be generalized. There is probably a small proportion of accidents which can be attributed to vehicle components. Interestingly, brakes were the only component found to have a definite accident involvement.

PMVI and Motor Vehicle Accident Rates

Highway safety researchers have developed other more powerful techniques with which to analyze the influence of PMVI on accidents. One approach adopted by several studies assesses large numbers of jurisdictions taking into account the diverse social and economic characteristics associated with vehicle accidents. Through rigorous statistical procedures, the influence of these varying characteristics can be controlled allowing the influence of PMVI to be identified. Another approach is to develop a long time series of fatality rates for states before and after adopting PMVI programs and comparing these to similar control states never having PMVI.

Conclusion - the group of studies employing the first approach were unable to account for the remaining differences among the states

fatality rates by the presence or absence of PMVI. The second approach, while not as powerful, yielded much the same result, with those states recently adopting PMVI and those which had established systems showing fatality rate trends increasing faster than the states without an inspection system. In short, all studies agree that PMVI systems are not associated with reduced fatality rates.

The Office of Budget and Administration's Evaluation of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Inspection Program

The OBA study was designed to test the assumptions stated at the beginning of my testimony; does the existence of PMVI reduce the level of serious motor vehicle accidents; does the frequency of inspection influence the level of serious vehicle accidents; is PMVI worth the cost. The first two statements have been objectively analyzed and the results are a matter of public record. As to the notion of value, that is a subjective judgmental decision which we cannot measure. The value of high inspection frequency is, to a large extent, illustrated by the extent to which the traffic safety objective of auto inspection is supplanted by the desire to have state mandated auto maintenance.

Since many previous studies, including those done by the NETSA, had demonstrated that certain demographic and socio-economic factors were strongly associated with accident rates; the OBA study used an evaluation approach to control for these influences. The analysis focused on 1971-73 annual data from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This study period was chosen because it represented a three-year period in which the

inspection status of each state remained constant and it proceeded the national gasoline shortage of 1974 which resulted in substantial reduction in both vehicle travel and accident rates. More recent data was not available for all of the variables under study.

The first phase of the analysis employed a wide variety of demographic factors, social and economic factors, environmental conditions and highway travel data thought to influence accident levels across the states examined. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics included population, per capita income, accidental deaths, and per capita alcoholic beverage sales. Environmental conditions focused on measures such as annual days of precipitation and annual average temperatures in each state. Highway data were composed of vehicle miles travelled, vehicle registrations, highway safety standards in force, surfaced miles and highway safety expenditures per capita. Through these variables the study sought to explain or account for the differing levels of fatal accident rates and the combination of fatal and injury accident rates across the states. Like other studies before it, the OBA analysis found that per capita income, accidental death rates, percent rural vehicle miles travelled, annual precipitation and temperature were consistent and powerful explainers of the differences in rates of serious accidents across the states. We could explain between 50 and 80 percent of fatal accident rates and between 22 and 42 percent of serious accident rates by these variables alone.

The second phase of the evaluation divided the states into three groups: those with semi-annual systems; those with annual systems; and, states with no periodic inspection. This analysis mathematically controls for the affects of the above mentioned variables, thus allowing us to focus

on the influence of inspection on the remaining portion of accident rate variations.

The findings were, again, consistent with other studies in that serious accident rates among the state groups were essentially equal when differences in demographic, socio-economic, environmental and highway factors are considered. Differences in fatal and serious accident rates of annual, semi-annual and no PMVI states were not statistically significant. No significant differences could be found between annual and semi-annual states for any of the accident measures employed.

Our report conservatively estimates the cost of Pennsylvania's inspection system at \$155 million annually exclusive of repair costs. The assumptions used in this calculation were:

Inspection	=	\$122.4 million annually (6.8 million vehicles at \$9.00 per inspection);
Time Cost	=	\$27.2 million annually (1 hour at \$2.00 per hour per inspection);
Travel Cost	=	\$5.9 million annually (6 miles round trip at 7¢ per mile per inspection). This is based on 17 m.p.g. fleet wide and \$1.25 per gallon of gasoline.

In addition, there is some evidence to suggest a reason for concern regarding the application of the system to the vehicle fleet. The OBA obtained reliable estimates from the State Police concerning the time involved in completing an inspection. Current estimates range between 30 and 45 minutes to do an inspection; and this is borne out by the prevailing cost of around \$10 to \$12. Given the comprehensive nature of Pennsylvania's

inspection requirements, it is estimated that 1 to 1.5 hours would be required to evaluate all components. Since this is not the case in field application, it must be assumed that inspection stations are making priority decisions on which components to inspect - if they are aware of the requirements. Further, there is no assurance that inspection decisions always include those items which are considered the most safety sensitive. Several studies have found that the large majority of rejected components are of lesser importance to safety such as lights and wipers as opposed to brakes, tires and steering.

Conclusions

The evidence from several very well designed studies from a wide variety of sources agree that PMVI systems have no detectable influence on the level of serious accidents. Furthermore, there is no empirical support for the assertion that the added impact on general vehicle condition of semi-annual inspection is at all proportional to the added cost. Indeed, the longer wear intervals for virtually all auto components may be eroding any impact on vehicle condition.