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P. O. Box 4249

PITTSBURGH, PA 15203

PHONE 391-1131

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAY SAFETY**

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**In Re: PUBLIC HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 562
PRINTER'S NO. 589**

**Held At: Monroeville Municipal Building
Monroeville, Pennsylvania**

Wednesday, August 19, 1981

BEFORE:

**JOHN S. DAVIES, CHAIRMAN
Subcommittee on Highway Safety**

02-02-035

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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MR. DAVIES: It's a little past ten, so I guess we better get underway.

This is our second hearing of the public hearings that the Subcommittee on Transportation is conducting on House Bill 562 Printer's Number 589, the first of which was held in Harrisburg. I'll have the members that are here and the staff that's here introduce themselves.

(Off the record discussion.)

MR. DAVIES: I'm John Davies, who is in charge of this particular segment of the process, of the legislative process on the Bill. I'll have the gentlemen and ladies introduce themselves. Fred Trullo asked that I express his regrets that he could not be here this morning. He has another meeting. He expressed his concern yesterday about not being able to make it, but he had an obligation that could not wait.

Rick Tice is in the hospital in North Carolina after suffering an accident in a hang gliding incident while on vacation. He would have been here as well. So, I express those two concerns that I received from those individuals.

We'll start over here, sir.

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MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a little statement before you introduce yourselves. Why wasn't this meeting advertised? I think it's completely out of order because I don't see no inspection mechanics here this morning, and it involves all inspection mechanics. I think this meeting is completely out of order. It wasn't advertised. I had to go through channels to find out when the meeting was going to be held.

MR. DAVIES: Well, all I can say is in keeping with our requirements under the Sunshine Law I think it was advertised properly, and I would submit that to---

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Where was it advertised, sir?

MR. DAVIES: Well, Mr. Landis' staff can tell you.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: The paper only said it was going to be held in Monroeville and Erie, but didn't give no dates.

MR. LANDIS: The Chief Clerk's Office advertised this 72 hours--they by law must advertise it 72 hours ahead of the meeting. It was advertised, according to their office, in the local--in the Pittsburgh papers, probably in a classified note, a meeting notice. We notified the Service Councils, we have an agenda that will have people that represent mechanics.

1 We started setting this meeting up on the 24th
2 of July. It was--letters went out to organizations, as
3 well as the chief ---

4 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: You didn't come out to
5 the inspection stations, which involves us.

6 MR. LANDIS: We have, for example, Arthur Miller,
7 who is the President of the Service Councils; I have ---

8 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I'd like to see where
9 it was advertised by the Sunshine Law, and I say it's
10 out of order.

11 MR. DAVIES: Sir, if you'll just give him an
12 opportunity; now I don't want to rule you out of order,
13 but I'll give you your time.

14 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: If I'm out of order,
15 you state it.

16 MR. DAVIES: I'll also give you any time on the
17 schedule you want. If it takes to midnight tonight or
18 any time it takes for you to express your concerns, fine.
19 The gentleman--do you understand?

20 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Yes, go ahead. Say
21 your speech. I asked you for a few words on the floor.
22 You gave it to me, so I'm telling you.

23 MR. DAVIES: I'm going to give you a few more
24 words, and that will be it. If you have anything to
25 add to the record, I'll be glad to hear you. Will you

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give the gentleman an opportunity to finish, then of course we'll go on.

MR. LANDIS: We have, for example, scheduled at noon Mr. Thomas Messner, an auto inspection committee man from Westmoreland County. We have Arthur Miller, the President of Chapter 4 of the Automotive Service Councils, which from my understanding represents all the inspection stations in this area that belong to the Service Councils. We have Ken Boice from the Butler County Inspection Association; he belongs to the Inspection Association.

By law our Chief Clerk in the House of Representatives must advertise, and they did advertise. It was in the--I saw it last Friday in the notice that is given to all the press Friday morning with the times and where the hearing is being held and the time of the hearing.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Which paper, sir?

MR. LANDIS: That is the Chief Clerk in Harrisburg that has to make that determination. I would probably say the--the Pittsburgh Post Gazette and Press are probably the papers of the--the major papers in the local area.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: You can't furnish me the proof it was advertised in the Pittsburgh Press.

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MR. LANDIS: They do that. We know it from past experience.

MR. DAVIES: Sir, we'll note your objection, and we'll research that, and we'll take your name and ---

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I'd like to have that researched. If not, the meeting is completely out of order.

MR. DAVIES: Do you mind? We'll get that information to you. If you want to pursue it from there, you can pursue it from there.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Right.

MR. DAVIES: All right. The first witness or first--I'm sorry, testimony that would be--the report of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Traffic Safety, Mr. John Pachuta.

MR. PACHUTA: Thank you. You may wish to finish your introduction; you got sidetracked.

MR. DAVIES: Oh, I'm sorry, we did. I stand corrected.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm Merle Phillips, representing the

MR. PUNT: Terry Punt, 19th District.

MR. LANDIS: I'm Paul Landis, House Majority Staff Director, Department of Transportation.

MR. STEIGHNER: Joe Steighner, Member of the House, Butler County.

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MR. PETRACA: Representative Joe Petraca, West-
moreland County.

MR. MARTINI: I am Jim Martini, Minority Staff
Director.

MR. DAVIES: Are there any other members of
the Committee or House present? All right.

1 MR. PACHUTA: Thank you. Honorable Chairman
2 and members of the Transportation Committee and ladies
3 and gentlemen of the audience here, good morning. I
4 am John Pachuta, the Director of the Bureau of Traffic
5 Safety Operations for the Pennsylvania Department of
6 Transportation. I'd like to express my appreciation
7 at the opportunity to testify before this committee
8 in regards to House Bill 562.

9 I am certain everyone here is aware of the
10 Department that--that the Department embraces the con-
11 cept proposed in this legislation that will reduce
12 our current vehicle inspection requirement from twice
13 yearly to once a year. We believe the statistical
14 evidence in the January, 1981, report entitled Motor
15 Vehicle Inspection produced by the Office of Budget
16 and Administration is both clear and valid information.
17 This report concludes that an annual inspection of
18 motor vehicles for safety will not adversely affect
19 highway safety in Pennsylvania.

20 Under Secretary Larsen the Department has con-
21 tinually strived to provide a safe and efficient trans-
22 portation system for the citizens of the Commonwealth.
23 Our commitment to service is one which I believe is
24 unparalleled in the Department's history. Much of our
25 improvement is a direct result of the recognition of

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changing conditions in the transportation needs of the people of the Commonwealth. This has led to a need for a change of the old standards and practices which are no longer effective. Changes have been made which I believe we are all 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 periodic motor vehicle inspection for safety will add to this by providing a cost effective highway safety program insuring 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 and the Motor Vehicle Safety Act are basically regarded as foundations for periodic motor vehicle inspection. 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 one in this list of 18 is periodic motor vehicle inspection.

The purpose, as stated in the Manual for Periodic Motor Vehicle Inspection, is to increase through periodic

1 inspection the likelihood that every vehicle operated
2 on the public highways is properly equipped and being
3 maintained in reasonably safe working order. Pennsyl-
4 vania has had inspections since 1929 with the express
5 purpose of reducing the number of motor vehicle acci-
6 dents caused by unsafe or defective vehicles.

7 The evidence cited in the OBA Report that I
8 mentioned earlier demonstrates that the existing pro-
9 cedure has outgrown its usefulness and accrues more
10 costs to Pennsylvania citizens than benefits. We are
11 obligated to change this situation when the data shows
12 clearly that inspecting a vehicle twice a year is no
13 more likely to improve highway safety than a once a
14 year safety inspection.

15 Our program must address the needs of Pennsyl-
16 vanians both in the highway safety as well as the
17 economical arenas. We believe that annual inspection
18 as proposed in House Bill 562 will provide such a pro-
19 gram. We feel the compulsory annual periodic inspection
20 is essential in minimizing the risks associated with
21 the operation of unsafe vehicles, but any system that
22 we have in place should not put the owner of the vehicle
23 in any undue hardship.

24 Current vehicle inspection laws and regulations
25 in the Commonwealth require revision. Engineering and

1 design enhancements have given us a vehicle mix that
2 is equipped with longer wearing and less failure ridden
3 components. Lengthened maintenance intervals for
4 today's automobiles are evidence of this fact. Disc
5 and self-adjusting brakes, dual braking systems, longer
6 wearing brake linings, brake wear indicators, improved
7 safety glazing, improved traction tires, and longer
8 wearing tires with wear indicators are but a few of
9 these items. Additionally, on board vehicle component
10 monitoring devices provide the operator with information
11 that previously was only reported to him by the inspec-
12 tion mechanic that he visited twice a year.

13 The other major input into the formula which
14 logically leads to annual inspection is the general
15 change in vehicle usage patterns which has accompanied
16 the higher fuel costs we now experience. Since many of
17 the items just listed are designed such that they de-
18 generate through use, that is brake shoes wear out as
19 they are utilized, a reduction in individual vehicle
20 miles of travel results in a decreased wear rate for
21 many components.

22 Since our existing regulations have developed
23 over many years, they include items which are not di-
24 rectly safety related. In recognition of this fact,
25 we are currently working on a revision of the Safety

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Inspection Regulations which concentrates, the new regulations, on critical component inspection, brakes, tires, steering-suspension, exhaust, glazing, et cetera; and it eliminates many of the items which quite frankly are no longer relevant.

A complete inspection performed according to the Vehicle Equipment and Inspection Regulations Manual would take about one and a half hours. According to the OBA Report, Pennsylvania passenger car inspections are routinely done in 30 to 45 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 safe-conscious fashion.

Today you will probably hear the contention that more extensive and expensive repairs would be necessary to correct defective components under the annual inspection system. However, according to the OBA Report, vehicle repair costs are not expected to be any greater under the annual inspection cycle. This is because under the present system many 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 vehicles fail to pass inspection

1 because of lighting or electrical system failure.

2 Their failure obviously requires a complete replacement
3 and does not cause accelerated wear on other parts.

4 It is true that worn brake pads or linings could
5 damage other portions of the braking system. However,
6 the current method for determining the remaining life
7 of brake pads or linings could be changed to conform
8 with the annual inspection cycle. We do not intend to
9 radically alter our standards, as you might be led to
10 believe. The idea that minimum brake lining thickness
11 measurements should be changed causing good linings to
12 be disregarded at the time of inspection is incorrect.

13 As previously mentioned, brake lining wear is
14 a use related item and since our inspection period is
15 not tied to vehicle usage, as would be the case if the
16 inspection period was based on mileage and type of
17 driving, we do not propose increasing these standards.

18 Even if the contention concerning more expensive
19 repairs were true, even if our present inspection pro-
20 cess demonstrably resulted in better maintained cars
21 in Pennsylvania, the point is irrelevant. The Depart-
22 ment of Transportation has no business telling the
23 public how to maintain their automobiles. Our concern
24 is safety. State vehicle inspection is intended solely
25 to identify and correct worn out or defective equipment

1 that would lead to highway accidents. Anything else
2 is the individual citizen's responsibility.

3 You will also hear a variety of reports regard-
4 ing the number of vehicles requiring repair under the
5 current program along with cost figures for this ser-
6 vice. In the Bureau of Traffic Safety Operations we
7 randomly sample the items each month; and based upon
8 information submitted by every inspection station in
9 the Commonwealth on the TS-431 form over the past 18
10 months, just under 36 per cent of the vehicles inspect-
11 ed required maintenance. Sampling for the same period
12 revealed that the statewide average inspection costs
13 in both fees and repairs would be approximately 49
14 dollars with the urban areas averaging about 15 dollars
15 more.

16 While we are on the subject of costs, the ques-
17 tion was raised at a previous hearing regarding insurance
18 rates and the proposed change from twice yearly to a
19 once a year vehicle inspection. A recent study by an
20 insurance research analyst for the Commonwealth said
21 that the probability of the inspection period change
22 causing an increase in insurance rates is remote to
23 the point of nonexistence at this time.

24 Let me briefly describe two of the changes in
25 the inspection process proposed in House Bill 562.

1 First, only passenger vehicles and light trucks would
2 be affected. All heavy trucks would still be inspected
3 semiannually, mostly because these vehicles tend to
4 have unusually high mileage. Transit vehicles, school
5 buses, and emergency vehicles would be inspected semi-
6 annually. The rationale here is that those riding in
7 these vehicles do not have control over the maintenance
8 or do not have a close working knowledge of the vehicles
9 that the owners of passenger vehicles would have.

10 Secondly, we plan to coordinate the annual
11 inspection of vehicles with the staggered registration
12 renewal program. Before a vehicle could be registered
13 or its registration renewed, that vehicle must pass
14 safety inspection. Because most vehicle inspections
15 would expire at the same time as their registrations,
16 inspection station workloads would be more evenly dis-
17 tributed throughout the year.

18 An annual inspection program as proposed in
19 House Bill 562 would result in dramatically reduced
20 motorist inconvenience and cost while maintaining present
21 levels of traffic safety. It is estimated that Pennsyl-
22 vania's 6.8 million automobiles and small truck owners
23 would save more than \$61 million a year in inspection
24 fees alone. The administrative burden in certain areas
25 of the Department would also decrease, which should

1 result in reduced operating costs for the Commonwealth.
2 Additionally, we believe that security controls to
3 eliminate the use of stolen or forged inspection certi-
4 ficates would be greatly enhanced.

5 In summary, the Department believes that annual
6 safety inspection will provide another major step in
7 reducing government regulation, will reduce motorist
8 expense and inconvenience, while not adversely affecting
9 the present levels of traffic safety.

10 Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and
11 I'd be delighted to entertain any questions you might
12 have at this time.

13 MR. DAVIES: What if anything do you think that
14 the safety devices that have been added or warning
15 systems and the like over the past decade to the auto-
16 mobiles, what percentage of that would give somebody
17 that ordinarily doesn't know anything about automobiles,
18 any kind of self directed safety concern, is there a
19 percentage figure or does the industry or do the experts
20 have any such information that would indicate there is
21 a figure there that has been added over that increment
22 of time?

23 MR. PACHUTA: I would hesitate to quote any
24 percentage. I don't know that it has been researched
25 to that level. The general consensus that I have

1 received from industry and so forth is that the self
2 contained warning apparatus has enhanced it, but by no
3 measured degree--not to say it is not a measurable de-
4 gree, but by no measured degree. The self induced
5 maintenance, if you will, of vehicles by owners and
6 such things as brake warning lights and wear indicators
7 and that type of thing alert the operator before cata-
8 strophic failure of a system failing.

9 MR. DAVIES: All right. We did not list it, but
10 in the first set of hearings in testimony by somebody
11 from the commercial field they felt as if the commercial
12 short term lease vehicle should also be included in
13 that. What are your thoughts on that? Do you think
14 it should be, the short term automobile on short term
15 lease or daily lease or weekly lease or where you have
16 a different driver, maybe 100 different drivers in a
17 year, should those be included in the inspection? I
18 notice they said they do it themselves, but what are
19 your feelings?

20 MR. PACHUTA: My feelings are that we cannot
21 delineate between those vehicles and their use patterns;
22 therefore, they would be part of the annual program as
23 passenger vehicles. However, the investment by a firm
24 of that nature in the automobiles warrants their own
25 preventative maintenance program which is generally

1 much better than the average operator would have; so
2 that of the vehicles of that nature, operated by many
3 different people on short term lease, I would say their
4 condition is generally better because that is their
5 investment, that's their overhead, operating that ve-
6 hicle and keeping it in good working order.

7 MR. DAVIES: All right. The 15 dollar differ-
8 ential between the urban and the average, is that be-
9 cause of the brake factor in the urban area or what
10 other factors would you say contribute to that
11 differential?

12 MR. PACHUTA: Generally the majority of the 15
13 dollar difference is made up by higher labor costs and
14 possibly higher inspection fees in the urban areas.
15 The rural garage operation does not have the overhead
16 or whatever that precludes their making a lower charge
17 for inspection or a lower charge per hour of maintenance
18 work, so that the higher costs on the urban areas is
19 probably a reflection of higher labor per hour labor
20 costs for repairs as well as a slightly higher inspec-
21 tion fee.

22 MR. DAVIES: Well, from your past experience do
23 you find that there isn't then--isn't there some signi-
24 ficant difference, for example, in brakes and so forth
25 and so on in urban areas, and particularly we were led

1 to believe that hills and so forth and so on and some
2 of the terrain of the Commonwealth that is so diversifi-
3 fied also is a factor, isn't it?

4 MR. PACHUTA: That's correct. It would also
5 take into account the different types of repairs at
6 the staticns, and generally, also the wear on an urban
7 vehicle with stopping and starting on the city streets
8 would be greater, so that the percentage of replacement
9 of brake parts and other parts is higher in the urban
10 areas; so you are correct.

11 MR. DAVIES: Before we proceed with questions,
12 may we have the other representatives that came in.
13 I think that there are three or four that came in; will
14 they introduce themselves so for the record when we
15 get the questions, we can properly identify them on
16 the tape.

17 MR. TIGUE: I'm Tom Tigue, and I'm from Luzerne
18 County.

19 MR. BORSKI: Bob Borski, Philadelphia.

20 MR. HEISER: Gorley Heiser, Allegheny County.

21 MR. DAVIES: All right. Now, gentlemen, if you
22 will, questions.

23 MR. STEIGHNER: John, I don't want to get bogged
24 down in the exchange we had concerning the fee increase--

25 MR. PACHUTA: Neither do I.

1 MR. STEIGHNER: If we go from twice a year to
2 once a year inspections, does the Department foresee
3 any reduction in costs?

4 MR. PACHUTA: Yes, we do, particularly if it's
5 tied to registration. Quite frankly, our process--
6 after an initial start-up which would require consider-
7 able system changes it could be quite a bit quicker
8 and automated to some degree with an annual inspection
9 program tied to vehicle registration. Initially our
10 costs for development would be high. After that the
11 administration of the program itself should be less
12 because, quite frankly, we won't be mailing out stickers--
13 actually, you know, for every period we already will
14 be mailing out at a more even flow; we won't have the
15 expense that we have now at the end of each period
16 where we have to employ temporary personnel to handle
17 the loads and the long lines of waiting people wanting
18 stickers to place on personal vehicles; so it should
19 reduce our peaks, even out the load, and make our costs
20 predictable and lower.

21 MR. STEIGHNER: Do you have any dollar estimate?

22 MR. PACHUTA: No, because at this point in time
23 it would depend on the implementation scheme, what would
24 be required; but I would only say that there would be
25 considerable savings. I'm sorry I can't give you the
exact figure.

1 MR. STEIGHNER: It would be safe to say that the
2 Department would save money then, right?

3 MR. PACHUTA: I would hope. If we don't, I
4 think I'll be out.

5 MR. STEIGHNER: So it would be a fair assumption
6 on my part to assume one, the Department is saving
7 money, and on a per inspection cost the Department's
8 asking for a one dollar to a two dollar fee; correct?

9 MR. PACHUTA: Here we go. It would be safe to
10 say that under the annual inspection program of vehicle
11 registration the administrative costs should be lower
12 for the Department, that's correct, sir.

13 MR. STEIGHNER: And the Department is asking
14 for a one to two dollar increase in the fee per inspec-
15 tion.

16 MR. PACHUTA: That's correct.

17 MR. STEIGHNER: Okay, that's all.

18 MR. DAVIES: Gentlemen?

19 MR. PUNT: John, several questions. One which
20 concerns me very much here, and I'm a co-sponsor of
21 the proposal, but if we'd go and change to these guide-
22 lines and so forth, I believe it would be your Depart-
23 ment's responsibility to rewrite the standards for
24 brake lining and et cetera and so forth, is that correct?

25 MR. PACHUTA: That is correct.

1 MR. PUNT: Something which concerns me is pre-
2 sently under a twice a year inspection program where
3 we have a person who takes their car to be inspected
4 and they have another six months, seven months wear and
5 tear in the brake lining and they are notified at that
6 time that come the next inspection period, they're go-
7 ing to have to have that replaced; and under an annual
8 auto inspection program if they've come up with that
9 same thing, they're going to have to replace that brake
10 lining at that point in time; is that correct?

11 MR. PACHUTA: No, that is not correct. That
12 would be correct if we changed the standards for mini-
13 mum lining thickness. The fallacy in the argument that
14 we're working around here is the initial statement you
15 made that they have six months worth of wear left.
16 The wear is not related to months of time. If that
17 person takes that vehicle home and parks it for the
18 next six months, then they still have another six
19 months when they drive it back again. If they take
20 that vehicle and drive it through the mountains for
21 the next two months, that's it.

22 The fallacy is your initial statement they have
23 six months left based on some average, but we in no
24 way control what the operator does with that vehicle;
25 so it's not six months worth of wear, although that's

1 commonly said. We really can't tie it. You may say
2 so many miles, but even that would depend on the type
3 of driving. Obviously, if you drive six months of
4 driving on the interstate or turnpike in your duties
5 and I did six months worth of driving in the mountains
6 with plenty of four way stop signs, the wear on our
7 brakes would be considerably different. The six month
8 argument is where it falls short.

9 We will not be--I don't believe we will require
10 an increase in the measurement. What we will require
11 in all likelihood is a report of what is left, that
12 type of thing. I don't believe any mechanic can--unless
13 he is very familiar with the vehicle used and the
14 planned use in the six months or whatever--could accu-
15 rately predict the wear.

16 MR. PUNT: The second question: We're increasing
17 the fee to \$2.00?

18 MR. PACHUTA: The per inspection fee would be
19 increased, that is correct.

20 MR. PUNT: If the Department is going to realize
21 a reduction, a potential reduction in administrative
22 costs, why would--what's the justification in an increase
23 in fees?

24 MR. PACHUTA: The fee change per inspection is
25 not an increase in the annual cost for inspection of

1 vehicles. The fee change would make the per cost--the
2 per year inspection requirement for a vehicle, which is
3 now twice a year at a dollar a throw or two dollars a
4 year, the same. It would in essence be equal because
5 it is now once a year at two dollars a year, so it's
6 two dollar a year for the motorists. That's the reason
7 we maintain the same economic level, it did not increase
8 the level.

9 MR. PUNT: The final question and I have heard
10 the Governor use this, and you use it on page seven of
11 your testimony, a savings of approximately \$61 million
12 a year; and I take it that's figured basically through
13 the elimination of one inspection.

14 MR. PACHUTA: That figure is the fee alone, not
15 the repair, the fee alone, and actually that is a little
16 bit low since the fees have crept upwards since that
17 was calculated. It's about nine to ten dollars an
18 inspection for the vehicles.

19 MR. PUNT: If we go to an annual inspection pro-
20 gram, why wouldn't the service stations increase the--
21 what they're charging the consumer now, the motorist?

22 MR. PACHUTA: Quite frankly, they could.

23 MR. PUNT: We're not being actually true and
24 accurate, are we, when we're saying a \$61 million
25 savings?

1 MR. PACHUTA: We would like to think that the
2 fee is based upon the time required to do the inspection.
3 Since the time required to do the inspection would still
4 be basically the same, we would not suspect that a fee
5 increase would then be warranted. So, you know, if
6 you base it on the mechanic's cost per hour, if the
7 time required is basically the same, then the fees
8 should be basically the same; that's the way we felt
9 it was done in the free enterprise system.

10 MR. PUNT: What are we going to tell the motor-
11 ists after the fact? It becomes raw, and the service
12 stations increase fees another ten dollars for inspec-
13 tion; what are we going to tell the people then?

14 MR. PACHUTA: I would imagine--well, if I may
15 philosophize or wax philosophical for a moment, I
16 would imagine in the system we have there will be that
17 inspection station that bases its cost upon the hours
18 spent doing the inspection. Since that time will not
19 increase, they will reasonably be able to charge that
20 same amount; and under competition in the free market-
21 place, they will attract more business, and soon the
22 price will get back to the actual cost for the inspec-
23 tion.

24 MR. PUNT: You've stated about the time in
25 several instances here. It takes about an hour and a

1 half, I believe you said in your testimony, to properly
2 inspect the car.

3 MR. PACHUTA: It was estimated that the procedure
4 as outlined in the regulations would take one and a
5 half hours.

6 MR. PUNT: But from your survey you found it
7 takes 30 to 40 minutes.

8 MR. PACHUTA: 30 to 45 minutes was the time
9 reported.

10 MR. PUNT: Under the guidelines here of 562,
11 what would the time factor be involved? Basically the
12 same, the 30 to 45 minutes now to inspect these five
13 specific areas, or would it be less?

14 MR. PACHUTA: Under the Bill itself, that does
15 not delineate the time or the requirement. They would
16 be under the regulations, which we are now revising,
17 we do not intend to significantly change these regula-
18 tions to require more time; so as a result, we would
19 assume that would take 35 to 45 minutes per inspection
20 under the revised regulation plan.

21 MR. PUNT: One final question: In essence, the
22 mechanics, the inspection stations are going to admin-
23 ister the program through the registration renewal,
24 correct?

25 MR. PACHUTA: They would provide the inspections

1 and the evidence of that inspection would be submitted
2 to the Department along with the registration renewal.

3 MR. PUNT: How are you going to have a check
4 bounce on us if they're accurate, if they were actually
5 truthful?

6 MR. PACHUTA: In inspecting the vehicle? What
7 system do we have now? The system we have now employs
8 the State Police as garage supervisors with once a
9 year audits as required or by citizen complaint. I
10 see no reason to be altering that schedule, so we would
11 be maintaining the same type of system to assure the
12 quality of the inspection. In fact, we would probably
13 improve our inspection process because the Department
14 would receive some evidence to tie that vehicle to
15 that inspection station when the registration comes up
16 for renewal.

17 MR. PUNT: Okay, thank you.

18 MR. DAVIES: Yes, sir?

19 MR. TIGUE: John, one question--well, two ques-
20 tions. The first question will be have you devised a
21 system as of yet--the mechanics have the system you're
22 going to employ, if we go to once a year inspection?

23 MR. PACHUTA: We are working on a development
24 of a scheme for once a year inspections. If you like,
25 I could briefly outline what the latest thoughts are.

1 It doesn't necessarily mean that will be the final pro-
2 gram.

3 The simple explanation would be what we call
4 clean registration renewal. In other words, you own
5 the vehicle now, and you wish to renew the registration.
6 At that point our intent is that the invitation to renew
7 registration would be mailed to the operator, he would
8 then take that renewal application along with the ve-
9 hicle and get the vehicle inspected, some evidence of
10 that inspection would be placed on the renewal form,
11 and that form along with the fee for registration re-
12 newal would be mailed to the Department, and the Depart-
13 ment would renew the registration based on the fact
14 that there is evidence of inspection.

15 MR. TIGUE: But there were questions at the
16 last hearing. Is that going to be a sticker on the
17 plate, placed on the window, things like that? Has
18 that been decided upon?

19 MR. PACHUTA: Not strictly since the Bill could
20 delineate that and change it, but right now are thoughts
21 are that some type of sticker could be placed on the
22 automobile, probably on the windshield of the automobile
23 to delineate the fact that that vehicle is both regis-
24 tered and inspected so that at the time of vehicle
25 change, you know, change in ownership, there would still

1 be some evidence with the vehicle that was inspected.

2 MR. TIGUE: Okay. One other question. In
3 answer to Mr. Punt's question you said in essence that
4 you're not going to change the standards or there's
5 going to be very few changes in the standards regarding
6 brake lining, et cetera, for once a year inspections.
7 Just in your opinion, and I know you haven't been in
8 your position all that long, why do you think they come
9 up for standards for one thirty-second on pads and
10 et cetera?

11 MR. PACHUTA: Quite frankly, I really do not
12 know the basis for a minimum measurement, since the
13 wear would not be related to a time period of--a six
14 month span of time. I believe it was probably based
15 upon an older average mileage, an older average wear,
16 and component usage or wear rates from the past. Now
17 our wear rates are different, our vehicle usage is
18 different, and we need to change those requirements.

19 MR. TIGUE: If I'm not mistaken, I think that
20 particular standard, and maybe Tom or someone else can
21 answer, was changed not that long ago; it was lowered.

22 MR. MURPHY: It was standard at one time that
23 disc brake pads were two thirty-seconds, or one sixteenth,
24 and it was changed recently to one thirty-second from
25 the rivet head because it was found out with the

1 improvement of brake lining this was sufficient to give
2 the stopping requirements at that time.

3 MR. TIGUE: Thank you.

4 MR. DAVIES: Would you identify yourself, you
5 came in after we made identification, just for the
6 record.

7 MR. MURPHY: Okay, John. My name is Tom Murphy,
8 and I represent the Northside of Pittsburgh.

9 John, in the previous committee hearing and in
10 the insurance committee meeting we have discussed the
11 importance of no fault automobile insurance and the use
12 of the inspection time and the registration as a period
13 when you would--the last check for people who had no
14 fault automobile insurance. Have you thought about
15 that in the new registration procedures outlined in
16 this Bill?

17 MR. PACHUTA: We have considered that; and, quite
18 frankly, we do not think very highly of making the in-
19 spection mechanics fill--give him another duty as an
20 enforcer and requiring him to show some evidence of
21 insurance. To place that burden on the inspection
22 mechanic would really--he is a qualified safety inspec-
23 tion mechanic, he is not an insurance underwriter. He
24 is not familiar with insurance policies and so forth.
25 I would be hard-pressed to say that we feel strongly

1 towards making some evidence of insurance available at
2 the time of inspection. Quite frankly, for the garage
3 mechanic to say, "Well, they showed me a card. I really
4 didn't even know if it were with that vehicle or opera-
5 tor." We've asked them to do quite a bit already, and
6 this added burden would not be fair to them.

7 MR. MURPHY: Okay, thank you.

8 MR. DAVIES: Any questions?

9 If not, thank you a whole lot; and if we come
10 across anything that we happen to have a comment on,
11 I'd appreciate those comments as well.

12 MR. PACHUTA: Yes, sir, thank you.

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1 MR. DAVIES: All right. Mr. Gene G. Beeman,
2 Assistant Chief of the Office of Budget and Administra-
3 tion and the division of Program Planning and Evalua-
4 tion.

5 MR. BEEMAN: Thank you. The committee's deliber-
6 erations today--the committee's agenda today will be
7 long, I realize, extending possible well into the night.
8 I am prepared to give you the highlights of my prepared
9 statement, if you choose, or I will read it verbatim,
10 whichever your preference. You all have a copy, I
11 presume.

12 MR. DAVIES: Yes. I believe that the highlights
13 would be in order, and then if there are any specific
14 questions, we can get to those.

15 MR. BEEMAN: Fine. My purpose today is not to
16 argue one way or the other about the merits or demerits
17 of periodic motor vehicle inspection. My purpose is
18 to inform you committee members and guests which you
19 have invited to attend on the recent research that has
20 been done regarding the effectiveness of motor vehicle
21 inspections.

22 Let me first begin by saying that all automobile
23 inspection systems in the country are based--were im-
24 plemented on the basis of two primary assumptions, one
25 of which was explicit and the other is implicit. The

1 explicit assumption I think deals with the notion that
2 a large proportion of accidents result from vehicle
3 malfunctions and that any given type of motor vehicle
4 inspection can detect and rectify these malfunctions,
5 thereby reducing general accident rates, preferably
6 the most serious of those accidents. The implicit
7 assumption of course in all of this is that given
8 motor vehicle inspection system costs, either in the
9 public jurisdiction or the motoring public dollars,
10 that the inspection system adopted in any given state
11 is worth the cost, that is that the frequency--I think
12 it follows that the frequency and astringency of that
13 inspection system is in relative proportion to the cost,
14 that is an annual inspection system yields a certain
15 quantity of benefits and costs x amount of dollars per
16 year to administer, and that the motor vehicle public
17 experiences certain costs.

18 As semiannual inspection costs are roughly
19 double, therefore the benefits should be double in
20 terms of traffic safety. Given that these are the
21 bases I think of virtually all inspection systems, I
22 want to state too in the last 40 years there is no
23 credible serious sophisticated research that was ever
24 done to provide emphasis for these bases. It wasn't
25 until recently that such research began to be done,

1 recently in the last 10 years, dozen years or so. Now
2 there's a very good reason for that. It was thought
3 by individual states implementing inspection systems,
4 as well as the National Highway Traffic Safety Admin-
5 istration, that further evidence was not needed.

6 I have a chart here to demonstrate what I'm
7 talking about. Page three of my testimony contains a
8 copy of this chart, if you'd like to follow along, but
9 if we go from the period 1955 to 1968 when the Traffic
10 Safety Act--the National Safety Act was enacted by
11 Congress, we--the white line represents states with
12 periodic motor vehicle inspection. The red line are
13 those without, and the yellow line is the national
14 average. Now if we extend these time series on back
15 into the '40's and '30's, we find generally the same
16 kind of configuration. The states with inspection
17 systems tend to be much lower in terms of fatalities
18 per mile driven; those without tend to be much higher
19 than the national average, as well as the difference
20 in each other, so the evidence had seemed incontrovert-
21 ible and perfectly obvious to justify the existence of
22 inspection stations.

23 However, beginning in 1957 and later around
24 1960 trends began a dramatic change. The PMVI states'
25 accidents began to increase rather dramatically, and

1 those without PMVI began to decrease; and as we get on
2 towards the end of our time series here in the late
3 '60's, the accident trends actually begin to converge
4 with the national average; and if we were to extend
5 the time series onto the present, you would find that
6 the states with and without PMVI alternately go above
7 and below the national average. There is no consistent
8 pattern in the last dozen years regarding this distinct
9 difference. It has disappeared and it appears the
10 trends are fairly solid.

11 So, the efficacy of motor vehicle inspection as
12 well as the regulations promulgated by the National
13 Highway Traffic Safety Administration are being called
14 into question quite severely towards the end of the
15 '60's and some very credible research began to come
16 out of universities. The Administration itself began
17 to contract with private firms to do research on whether
18 or not inspection systems were related to accidents and
19 governments themselves, state governments began to take
20 another look at their law; and in fact, several states
21 revoked their requirements for mandatory inspection.

22 The research began with trying to isolate the
23 effect of motor vehicle inspection on the condition of
24 the vehicle, and the two or three studies that we cite
25 down in the late '60's and early '70's, these studies

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did in fact show some marginal increase in the vehicle integrity in those states with the most stringent inspection systems, and indeed, the independent university study, which is probably the most credible up to its time in the early '70's, did isolate a small stubborn core of traffic accidents that were associated with vehicle component failure. I say small because they were only able to isolate about two or three percent, and the involvement of vehicle component failures was not an isolated phenomena; that is to say it was always in conjunction with other factors. So if the truth were known and our analytical skills were more precise, we could probably isolate the accidents that are a result of vehicle components alone as being much smaller than that.

In addition, a couple of other studies found that Pennsylvania and a couple of cities that had more stringent vehicle inspection station requirements had generally a better vehicle integrity record; that is, through their analysis they found fewer reasons to reject vehicles for component failures. However, I'd like to remind you that these two studies that I'm citing now were based just on three states and just on four cities in the entire nation. I think credible research done in the area and reasonably sophisticated

1 research done by traffic safety researchers now look
2 for general tendencies in the country at large. You,
3 the committee here, as well as the Congress shouldn't
4 rely on a single study as being definitive in this
5 area; certainly, it is not. What you want are as many
6 studies as you possibly can get from the diverse number
7 of sources that all employ reasonably good designs
8 accepted in the community and look for a convergence
9 of conclusion. That's what we did in our literature
10 of research and came up with five or six that were
11 very credibly done and tend to converge on the same
12 conclusion.

13 As my chart showed in the beginning, the trends
14 in motor vehicle fatalities in states with and without
15 inspection station requirements tended to converge in
16 the late '60's, and the trend has remained essentially
17 the same. That is another way of saying that motor
18 vehicle accidents, as evidenced by that chart, are be-
19 having in a manner independent of the existence of
20 motor vehicle inspection systems. Stated yet another
21 way, clearly it's something else, as it were. There
22 are some persuasive factors involved here that propel
23 the accident rate trend other than motor vehicle inspec-
24 tion.

25 For instance, to date most of the research done

1 throughout the '70's employs socioeconomical factors,
2 environmental factors, and a host of other factors that
3 have been found through other research being associated
4 with a level of accidents in a jurisdiction, namely
5 per capita income, type of highway, and other kinds of
6 accidents that happen in the general population, the
7 amount of driving done in the state, et cetera. A
8 host of other variables tend to be generally associated
9 with high and low vehicle accident rates, and these
10 are terribly good predictors, by the way. One study
11 recently done could predict up to 80 per cent of the
12 accident variation among the states by employing these
13 socioeconomic factors alone. Our study reached, in
14 one equation, 80 per cent; but we varied from the early
15 40 per cent to 80. Mostly, around 50 to 60 per cent
16 we could account for through these other variables. I
17 might add that it's generally thought in the literature
18 that there is a large and probably persistent stubborn
19 random event component involved in all kind of traffic
20 accidents, no matter whether there's a fatality or
21 injuries or property damage. It depends on the condi-
22 tion of the driver, the condition of the vehicle, what
23 he perceives, whether he's mad at his wife or his
24 children or whatever; a host of factors come into play
25 in any given situation that produces an accident, and

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it's difficult if not impossible to predict these things; but with the socioeconomic factors that we are able to put into these equations and are measured by governmental jurisdictions and are fairly reliably measured across the states, we can get roughly 60 per cent of the variation accounted for by these factors, and that's what we did.

We chose nine of the most powerful socioeconomic environmental factors that we could find out of up to 20, and then held those constant; that is, their influence on traffic accident variation across the states was eliminated from the equations and the effect of the presence or absence of motor vehicle inspection systems was allowed to come in and see if it could explain any of the remaining variation. Our conclusions are the same as the half dozen studies that we've cited in our study, that being we concluded no association. Once these factors explain their portion of the motor vehicle accident variation, the presence or absence of a semiannual, annual, or no periodic motor vehicle inspection adds no additional explanatory power to the accident rates of states. You cannot predict what any given state will have in terms of accident rates by these, by the system itself.

One last conclusion. We devote a small section

1 of the study to the way the current inspection system
2 in Pennsylvania is applied, and we come to one conclu-
3 sion there which is largely forensial. We do not do
4 any direct research into this that all those others
5 have, Carnegie Mellon and others have. It regards to
6 a point that was brought up here during John's testi-
7 mony. The State Police made an estimate for us of
8 approximately 1.5 hours per inspection, if everything
9 in the regulations published by the Department of
10 Transportation were looked at and evaluated on the
11 automobile. At today's rates that would be roughly
12 30 dollars per inspection. That would be the retail
13 fee.

14 It is well known that the fee oscillates between
15 somewhere between eight and twelve dollars, depending
16 on the region of the state that they're in; and we
17 have reasonably good evidence that it takes roughly
18 between 30 and 40 minutes to complete an inspection,
19 again depending on the inspection station and the region
20 of the state that they're in. By inference, someone
21 is making priority decisions about what to inspect, and
22 the motoring public has no reasonable assurance that
23 those priority decisions involve the most safety sensi-
24 tive components of the automobile. If you only take
25 half to one-third of the time involved in a full

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inspection of the automobile, we must assume that half to one-third of the components are inspected. The question is which ones. Is it always the same? Probably not. There is probably some variation.

We would like an opportunity at some future time to follow-up on this, just what--how wide the latitude is; but now I can only make the inference that certainly there must be priority decisions being made, and we have no assurance about the safety sensitiveness of the components being looked at. That's about all I have. I think I've hit most of the highlights.

MP. DAVIES: On that study of that decade of the '60's, that--so that there isn't any misunderstanding as before Nader and before the commuter, what went into those figures? That's not the three states and the four cities you're talking about?

MR. BEEMAN: In the chart that I showed?

MR. DAVIES: The chart that you showed are national figures?

MR. BEEMAN: Yes.

MR. DAVIES: As best brought in by the federal ---

MR. BEEMAN: The states that I show here, there are 19 states without inspection and about 14 with inspection systems. These are long standing consistent states. Those are the states that have motor vehicle

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inspection shown in that chart and have had it since before 1955, so they've had at least 20 years of experience, 30 years of experience, and in Pennsylvania's case, of course 50 years. The states without, of course, are consistent up to that point. There are no additional states recently adopting inspection systems dumped into there to change those numbers. They are all consistent states, they are all the same states.

MR. DAVIES: And you have no figures on 1914, like for five years of the '70's after Nader and after the commuter?

MR. BEEMAN: We have those figures, but we did not bring the charts. We certainly do, but ---

MR. DAVIES: Is there any significant change?

MR. BEEMAN: No, no. When we pushed out the time series up until the present, and 1978 I think is our latest data, the lines still crossed the national average and hug very close to it within a half a fatality per hundred mile vehicle miles. There is a very narrow band of variation, and it seems steady; and by the way, the whole thing--all three lines, including the national average, are sloping slightly downward fairly consistently throughout those years.

MR. DAVIES: All right. That is in essence what I was concerned with. Gentlemen?

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MR. STEIGNER: Mr. Beeman, on page eight of your testimony we refer to your report and you give a figure of \$155 million annually exclusive of repair costs.

MR. BEEMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. STEIGNER: Did you do one that included repair costs?

MR. BEEMAN: No, I don't know. At the point that we finished the study sometime before January we had not gone over to the Department of Transportation and gone through their motor vehicle inspection station lists to find out how much repairs cost. That has only recently been done, and I think only on a sampling basis.

MR. DAVIES: Gentlemen?

MR. PUNT: Mr. Beeman, let me play the devil's advocate for a moment. Do we need an annual inspection even?

MR. BEEMAN: It's a national regulation.

MR. PUNT: For annual inspection?

MR. BEEMAN: If you care to risk the loss of highway safety funds, as well as a portion of highway construction dollars, which are not being utilized to a very large extent in this state right now, you might want to chance it; but it is a national regulation that

1 states must adopt an approved inspection system.

2 MR. PUNT: Under the guidelines of 562 will
3 those five specific areas meet the needs?

4 MR. BEEMAN: Probably. I'd have to ask the
5 National Highway Traffic Administration; I'd guess that
6 they would.

7 MR. PUNT: In your research the accidents that
8 you base your research on, how many of those have been
9 the fault of faulty equipment, of some mechanical part
10 not functioning properly?

11 MR. BEEMAN: The State Police through accident
12 reports and their investigation is the most reliable
13 evidence we have. We did not do on sight inspection of
14 the vehicle recently after an accident. Their data
15 which assign causal factors to each given accident
16 after it occurs reveal that over the last ten years a
17 fairly steady two to three percent involved, involve
18 in a primary way vehicle components, generally tires
19 and brakes. It's a fairly consistent number. I have
20 no idea whether it's to the nth degree valid, but it
21 seems to be running fairly consistent.

22 MR. PUNT: But it's a small number in ratio to
23 total accidents?

24 MR. BEEMAN: Very small. Furthermore, these are
25 involved--not exclusive causes, which suggests to me

1 that had the environment been correct, had the driver
2 been in a different mood, had the driver been more
3 alert, had the driver exhibited some other behavior,
4 he possibly could have overridden the malfunctioning
5 component.

6 MR. PUNT: In your research have you studied
7 the State of Maryland?

8 MR. BEEMAN: Have I studied the State--no, sir.

9 MR. PUNT: Their program.

10 MR. BEEMAN: No, sir.

11 MR. PUNT: The State of Maryland, as I understand
12 it, once a car comes into that state, it must be in-
13 spected; and once that car is sold, it changes owner-
14 ship but must be inspected. If a car is on a lot and
15 it's purchased, it must be inspected prior to leaving
16 that lot. That's all they have.

17 MR. BEEMAN: I see.

18 MR. PUNT: The reason I was wondering, if you've
19 studied the State of Maryland's traffic fatalities and
20 compare that to the difference of what you see here
21 in Pennsylvania.

22 MR. BEEMAN: I see what you mean now. We did
23 not study the State of Maryland in depth; however, it
24 was included in the data you see. We studied every
25 state, all 50 states; so Maryland of course was included.

1 MR. DAVIES: Is Maryland one of those that you
2 studied in the extension then, over the line in the
3 19th and the 14th?

4 MR. BEEMAN: Yes, it was.

5 MR. PUNT: That's all.

6 MR. PHILLIPS: Mr. Beeman, in your studies gen-
7 erally it's state against state. You compared one
8 state against another state.

9 MR. BEEMAN: Yes.

10 MR. PHILLIPS: Have you taken sections of a
11 state? I'm primarily thinking of have you taken the
12 rural areas and compared one rural area of a state
13 against another rural area and found the effect of that?

14 MR. BEEMAN: No, that really wasn't our purpose.
15 We wanted to examine the effect of the inspection pro-
16 gram across the states.

17 MR. PHILLIPS: Would your belief be certain
18 areas would differ like an urban area and a rural area,
19 should there be a difference in a rural area, the rate
20 would be higher maybe in that particular area and counter
21 balance over the urban area, and that's the purpose of
22 asking the question.

23 MR. BEEMAN: The rural area, regardless of in-
24 spection systems, tends to have a greater fatality rate.
25 Urban areas on the other hand tend to have an overall

1 larger accident rate, obviously because of the exposure.
2 People drive more per registered vehicle in urban areas.

3 MR. PHILLIPS: But no studies have been done
4 whatsoever comparing one area ---

5 MR. BEEMAN: No, I'm just giving you the raw
6 statistics that I've seen.

7 MR. PHILLIPS: State for state?

8 MR. BEEMAN: State for state and rural-urban
9 within this accident rate.

10 MR. TIGUE: Mr. Beeman, a lot of figures have
11 been thrown out concerning how much the consumer is
12 going to save, \$61 million, once a year, and et cetera,
13 et cetera. I'm not totally convinced. Let me ask you
14 another question. How much money do you know, if you
15 know, will PennDOT save?

16 MR. BEEMAN: I do not know.

17 MR. TIGUE: Has there been any studies done at
18 all on this?

19 MR. BEEMAN: No, sir, not under the Bill; no,
20 sir, not that I know of, unless PennDOT has conducted
21 its own in-house research on the area.

22 MR. MURPHY: Mr. Beeman, you mentioned that it's
23 your estimate that one third to one half of the
24 components of the inspection are actually done and
25 the other half probably is not looked at in the time

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allotted. Is that a correct assumption?

MR. BEEMAN: I was just assuming that given-- we have reasonably good evidence that it takes an hour and a half but that thirty to forty minutes is actually spent. I assume that the number of components looked at is roughly in proportion to that.

MR. MURPHY: O.K. You seem to have pretty good information on the causes of accidents involved, vehicle components. You mentioned the tires and brakes. I would assume there are probably a couple other parts of the car involved that are overwhelming in the percentage of the causes for accidents. Does that lead to the conclusion that we might want to look more closely at what we require the service station operator to do in inspections in regard to not only what he's looking at, but also what the requirements would be under a once a year inspection?

MR. BEEMAN: You mean allowing greater wear tolerances?

MR. MURPHY: Or greater wear tolerance, since we're only going to be looking at them once a year instead of twice a year.

MR. BEEMAN: Offhand--we didn't study this. Roughly, over the last fifteen years from the engineering data that I've seen, and you can correct

1 me, with the introduction--widespread introduction of
2 radial ply tires as opposed to bias ply, we get roughly
3 double the mileage. It is my general conventional
4 wisdom that the same applies to brake materials as
5 well, roughly double the mileage; so if we double the
6 interval, doesn't it follow that no further wear
7 tolerance has to be allowed? If we adopt the same
8 general standards that we're adopting now, that is
9 we're assuming most of the driving public will be
10 captured on a semi-annual basis with current tolerances.

11 MR. MURPHY: O.K. In summary then what you're
12 saying really is that number one, most of the accidents
13 are not caused by the failure of the vehicle components;
14 and two, the because of improved technology those
15 vehicle components have improved in wear and life span
16 and therefore a once a year inspection is reasonable.

17 MR. STEIGHNER: Mr. Beeman, very briefly, I
18 think this is maybe touching on two or three of the
19 previous questions. Say I'm driving down the road
20 at 75 miles per hour on two bald tires. One tire
21 blows and I drive into a tree. What is the reason
22 for that accident? Is that driver error, a component
23 factor?

24 MR. BEEMAN: If you were aware you had two bald
25 tires and you were driving 75 miles per hour, certainly

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there was a human factor involved.

MR. STEIGHNER: What category would that fall into?

MR. BEEMAN: I don't assign positive factors to accidents.

MR. STEIGNER: Isn't it true, however, it is very difficult to assign one major contributing factor to an accident?

MR. BEEMAN: Again, let me emphasize that we're looking for general tendencies over a number of pieces of research independently done. I cited the Indiana University study which has an extremely credible reputation for doing very very good sophisticated safe track research. They isolated through their engineering studies an on site investigation of accidents around two to three percent; it varied. Two to three percent at some level of vehicle component involvement, whether it be foremost or slightly secondary; it's hard to tell just in the situation you mentioned.

The state police have been assigning causal factors to accidents over several years, and over the last ten years it's been rather steady, two to three percent are involved with motor vehicle component failures or malfunction. There's at least a bald tire

1 on the car, at least insufficient pedal on the car
2 to cite that as a contributory if not a primary cause
3 of the accident.

4 MR. DAVIES: Thank you very much--I'm sorry.

5 MR. PUNT: Of the accidents through the research
6 where the responsibility has been placed on malfunctioning
7 equipment, O.K.?

8 MR. BEEMAN: Yes.

9 MR. PUNT: How many of those cars, those
10 vehicles, were late model cars; and when I say late
11 model cars, I'm speaking of say in terms of two or
12 three years of age or less than that versus cars that
13 are maybe four years to eight years.

14 MR. BEEMAN: What we can say on that is that
15 the Indiana study, as I mentioned earlier, is probably
16 the best that we have nationally on this question.
17 They selected vehicles that mirrored the national
18 vehicle age stratification. It's all I can say. In
19 1972 when they made their conclusions, it was on the
20 basis of the fleet composition at that time. Now it's
21 been nearly ten years since then. We've had an
22 acceleration of vehicle turnover. I would imagine
23 that that's changed a great deal. Current numbers on
24 how much late models are represented in accidents
25 would be a little bit misleading, I would guess, if

1 the fleet was made up largely of late model automobiles.
2 Naturally you're going to get a large representation,
3 whether they're overly represented I couldn't say.
4 I would imagine they're in rough proportion to their
5 proportion in the fleet. I have no reason to believe
6 that people who drive late model cars have a greater
7 propensity to get in accidents than others.

8 MR. HUNT: The reason I'm asking that question,
9 The majority of people can't afford to get a brand
10 new car every year. They're driving used cars anywhere
11 from four to eight years old. I would think that they
12 would have more chances of malfunctioning parts, of
13 breakdown perhaps.

14 MR. BEEMAN: Certainly.

15 MR. HUNT: The majority of the people are
16 driving those types of vehicles and we have to consider
17 that. Later model vehicles have received the benefits
18 of advanced technology and new parts and so forth,
19 but the older cars don't have that advantage and neither
20 do those people that own those cars. That's all.

21 MR. BEEMAN: Very true.

22 MR. DAVIES: Thank you very much, sir.

23 MR. BEEMAN: Yes, sir.

24 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Mr. Chairman, could
25 you set aside the agenda five minutes and give me

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five minutes on the floor?

MR. DAVIES: No, I'm sorry, I can't.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I'll have to leave because I have a business to run, I'm sorry.

MR. DAVIES: I'll invite you back after your shift because we'll probably still be here.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I could have answered a lot of questions here today. I think you're not dealing with the people that have the experience in inspecting automobiles.

MR. DAVIES: I'll say--

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: How many people up there have inspected an automobile?

MR. DAVIES: We only have one member of the house.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: You're throwing everything on the burden of the state police and you're not training the state police to go out and pick up inspected cars that are not fit on the road. They're out there to do a job for us, they're not out there--

MR. DAVIES: I'll be here at five, if you're finished at five.

MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I've got a business to run, I'm sorry. You're getting paid. I thought I'd

1 get five minutes anyway, so I could maybe brief you
2 on some of the stuff, being I've been experienced in
3 the past thirty years on this thing; but if you don't
4 want to give me the five minutes, thank you very much.

5 MR. DAVIES: We're going to stick to the agenda;
6 and if you want to come back, you're welcome to come
7 back.

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1 MR. DAVIES: Captain Russell C. Rickert of the
2 Pennsylvania State Police Safety Services Division.

3 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Mr. Chairman and Members of
4 the Transportation Committee and ladies and gentlemen,
5 good morning. I am Captain Russell C. Rickert,
6 representing the Bureau of Patrol of the Pennsylvania
7 State Police. I wish to give an overview of the
8 Department's responsibilities and participation in
9 the motor vehicle inspection program.

10 The Commonwealth's motor vehicle inspection
11 program is administered through a cooperative effort
12 of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and
13 the Pennsylvania State Police. The responsibility of
14 the State Police in this program is primarily to
15 supervise the vehicle inspection program in all 67
16 counties of the Commonwealth. The actually field
17 duties in the program are the responsibility of those
18 state police members assigned to the motor vehicle
19 inspection program and designated as inspection station
20 supervisors, commonly referred to as garage inspectors.

21 There are currently sixty-seven troopers serving
22 in this capacity on a full time basis. There are an
23 additional fifty-five troopers who are assigned as
24 alternates. The latter only serve in this capacity
25 when the permanently assigned supervisor is on leave

1 or must be absent from his primary duties for other
2 authorized reasons or whatever. In addition, the
3 alternate must perform garage inspection duties at
4 least four days per month.

5 The following is a summary of the most
6 prominent vehicle inspection program activities
7 performed by the garage inspector: official inspection
8 stations are visited at least once each year. These
9 visits are unannounced, at which time the station is
10 checked for sufficient and proper tools, qualified
11 mechanics, accurate record keeping, and an exact
12 inventory of and sufficient security for the inspection
13 stickers.

14 When an application for establishing an official
15 inspection station is submitted, supervisors conduct
16 a complete investigation to determine whether the
17 applicant meets the appropriate requirements.

18 Station owners and mechanics are provided
19 assistance in making application for certification as
20 an inspection station owner or inspection mechanic.
21 This is accomplished by the supervisors' consultations
22 on requirements, procedures, etc. The applicants are
23 also tested for their ability to inspect a vehicle
24 in conformance with the regulations.

25 In addition to the annual station visits,

1 supervisors conduct unannounced, unscheduled periodic
2 visits to insure conformance with requirements of the
3 statutes and the regulations.

4 Citizen complaints regarding faulty inspections
5 are investigated by the garage inspectors. These
6 investigations are performed to ascertain if vehicle
7 code laws or inspection regulations have been violated,
8 which can result in subsequent prosecution.

9 School buses are inspected annually prior to
10 the start of a new school year. This inspection is in
11 addition to the present semiannual inspections and is
12 performed by the garage inspector. There are
13 approximately eighteen thousand school buses in
14 Pennsylvania. School buses are also spot checked
15 during the school year by the garage inspectors.

16 While these are the primary duties directly
17 related to the motor vehicle inspection program, there
18 are other indirectly related duties that are performed
19 by the garage inspectors. These include such duties
20 as dealer investigations, visits to junkyards, and
21 visits to official speedometer testing stations.

22 In conclusion, I wish to thank the committee
23 for the opportunity to present this statement on behalf
24 of the state police.

25 MR. DAVIES: We had had an off the record

1 discussion about the potential of the illicit and
2 salient distribution of inspection stickers that can
3 occur under the present system. With your knowledge
4 of the entire scope of your jurisdiction and operation,
5 would you say that any of the offered discussions as
6 planned thus far in the change would diminish that
7 potential at all as far as this Commonwealth is
8 concerned and is it a serious problem today?

9 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Number one, yes, it would
10 certainly diminish the theft because there wouldn't
11 be nothing to steal, only for of course your semiannual;
12 but under the outline, if I understood Mr. Pachuta
13 correctly, there would be no more stickers issued.

14 Is it a problem? Most certainly in the southeast
15 corner, Philadelphia, down in that area, yes. They're
16 stolen by the thousands.

17 MR. DAVIES: Yes?

18 MR. PHILLIPS: How long do these inspectors
19 stay in one area? Do you have a set way that they're
20 in there for six months and they transfer and somebody
21 else comes in to inspect the stations, or isn't there
22 any set pattern for that?

23 CAPTAIN RICKERT: If I understand your question
24 correctly, sir, an inspection station supervisor is
25 selected and assigned a troop area and he is there as

1 long as he performs his duties satisfactorily, as long
2 as he wants to stay there or until he gets promoted.

3 MR. PHILLIPS: The reason for the purpose for
4 my question is sometimes you get friendly with stations,
5 and I just wondered if you'd alternate supervisors
6 coming in to try to keep that from happening, that they
7 would build up a relationship with inspection stations.

8 CAPTAIN RICKERT: You mean with the --

9 MR. PHILLIPS: Going in and checking these
10 inspection stations. They could ease up on their
11 inspection, and I just feel that a new inspector
12 coming in periodically would help that.

13 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Well, that's the purpose,
14 sir. I believe in my statement there I said that at
15 least four days a month they must go out and perform
16 duties, and it's on the job training, if you will, sir.

17 MR. PHILLIPS: Do they go in with the supervisor
18 or by themselves?

19 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Yes, yes; and in his absence
20 then, of course they take over.

21 MR. TIGUE: Captain, actually, the job of the
22 garage inspector is to check records.

23 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Yes, sir.

24 MR. TIGUE: No one actually checks whether or
25 not an inspection was done according to regulations.

1 CAPTAIN RICKERT: Yes, sir. He would only
2 catch that on a periodic visit, if he would stand
3 there and happen to watch him do it, yes, sir.

4 MR. TIGUE: That's all.

5 MR. DAVIES: The gentleman that left asked
6 whether there was anybody on staff or anybody in the
7 house that has thus served. There is one gentleman
8 in the house that does serve as a licensed inspection--
9 holds the license and held it for a number of years;
10 and for the record, I want the record to clearly show
11 that he supports the legislation of a once a year
12 inspection. That member is George Hazey, a member
13 from Lucerne County; so that the challenge by the
14 gentleman is that there isn't anyone in the house that
15 knows what we're talking about,--God knows I don't,
16 and neither do I make any pretext that I do; but I
17 want the record to have that for the gentleman; and if
18 the gentleman would want to come back, I'm open to
19 any testimony that he may have to add.

20 I want to thank you, sir, for your expertise
21 on this.

22 CAPTAIN RICKERT: I'm glad to come, thank you.

23 MR. DAVIES: O.K.

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MR. DAVIES: Ms. Marilyn Skolnick, who is the state legislative director for the League of Women Voters.

MS. SKOLNICK: Mr. Chairman, members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify here today. I am Marilyn Skolnick, Urban Policy Transportation Director of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, speaking on behalf of the sixty-six local leagues in Pennsylvania. I want to thank you for coming to my home town. This is the first time I've ever been able to testify just by going out my back yard.

The League has been concerned about transportation since 1971. Our members are supportive of all types of public transportation, including van pools and car pools when adequate transportation is not available. Most public transportation in Pennsylvania is provided by buses. In addition, all public school districts provide some transportation for their students. It is for these reasons that the League is particularly interested in House Bill 562 providing for the registration and inspection of vehicles.

Most of the revisions presented in the Bill seem to be reasonable. However, the League opposes the changes on page 4, section 5, subsections A and B

1 concerning inspection of vehicles. I would like to
2 deal with subsection B first, semiannual inspection
3 of certain vehicles.

4 League endorses the concept of two inspections
5 a year for school buses, mass transit vehicles, and
6 motor carrier vehicles. It appears, however, that the
7 Bill eliminates motorcycles and fire-fighting vehicles
8 from this subsection. Are these to be the vehicles
9 included in subsection A? We do not wish to see
10 inspection for those vehicles omitted.

11 The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
12 opposes subsection A, annual inspection except as
13 provided in subsection B. We strongly urge the
14 retention of two inspections a year.

15 No one will dispute the fact that the automobile
16 is inexorably interwoven into American life. The
17 automobile has provided freedom of movement that no
18 other kind of transportation has ever provided. However,
19 this freedom has its price. Traffic accidents are now
20 the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

21 While many factors are involved in causing
22 accidents, motor vehicle defects have been shown to be
23 responsible for between five and twelve percent of all
24 accidents. This means that there are as many as two
25 million accidents a year involving safety defects--a

1 year involving safety defects could be occurring on our
2 nation's roadways. Worn brakes and tires are known to
3 be the leading causes of safety defects.

4 We are concerned that next to wearing a safety
5 belt a car's weight is one of the most important
6 factors affecting passenger safety. The number of cars
7 that are smaller or subcompact in size is growing
8 proportionately to the increase of the cost of gasoline.
9 By 1980--and there was a typo here if you'll follow me--
10 by 1980 the percent of small car exposure in the nation
11 increased to eighty-eight percent. Because of the
12 vulnerability of small cars to accidents, a vehicle
13 must be maintained in as safe as possible mechanical
14 condition. The margin for error must be decreased
15 measurably because a public health problem of
16 unbelievable dimensions exists in both harm to human
17 health and economic waste.

18 By 1975 motor vehicle crash injuries,
19 conservatively estimated, were costing the nation
20 more than fourteen billion dollars annually, including
21 the cost of emergency medical aid, hospital care,
22 rehabilitation, lost wages, and other direct and
23 indirect costs. These costs exceed twenty billion
24 today.

25 Of the leading causes of death to Americans,

1 motor vehicle crash injuries are second only to cancer
2 in their economic burden. They account for about
3 fifty-two thousand deaths a year and for the majority
4 of new cases of paraplegia and quadraplegia. They are
5 the single leading cause of severe facial lacerations
6 and fractures. They contribute predominantly to new
7 cases of epilepsy and brain damage and kill more
8 Americans aged one through thirty-five than any other
9 cause.

10 The cost burden is growing worse and shall
11 continue unless conditions are changed. Preventing
12 and minimizing motor vehicle crash injuries would be
13 a far less expensive course of action than suffering
14 the present economic cost burden.

15 Considerable research on the subject of
16 preventive maintenance through vehicle inspections
17 has shown it unwise to change the semiannual auto
18 inspection to an annual inspection, notwithstanding
19 the previous testimony.

20 A study entitled Vehicle in Use Safety Standards--
21 and, gentlemen, I have presented you with a copy of
22 everything except two documents that I'm going to cite,
23 so you can go over them yourself, and most of these
24 are federal documents, not private documents--Vehicle
25 in Use Safety Standards prepared for the U.S. Department

1 of Transportation by Ultrasystems, Incorporated, found
2 that in the sampling of vehicles from California,
3 Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. there
4 was a significant difference between the condition of
5 the vehicles in the states. The vehicles in Pennsylvania
6 were in the best condition. Based on the number of
7 vehicles in need of maintenance according to the
8 manufacturer's specifications, there was a significant
9 difference between the states that had periodic motor
10 vehicle inspection and those that have random motor
11 vehicle inspections. The state with the two inspections
12 per year utilizing privately operated vehicle inspection
13 stations, which happens to be Pennsylvania, produces
14 vehicles in a significantly better condition than the
15 state with one inspection per year utilizing state
16 operated inspection stations, and that was New Jersey.
17 New Jersey in turn produced better conditions in the
18 vehicle than the state with random inspection, which
19 was California.

20 Another study performed by Ultrasystems for
21 the United States Department of Transportation entitled
22 Optimum Frequency of Inspection--and I quote--"It has
23 been determined by previous U.S. DOT Studies that the
24 most safety critical vehicle system is the braking
25 system. Moreover, this has been confirmed by accident

1 investigation studies and by the study of the effect
2 of brake degradation on vehicle performance. Past
3 research has also demonstrated that periodic motor
4 vehicle inspection definitely produces vehicles that
5 are in better safety condition than would otherwise
6 be the case."

7 The study made the following recommendations:
8 A recommended optimum frequency of inspection plan
9 consists of the following: A, inspect brake fluid level
10 every six months on all cars; B, the brake tester
11 should be utilized on all cars every six months in
12 conjunction with the brake fluid level test; C, all
13 front wheel brake components should be inspected every
14 six months, beginning at a vehicle age of eighteen
15 months; D, the front brake hose should be inspected
16 every six months beginning at vehicle age of three
17 years.

18 The study entitled The Effects of Automobile
19 Inspections on Accident Rates, written by the Kenneth
20 E. Johnson Environmental and Energy Center, University
21 of Alabama, for U.S. DOT, concluded in the study that
22 inspected vehicles had a 9.1 percent lower accident
23 rate than uninspected vehicles. Vehicles with only
24 one inspection per year with passage of time degraded
25 to a condition equivalent to uninspected vehicles.

1 After this degradation, your accident rate was the
2 same as the uninspected vehicles, suggesting that a
3 minimum of 9.2 percent reduction in accident rates is
4 possible. The last observation was that after comparing
5 the accident rates of the auto check inspected vehicles
6 prior to and after inspection, and presumably after
7 repairs were done, indicated that the post-inspection
8 accident rate dropped 11.8 percent.

9 Since the experiment in an area where the auto
10 check program was voluntarily, the participants were
11 not under any legal requirements to have their vehicles
12 inspected. The study further concluded that if such
13 a legal requirement had been enforced, the accident
14 rate reduction would have presumably been greater.

15 In light of the studies quoted and the statistical
16 information, it is inappropriate to reduce the number
17 of automobile inspections from two to one a year. It
18 is not in the best interests of the passengers or
19 drivers.

20 In conclusion, the minor costs connected with
21 two inspections annually are minor in comparison with
22 the costs due to accidents. Let us not get into the
23 same frame of mind that permitted hotels in Las Vegas
24 to say that it was too costly to install fire prevention
25 equipment with horrifying results. If we err, let us

1 err on the side of caution.

2 The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
3 enthusiastically supports two annual car inspections
4 for all motor vehicles. Thank you.

5 I'd like to just say a couple of things in
6 addition, if I might. I think it's been pretty well
7 demonstrated that we do not really have the information
8 to accurately determine the number of vehicle--you know,
9 vehicle deficiencies that cause accidents. For example,
10 I would like to pose the question in an accident where
11 a driver has been determined to be intoxicated, does
12 the inspecting officer pursue that any further and
13 investigate whether there was any vehicle malfunction
14 or do they stop at the fact that the driver was so
15 intoxicated that it really didn't matter? We just don't
16 have the figures, and that's why we say if we're going
17 to err, let's err on the side of being cautious.

18 MR. DAVIES: I have to admire the intelligence
19 of your question because I posed the same question to
20 somebody in Harrisburg on that very item. I agree with
21 you that we do--we have a real problem with that, and
22 the problem is not just with alcohol, but it has been
23 increased tremendously by some of the studies on the
24 use of both legal and illegal drugs and those people
25 that are driving on medication as well as those that

1 may be under the influence of illegal substances. We
2 do have a problem with that, and I think that the
3 governor's council recognizes that. At least they
4 discussed it at their last meeting and they also
5 discussed the questions about alcohol as well.

6 I would not try to answer your question. All
7 I know is it's one of my great concerns as well, and
8 we're looking at legislation; but I don't want to make
9 any promises that that legislation is going to bring
10 forth any dramatic reduction in the problem that we
11 have as a national and state problem.

12 MS. SKOLNICK: No, I understand that. We are
13 concerned, though.

14 Well, did you realize that the Post Office
15 which has a number of vehicles and drives many more
16 miles than the average driver, performs vehicle
17 inspections every three months? They just absolutely
18 would not consider twice a year as being sufficient.

19 MR. DAVIES: I have no qualms about the federal
20 government regulating theirs. I would never hold up
21 the post office to any great shakes of management or
22 on any criteria. I would have to applaud them on that
23 aspect of it, and I--the gentleman from Pensky even
24 went better than that in what he stated as to what
25 they do on the commercial basis, and that testimony to

1 me was very enlightening; and I hold to the philosophy
2 that brakes--the matter of brakes are something that
3 where I drive--I drive thirty-three thousand miles
4 a year just on this business; and if I don't take--
5 if it isn't my responsibility to get that car in front
6 of what I consider to be a good inspection man at least
7 three or four times a year, I'm just putting my life
8 in jeopardy every time. I don't do that for that
9 period of time, and I think that we're going to come
10 into a direct clash on what I think is the interest
11 of the public and what I think is a matter of education,
12 and that it is not just the matter of where we've gone
13 to defensive driving, and that's part of the school
14 program and part of the program that we put in force,
15 but the idea of somebody taking their car in for
16 inspection on their own if they do that kind of driving.
17 If you'll excuse me, a driver is a damn fool or she's
18 a damn fool if they don't, and that's my own opinion
19 and that is something that I guess I got from the
20 matter of again a commercial experience. I don't
21 hold that it is the responsibility of the government.

22 The one thing, the question that comes to mind
23 is that does your study that you have quoted reflect
24 on any sampling of the variation of difference between
25 Pennsylvania and New Jersey as to those standards?

1 What does it show that Pennsylvania--how Pennsylvania
2 is better in its sampling and what was the degree of
3 sampling?

4 MS. SKOLNICK: Yes, in that particular
5 publication--I've got it quoted--the first one, I
6 believe.

7 MR. DAVIES; If it's in their, I'll seek it out.

8 MS. SKOLNICK: It's Ultrasystems. I think it's
9 the Vehicle and New Safety Standards study. It's in
10 there and it goes through great detail.

11 Now I'm not a professional, obviously, but I
12 got material from the federal government. When I
13 called their Bureau of Vehicle Inspections, I spoke
14 to Mr. Grillo. He was very concerned that Pennsylvania
15 was considering reducing from two to one. He was very
16 sorry he couldn't come here personally and testify
17 because he's far more experienced than I, but he
18 convinced me over the phone that this would be a very
19 unwise decision to make.

20 MR. DAVIES: Do you know the degree of that
21 sampling? Do you recall? The ones that I checked
22 last year, I would have to challenge the validity of
23 it because of the degree of sampling.

24 MS. SKOLNICK: The small numbers are you saying?

25 MR. DAVIES: Yes.

1 MS. SKOLNICK: Well, that could be true; but
2 that's true on either side. I'm saying--you know, I
3 admit that there is not enough what I would call
4 scientific data, and I don't envy you your position
5 of having a decision based on imperfect information;
6 but I repeat, if we have to err, let's err on the
7 side of being a little too severe until we do have the
8 data that we can safely eliminate one of them.

9 MR. DAVIES: Essentially how many people in
10 your organization make this decision or is this decision
11 the work of mostly your own research and your own
12 people?

13 MS. SKOLNICK: It's based on our Board, the
14 State Board decides. For example, since I am the
15 Director of Urban Policy and Transportation, all
16 legislation that comes from the state legislature on
17 a state level that deals with that subject comes to
18 me, and I have certain guidelines that have been
19 determined by the membership and cannot exceed them;
20 and a lot of the previous phase of my presentation,
21 we are advocating van pooling and car pooling, we now
22 are into a whole other area where we were not as
23 concerned before. That was not our area of interest,
24 but now we are; and so that's the reason we are giving
25 testimony.

1 Five years ago we probably wouldn't have been
2 presenting testimony at your public hearing, but the
3 situation has changed. More people are using cars and
4 vans in lieu of public transportation. That's another
5 point.

6 Public transportation in the state of Pennsylvania
7 is going to be cut back drastically. More people are
8 going to have to resort to car pooling and van pooling
9 or even going back to their automobiles because of
10 insufficient funding as a result of reduced operating
11 funding from the federal level. Service in Allegheny
12 County--just been told that they are going to be
13 drastically cut back, as you know, in public
14 transportation. People will have to get to work. If
15 there's a budget cut, they're going to have to use
16 something else. So, you are going to see more people
17 going back to cars.

18 MR. DAVIES: That's the projection. We have
19 some disagreement on it because although I agree with
20 you that the funds are going to be cut, I think it's
21 a matter right now of SEPTA, Conrail, and the other
22 public carriers. It is either going to be levied on
23 the basis of a taxation on a local level and rather
24 than pay it in to the feds, you're going to get more
25 burden at the fare box, and you're going to get more

1 on a local basis in the form of a local tax providing
2 for that transportation, and this is a matter of
3 philosophy again on who should be paying for it, and
4 we're going to be looking at that. We're looking at
5 it right now. I have faced the loss of train
6 transportation in my own community, which again I'm
7 not happy about, but it is going to be vital because
8 you're going to find out with the costs that are
9 skyrocketing on the other end it's going to be just--
10 we're going to have to decide what the priorities are
11 going to be; so I can't buy that on the fact that I
12 think the American public is going to have to wake up
13 to that reality of whether you're going to put it into
14 the federal coffers and get less on it or you're going
15 to get a bigger and more efficient share for your
16 local tax dollar, if that's the input.

17 That again, as I say, we're going to go head on,
18 you and I would go head on on this on the basis of a
19 philosophic exchange; but to awaken the public to those
20 factors, whether it's PAT by which you are served here
21 or whether it's SEPTA or Conrail--

22 MS. SKOLNICK: No, I agree with you in philosophy.
23 What I was saying is right now until you arrange for
24 some other means of financing public transit.

25 MR. DAVIES: Oh, yes.

1 MS. SKOLNICK: There is a cutback, and you're
2 going to find people who have to get to work and who
3 have no other alternative. It's either quit their job
4 or move or use an automobile. I'm talking in the interim.
5 You get your--

6 MR. DAVIES: I don't know about out here, but
7 in the eastern portion of the state SEPTA right now
8 is struggling with that, and they're going to have to
9 come up with some answers and in your local area, too.

10 MS. SKOLNICK: We're working on that, too.

11 MR. STEIGHNER: Ms. Skolnick, on page two of
12 your testimony you quote a study entitled Vehicle and
13 Use Safety Standards that was prepared for the Federal
14 Department of Transportation and infers that states
15 that have twice a year inspections have vehicles in
16 better condition. Did that study take it one step
17 further and compare the accident ratio?

18 MS. SKOLNICK: No.

19 MR. STEIGHNER: There was no comparison, a
20 higher degree of mechanical failure or--

21 MS. SKOLNICK: Right, right.

22 MR. STEIGHNER: It did not do that.

23 MS. SKOLNICK: No.

24 MR. PETRACA: Ms. Skolnick, I'm glad you got
25 your material from the federal government. If it would

1 have come from the state, it would have been all one
2 sided. We haven't made up our minds yet, that's why
3 we're having public hearings.

4 You hear the Department of Traffic Safety--they
5 say our tires are much better on the state level, then
6 you hear from the federal government that they just
7 recalled Firestone tires, millions of them, and the
8 replacement tires are falling apart also. Then they
9 say the brakes are better. Well, I worked in the
10 industry. Nothing was better than asbestos. They
11 could take five hundred, six hundred degree heat.

12 Now they're putting in hard material and they're
13 squealing so loud that the new innovation they had
14 where the brake lining was down to two thirty-seconds--
15 you could hear the squealing. I understand a fellow
16 drove in here from Butler and squealed all the way
17 down. That's why I would like to hear both sides
18 from the state. I appreciate you coming in.

19 Also, the gentleman from the state police,
20 there's only sixty-seven of them that's inspecting
21 cars. Just in Butler alone there's three hundred
22 fifty-seven inspectors. I remember when I was going
23 to Harrisburg and one time I was pulled off not for
24 speeding, like he does, but I was pulled off because
25 my inspection on the car was one day late, and then

1 the patrolman said, "I understand, it is a new car.
2 It's only until you get to Harrisburg."

3 I had one of the staff go to the garage, and
4 my brake lining had just started to score, and it was
5 caught in time; so some like one and--maybe the senior
6 citizen doesn't travel, you know. Like when someone
7 says "Well, there's two thirty-seconds; you could go
8 for another six months." Then traffic safety says,
9 "Well, no. you can't go by time." Well you know
10 yourself, you're going to work, coming home, going to
11 church, you're going to continue doing that. That's
.2 the way you're going to drive.

13 Also it's true--I know a man back home. He
14 wouldn't buy a car from Ohio. He says they're no
15 good, Pennsylvania cars are the best cars. It's a
16 breath of fresh air to hear both sides, thank you.

17 MR. MURPHY: Ms. Skolnick, how do you reconcile
18 the testimony earlier about there being no difference
19 in the accident rate between those states with
20 inspections and those without and the information you've
21 given us? It seems to me what Joe brought up over
22 there is you've not--you really were vague in the
23 questioning and in some of the testimony, and you've
24 not carried through on the fact were the vehicles
25 better maintained, whether that actually reduces the

1 accident rate. The study you quoted seems not to do
2 that.

3 MS. SKOLNICK: Simply because there hasn't been
4 enough scientific information on either side, and I
5 would be very suspicious of anybody who would get up
6 and tell you, "I have proof, definite, that this is
7 what you can do and this is what you can't do and these
8 are the causes and effects." I don't think you can.

9 MR. MURPHY: We're looking at a sort of numbers
10 that are facts. And X number of accidents annually
11 are in these states and some states have--

12 MS. SKOLNICK: It's a random selection.

13 MR. MURPHY: Some states have inspections and
14 others do not, and I think we can make some assumption
15 that the error in those--if they're saying it was
16 alcoholism and not a vehicle component failure, then
17 this would carry over regardless of the states; so--

18 MS. SKOLNICK: Are they doing that? That was
19 my question. I'm not sure what they're doing. I don't
20 know how you categorize the various accidents. That's
21 what I'm saying. It's a very imprecise determination,
22 and I really don't think there's proof enough on either
23 side. I think people are stretching the truth if they
24 say there is, and if you want to use the statistics,
25 even for the state of Pennsylvania we know that about

1 three percent of the accidents are vehicle malfunctions.
2 Well, I would like to have that zero.

3 MR. MURPHY: But that is also true, Ms. Skolnick,
4 of states that do not have any inspections, which
5 means that the inspections seem to be almost irrelevant
6 to the failure or the accident rate caused by vehicle
7 component failure.

8 MS. SKOLNICK: You're using statistics as if
9 they are facts, and that's very dangerous.

10 MR. MURPHY: Oh, I agree, but the fact of the
11 matter is you used statistics also to try to prove it,
12 and your quotes, so you--we're both playing that game,
13 so don't throw stones.

14 MS. SKOLNICK: It's not a game. If I had a
15 disclaimer saying there was no scientific --

16 MR. MURPHY: The question is I have read it in
17 a number of other studies that there is very little
18 correlation between semiannual inspections and reduced
19 accident rates in those states, O.K., and that I think
20 that is a pretty clear statistic. You can get in and
21 look at how they're determining what are accidents and
22 what are the causes of those accidents, O.K.? I happen
23 to think that there is no correlation that therein
24 most of the accidents are human error, are caused by
25 human error; and the lady is suggesting then of course

1 that we go to semiannual inspections regardless of the
2 cost to the consumer on the premise that it will make
3 a safer driving record for Pennsylvania, is that
4 correct?

5 MS. SKOLNICK: Yes, and I don't say that it's
6 regardless of the cost. That has to be determined by
7 legislation.

8 MR. MURPHY: I see no testimony here that
9 suggests we put some kind of control on the cost that
10 the garage would be able to charge.

11 MS. SKOLNICK: Because that's not the emphasis
12 that we were seeking. We were talking about one versus
13 two inspections a year. We did not go into any other --

14 MR. MURPHY: The other line therein in any
15 issue that we deal with is the cost and the benefit.
16 I think it's important that the League must express
17 their opinion on just what they feel the cost of this
18 program should be.

19 MS. SKOLNICK: We want as cost effective a
20 position as possible, but there are social costs too.

21 MR. MURPHY: Clearly there are, right. Thank
22 you.

23 MR. DAVIES: Yes?

24 MR. PUNT: Ms. Skolnick, on page 1, and it's the
25 only question I have, and I can't see how you've come

1 up with this, but on page 1 you state at the bottom
2 of the page in your last paragraph that while many
3 factors are involved in causing accidents, motor
4 vehicle defects have been show to be responsible for
5 between five to twelve percent of all accidents. Now
6 what do you base those numbers on?

7 MS. SKOLNICK: On the publication that's
8 footnoted on number one, which is on page four, and
9 you have a copy of that publication. I footnoted--I
10 mean there is no personal opinion here. I'm not--you
11 know, I'm not a transportation --

12 MR. PUNT: Why the wide variation? I haven't
13 seen the material you gave yet, but why such a wide
14 variation, five to twelve percent?

15 MS. SKOLNICK: Because it's an imprecise science.
16 If it were precise, we could say definitively X number
17 of people are in accidents as a result of brake failure.
18 They have not done that kind of work anywhere in the
19 United States, and as insurance costs go up and as
20 hospital costs go up, you will see more studies that
21 will come out with definitive costs.

22 Years ago when the costs were not such great
23 facts and not so many people owned automobiles, it was
24 not important to have the precise figures.

25 MR. PUNT: So this maximum of twelve percent is

1 basically an estimate?

2 MS. SKOLNICK: Right.

3 MR. PUNT: Right.

4 MS. SKOLNICK: Well, it's estimated on material
5 that they have at their disposal, the federal government.

6 MR. PUNT: All right.

7 MR. DAVIES: As I understand it, by that same
8 token, that was taking the given degree of invalidity
9 in the study and projected that way; that's what the
10 former figures were given to me last year were when
11 I went over that, and we didn't make a study at that
12 time because this was considered for legislation before,
13 but not to be at the public hearing level; but when we
14 faced as a potential those problems, and I think
15 possibly John can maybe give us some enlightenment on
16 that, because he was with the federal government at
17 that time and probably can give us some sort of
18 projection that--that I don't have at my disposal right
19 now.

20 MR. PACHUTA: Many of the gross statistics that
21 are referenced by the federal government is merely
22 information passed from the state. The state--I was
23 formerly the Director of the Bureau of Accident Analysis
24 for the state. We submitted regularly to the federal
25 government the statistics. They are getting them

1 second hand. Before this I worked for the federal
2 government in accident investigation, and the percentage
3 of actually federally investigated accidents in
4 transportation is very very small compared to the
5 volume handled by the state and then passed to the
6 federal government.

7 So those differences in and heavy reliance on
8 federal statistics I would say is ill warranted because,
9 quite frankly, they are getting the information second
10 hand from the state anyway.

11 MS. SKOLNICK: It's an imprecise science.

12 MR. DAVIES: The one point that we have got to
13 come back to as far as the matter of the science is the
14 factor that the people from the Office of Budget
15 Administration said that where you cannot--they said
16 specifically cannot delineate that particular driver
17 error, and that's the subject that you and I originally
18 talked about, from that factor, and it does remain;
19 and, you know, it is quite a challenge to anyone
20 whether they're sitting here deciding on legislation
21 or something that I feel that the government is never
22 going to regulate. I guess I'm going to say it's like
23 we make our attempt to legislate morality.

24 MS. SKOLNICK: True. There is also a little
25 folder dispelling a myth, a viewpoint on highway safety.

1 It's a 1976 document which kind of refutes the business
2 of driver error as being the main factor, and it came
3 out of the U.S. Department of Transportation; so you
4 might want to take a look at that, too.

5 MR. DAVIES: I guess we have--I'm sorry, we
6 have one more question.

7 MR. MARTINI: Mrs. Skolnick, to go back to
8 what Representative Punt said earlier about the five
9 to twelve percent accident causation, I don't see
10 anywhere where that is broken down to states that have
11 inspections twice a year, once a year, or no inspections.

12 MS. SKOLNICK: I don't think anybody has ever
13 done a study on that; other than the one I quote in here,
14 that's the only one. Other than that, they have not
15 broken it down.

16 MR. MARTINI: I just wondered, because I'm--
17 primarily this is to determine whether to go from
18 semiannual to annual.

19 MS. SKOLNICK: Yes.

20 MR. MARTINI: A factor such as that where you're
21 not breaking it out as to whether that's occurring
22 where the inspections are being done or where they're
23 not being done seems to me doesn't really bear any
24 credence.

25 MR. PUNT: That's right.

1 MS. SKOLNICK: Well, you know, that's a possible
2 interpretation. In talking to the people, the insurance--
3 what is the group--the Highway Moss Data Institute
4 and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, they
5 have never broken it out that way. They just feel that
6 to use a common term or saying more is better and less
7 is worse as far as they're concerned. They've never
8 done an analysis either.

9 MR. MARTINI: It just seems to me that it really
10 doesn't prove anything one way or the other as far as
11 in relationship to inspections.

12 MS. SKOLNICK: I can use Monroeville as a good
13 example. We have a very severe, one of the most
14 stringent fire codes probably in Pennsylvania. We
15 pioneered in smoke detectors. We don't have that many
16 fires, but we mandate that the houses have detectors.
17 It's preventive. It's not to say your house is going
18 to burn up tomorrow. You know, it's all in your point
19 of view. We're very very strict with the fire code
20 on any commercial building here. You ask any developer,
21 and they'll tell you. They put a tremendous amount of
22 money in and they keep saying we really don't need it,
23 it's not going to burn down, and you can use the same
24 logic.

25 MR. MURPHY: If I may point out, we received a

1 memo concerning, Mrs. Skolnick, referring to the
2 number of types of insurance companies. We received
3 this memo that would be helpful for you to look at
4 where is indicated in contacting most of the research
5 institutes in policy forms around the country, that
6 they have found no connection between increased
7 insurance rates or vehicle safety in accidents, and
8 that the fact of going to once a year inspections in
9 this state would have no effect whatsoever on insurance
10 rates.

11 MS. SKOLNICK: That's not what they told me.
12 It's interesting that they put in writing what they
13 could not tell me verbally.

14 MR. PUNT: Mrs. Skolnick, if I may before you
15 leave, as I started to point out, and the gentleman
16 over here pointed out, your figures of that five to
17 twelve percent has no verification and no ground.

18 MS. SKOLNICK: Let me look at that again.

19 MR. PUNT: We have done studies, the state has
20 done several and conducted studies that show the
21 figures, the percentages are much much smaller than
22 that; and I would like to share with you that you not
23 use this for public information because I believe it's
24 false. It's incomplete, it's inaccurate because they
25 do not--have not determined the states that have twice

1 a year inspection versus an annual inspection and so
2 forth.

3 The state of Pennsylvania has studied, has
4 researched the industry, and we do have those figures;
5 and I think this is erroneous information, and I don't
6 think you should use it before you verify it more
7 clearly.

8 MS. SKOLNICK: I'm quoting another source, and
9 the source is documented. If they are giving incorrect
10 information, then--

11 MR. PUNT: But in your presentation to the state
12 that is not a comparison between states with twice a
13 year inspection versus states with an annual inspection.
14 That's just an overall review. That's all.

15 MR. DAVIES: That's why I made the statement
16 that if you take the margin of--the lack of invalidity.
17 If you make the projection from that, that's how you
18 come up with that figure, and that's why I stated that
19 because I want--I think the record should show that;
20 and if that is in refute or anything like that, and
21 your research does come up, I would just ask or read
22 that into the minutes so that anyone that wants to use
23 these minutes for their research can make a determination
24 for either a yes or a no vote in committee or any other
25 place, that they have that word of record.

Any others? Thank you very much.

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1 MR. DAVIES: Next is Mr. Thomas Messner, auto
2 inspection committeeman, Westmoreland County.

3 MR. MESSNER: Good morning, my name is Thomas
4 Messner. I am a member of the Westmoreland County
5 State Inspection Advisory Board. I would like to
6 thank the committee for the opportunity to present our
7 comments today on House Bill 562.

8 I'm speaking not as an expert, but just with
9 the experience of thirty years or so in my business.
10 I am a new car dealer and also a licensed state
11 inspector. Just a couple comments before I get into
12 this here. From listening to the other gentlemen,
13 I feel myself that the motoring public is going to be
14 taken over the coals on this thing because I know
15 myself if a man comes in with a car that needs inspected
16 and wants to trade it, I'm going to look that car over
17 very thoroughly before I inspect it because I'm going
18 to have to inspect it before I resell it. He's going
19 to pay one way or the other to get it inspected or
20 for me to inspect it and resell it.

21 Initially, I would like to point out that
22 Pennsylvania has had a longstanding policy to insure
23 the safety of the motor vehicles operating in
24 Pennsylvania. The semiannual safety inspection
25 required by the present provisions of the vehicle code

1 were implemented in furtherance of this policy with
2 the specific objective of protecting the safety of the
3 citizens of Pennsylvania and their property.

4 Pennsylvania has achieved a nationally recognized
5 reputation for the effectiveness of its vehicle safety
6 inspection program. The provisions of House Bill 562
7 would require that only one vehicle safety inspection
8 be required per year. I believe that the lessening
9 of the vehicle safety inspections will necessarily
10 result in an increase in dangerous vehicles on
11 Pennsylvania highways and result in an increase in
12 vehicle related personal injuries and property damage.
13 For these reasons I strenuously oppose the provisions
14 of House Bill 562, which eliminates semiannual safety
15 inspections and require only an annual safety inspection.
16 I believe that the legislature is compelled to give
17 paramount consideration to the protection of the people
18 of this commonwealth.

19 There have been comments that the public is
20 being ripped off with two state inspections a year.
21 In my opinion the public will have more expensive
22 repairs in order to have their cars inspected if there
23 is a year between safety inspections. There will be
24 more damage done and the result will be higher repair
25 bills to the customer, especially with brake problems.

1 There are claims that new cars do not need
2 semiannual inspections, but I feel that this is one
3 way that the manufacturer gets a feedback on problems
4 discovered in the field, and that they have recalls
5 to correct these problems before serious damage is
6 done. Due to the cost of new cars, the buying public
7 is keeping their autos longer; this is another
8 important reason that the semiannual safety inspection
9 should be kept.

10 Also, Thomas Larsen stated that OBA bound that
11 eighty percent of causal factors in all motor vehicle
12 accidents in 1978 in Pennsylvania were classified as
13 human factors. The fifty-five miles per hour speed
14 limit has prevented many accidents, and I feel that
15 semiannual inspections has also been a contributing
16 factor in keeping the automobiles safe to drive.

17 Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear
18 here today and to present my comments on behalf of
19 the Westmoreland County Safety Advisory Board, and I
20 will be willing to answer any questions which the
21 committee may have; but before that, may I show you
22 something that turned up after this here took place.

23 Now, here is an automobile that was brought
24 into mv shop, and the mileage it was inspected was
25 twenty-two thousand eight hundred twenty. The mileage

1 that the man came in and complained that he heard
2 a little noise was twenty-six thousand seven hundred
3 forty-one, or a distance of three thousand nine hundred
4 twenty-one miles in four months and six days. This
5 brake pad causes a little noise that he didn't know
6 exactly what it was.

7 If you're familiar with brake pads, there's a
8 lot of lining; and it cost the man over two hundred
9 dollars to have it fixed. Now this brake pad also
10 has a wear sensor, but the wear sensor didn't tell
11 him to bring it in to get the brakes fixed.

12 MR. DAVIES: What was the model?

13 MR. MESSNER: A seventy-eight Bonaventure.

14 MR. PETRACA: Did the asbestos break?

15 MR. MESSNER: You're talking about the brake
16 lining. Every time you buy brake lining, they have
17 a different part because it's different material.
18 With the asbestos, you're not allowed to used that
19 asbestos any more because it's a health hazard; so now
20 they are trying hard lining which gives a screech.
21 They're trying a lot of lining that doesn't give you
22 no air. There's the kind of source where you can go
23 in and get cardboard lining that's not worth putting
24 them on.

25 MR. PETRACA: Dr. Larsen claims that these parts

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last longer.

MR. MESSNER: It sure does; this is twenty-six thousand miles.

MR. DAVIES: You're saying that--it's the time between the twenty-six and the thirty-three that this occurred, is that right?

MR. MESSNER: This is the original brake lining that came with the car from the factory; they've never been changed.

MR. PETRACA: Show that to the press, don't show that to PennDOT.

MR. DAVIES: I beg your pardon, I'd like all of us to share in that equally, if you would.

MR. PETRACA: It's your Bill, Davies.

MR. MESSNER: The thing of it is that the people will not bring their car in voluntarily to get it inspected. The only time they'll bring it in is when they hear a noise or they--something doesn't work or if it's under warranty. They're sure to bring it in when they're under warranty because they're not paying.

Those brake lights that tell you that you have a malfunction in your brakes, when that light comes on, it's too late because it's already malfunctioned. That light don't come on and tell you that you're going to

1 have trouble. With this, with Mr. Larsen here, they
2 stated that they're going to cut down on the inspection;
3 they're only going to bring mainly brakes, tires,
4 steering, and suspension. What about the exhaust
5 systems? What about the bodies that are rusting out?
6 We're coming into weather now where you get the lovers
7 out in lovers lane and end up asphyxiated because
8 their muffler is leaking and the floorboard is rusted
9 out and the exhaust gets up in there and they're gone.
10 So, we're losing taxpayers.

11 MR. PUNT: I always kept my windows cracked.

12 MR. DAVIES: I don't know who qualified him as
13 a lovers lane lover either. He's not going to let
14 anybody get ahead of him.

15 All right. That was one of the questions I had,
16 you hit the very subject that I wanted to get to as
17 far as the testimony, and that is with the fact that
18 they must under the warranty and under the guarantee
19 bring it in for certain things to be looked at by you
20 as the new car salesmen, we in the research that we
21 have done, the limited research that we have done
22 also found that there will be a factor then that will
23 increase the degree of safety with which that car was
24 supposed to be put out on the street; and that if that
25 was not the case, as far as the manufacturer, and again

1 I quote, after Nader and after computer error, the
2 computerization as far as safety is concerned, that
3 that has become a factor with you people looking at
4 the car that much more often. Doesn't that then
5 enhance the potential safety for the individual, don't
6 you feel that it does as a dealer?

7 MR. MESSNER: Yes. I mean if he's not compelled
8 to bring that car in, the only time he'll bring it in
9 is when he has problems; and when he has problems, it
10 is too late.

11 MR. DAVIES: But I mean under the warranty and
12 so forth and so on you are required to do that, at
13 least they have been with mine.

14 MR. MESSNER: No, under the warranty I'm not
15 required to do anything unless the customer asks me
16 to do it.

17 MR. DAVIES: Yes.

18 MR. MESSNER: And I'm required to repair if
19 there's any difficulties at the factory level.

20 MR. DAVIES: When I've taken mine in--maybe I'm
21 taking advantage of him when I say would you check
22 this or check that because I guess I'm going to have
23 to disqualify myself; but with the driving that I do,
24 I'm at the same time going to have them look at various
25 aspects of that because I have--

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MR. MESSNER: You're asking them to do that.

MR. DAVIES: Yes, and I drive a new one every year just on a lease basis so that they're doing this as a part of their own investment as well.

MR. MESSNER: If I have a customer who buys a car and says he has a problem in the transmission, I'm not going to check his brakes.

MR. DAVIES: In other words, you don't feel as if there is any--that the individual--you're records or your experience clearly indicates that those people are not going to make additional requests upon you to look at other factors in that particular vehicle.

MR. MESSNER: No. The only time they're going to ask is when they're running into problems and they'll ask you about that. Now the warranty has nothing to do with diagnosis. The warranty doesn't pay you for diagnosis.

MR. DAVIES: No, I understand that. I'm talking about my own experience and when I take the car.

MR. MESSNER: You're one of the very few because you take your life--you respect your life.

MR. DAVIES: Well then, I guess that position is a matter of again the individual.

MR. PETRACA: He has a lot of time. The rest of us are too busy.

1 MR. DAVIES: I don't know why he continually
2 picks on me.

3 MR. MESSNER: You must be retired then, because
4 they're the ones that are busy.

5 MR. DAVIES: John, you had a comment on that?

6 MR. PACHUTA: Just for the record, sir, if I
7 may, the brake lining in question was brought in after
8 twenty-six thousand miles of use; it was original
9 equipment, it was a three year old vehicle, and that's
10 a considerable amount of wear on a vehicle, and it was
11 brought in voluntarily, not as part of the state
12 inspection program. It was also a lining that--all
13 linings sold must meet the federal specifications.
14 The cardboard lining, while there might be some better
15 than others, there is a minimum requirement for brake
16 lining sold in this country.

17 MR. DAVIES: And that can't meet the standards
18 of your regulations either?

19 MR. PACHUTA: Our standards would coincide.

20 MR. DAVIES: Would coincide with those of the
21 federal--

22 MR. PACHUTA: That's right.

23 MR. MESSNER: There's also been statements made
24 that the tires last longer, and that is the most false
25 statement ever made. With these roads that we have,

1 you can take a brand new tire and put two miles on it,
2 and the tire is no good. It's not the tire's fault
3 altogether--well, it's the construction of the tire,
4 some of it, to give you a softer ride, a better
5 handling car; but if PennDOT would spend some of their
6 money repairing the roads and stuff around here rather
7 than trying to rip off the public, and I think this
8 is nothing but a big ripoff, this once a year
9 inspection, because PennDOT--they're not out to lose
10 any money because it was stated here they're supposed
11 to save the motoring public money, but they're going
12 to double the cost of their inspections. Now they're
13 charging the inspection stations a dollar per sticker,
14 and they stated that we have to send and buy our
15 stickers six weeks in advance to make sure we have
16 them for the current inspection. We have to tie up
17 our money for six weeks, so we--they shut down the
18 Pittsburgh office, they shut down the Philadelphia
19 office because it was costing so much. They cut the
20 costs out and raised everything.

21 So now they give us a credit of seventy-five
22 cents for any unused sticker. Who gets the quarter?

23 MR. DAVIES: PennDOT, as a matter of handling.
24 We went through that at the Harrisburg hearing, and
25 the only other counter to that would be under this

1 system you would no longer be obligated to suffer
2 that inconvenience or that outlay. If the new system
3 is perfected, the way it has been primarily explained
4 to us, what they're considering doing right now, the
5 change that they're considering, anticipating.

6 MR. MESSNER: With this once a year inspection,
7 they're going to lose more inspection stations, and
8 the inspection cost is going to be raised to the
9 public because they stated that it's going to take
10 about half an hour to forty-five minutes to inspect
11 a car according to what they're going to write up,
12 and there is no way that the inspection station
13 operator is going to be able to inspect your car for
14 ten to twelve dollars under these; and then every time--
15 we make a card, a form out to send in for the cars
16 we inspect, so now every time a car is sold or every
17 time a car is inspected it's going to take additional
18 postage and additional manpower to send that form in
19 so he can get his license.

20 They're putting more cost burden onto the state
21 inspections and raising--cutting their costs and raising
22 they're money that's coming in. I can't understand
23 this. I mean they're saying it's going to be less for
24 the motoring public, but they want more for their job.

25 MR. DAVIES: All right. Any other--

1 MR. PUNT: You just said something I want you
2 to clarify. You said if this goes through, there's
3 no way you can inspect a car for fifteen dollars.

4 MR. MESSNER: No, sir.

5 MR. PUNT: You're going to have to increase
6 the fees?

7 MR. MESSNER: Correct.

8 MR. PUNT: How much time do you spend on
9 inspecting a car now?

10 MR. MESSNER: Well, according to the state
11 inspection supervisor, you cannot inspect more than
12 eight cars a day per man, and he says they better be
13 all new cars.

14 MR. PUNT: How much time does it take for you
15 to inspect a car now?

16 MR. MESSNER: At least an hour and a half.

17 MR. PUNT: An hour and a half.

18 MR. MESSNER: Yes.

19 MR. PUNT: Under the guidelines of 526 you're
20 going to have basic areas that you're going to inspect.

21 MR. MESSNER: Yes, but those basic areas don't
22 even cover the exhaust system or, according to Mr.
23 Larsen's testimony, it doesn't cover the exhaust
24 system which is a very important system on a car,
25 especially in the winter time; and it doesn't include

1 any rusting of the body, which is very important on
2 some of these small pickup trucks.

3 MR. PUNT: And what you're saying that if 562
4 passes, you're going to raise your inspection fee,
5 your charge?

6 MR. MESSNER: You almost have to because it's
7 going to be more expensive to us.

8 MR. PUNT: I'm sorry, sir. I don't agree with
9 you, and I resent that fact, and I can tell you right
10 now if the inspection stations throughout this state
11 go hog wild and raise their fees just because of
12 passage of 562, I shudder to think but that legislation
13 would be introduced regulating you gentlemen in what
14 you --

15 MR. MESSNER: Why don't you regulate now?

16 MR. PUNT: We may end up doing it, especially
17 after this.

18 MR. MESSNER: You should, because you've got
19 these discount stores advertising three ninety-five
20 for an inspection. The reason they do that is to
21 get you in and sell you everything they can.

22 MR. PUNT: It's up to that individual to go
23 wherever that individual wants to go.

24 MR. MESSNER: If they would come out and say
25 state inspection is ten dollars or twelve dollars and

1 everybody has to follow that guideline, then these
2 people won't be going to these cut rate stores.

3 MR. PUNT: That may come about, but I don't
4 think you should just go out and arbitrarily raise
5 your fees, what you're charging, just because 562
6 passes. I don't agree with that, sir.

7 MR. MESSNER: It's going to be more expense to
8 us.

9 MR. PUNT: I don't think it will be.

10 MR. MESSNER: It will be.

11 MR. PUNT: How, why?

12 MR. MESSNER: Well, O.K. Every automobile now--
13 these forms that we fill out, I think it takes thirty
14 inspections per form. If you go by the same as the
15 licenses, you know, for inspection, everyone that comes
16 into my place I'm going to have to make a report out
17 and send that daily to the department.

18 MR. PUNT: There's nothing in the Bill that
19 says that, nothing in the legislation says that.

20 MR. MESSNER: How--if I only have two inspections,
21 say two inspections a week, that man is going to be
22 running out with no inspection, no license because the
23 report hasn't got in to the state for him to get them
24 back.

25 MR. PUNT: I'm sorry, I don't agree with that

1 opinion. The intent is that the vehicle owner be
2 given proof to supply to the department and not for
3 the garage to do it.

4 MR. MESSNER: Then it's going to be more
5 expense --

6 MR. PACHUTA: He has to mail it in for his
7 registration anyway.

8 MR. PUNT: It's going to be tied in with the
9 registration.

10 MR. MESSNER: When I sell an automobile and
11 have the plates, I mail it in.

12 MR. PACHUTA: That's the intent.

13 MR. PHILLIPS: I have one question. You said
14 that more inspection stations will close up.

15 MR. MESSNER: Right.

16 MR. PHILLIPS: Why?

17 MR. MESSNER: Because people are not going to
18 bring their car in as often to get the work done.

19 MR. PHILLIPS: In other words, you're saying
20 then it will save money.

21 MR. MESSNER: No, it won't save money.

22 MR. PHILLIPS: It will save money to the
23 consumer.

24 MR. MESSNER: If they bring it in every five
25 or six months, it might cost them fifty or sixty

1 dollars. If they bring it in once a year, that man
2 has to go for a full year before --

3 MR. PHILLIPS: Are you saying the service
4 station won't make as much money and that's why he'll
5 go out of business?

6 MR. MESSNER: I didn't say he won't make as
7 much money. The money won't be coming in as often.
8 How would you like to go for a year for a pay check
9 rather than six months?

10 MR. PUNT: If we don't pass the budget on time,
11 we do it.

12 MR. PHILLIPS: What I was trying to get at
13 here was it going to--we're trying to go to the point
14 that's trying to save consumers money and you making
15 the statement that inspection stations will be going
16 out of business. They will be getting less money,
17 so it sort of proves it's going to save the consumer
18 money?

19 MR. MESSNER: No, it's not going to save the
20 consumer money.

21 MR. PETRACA: Look what happened to me the
22 one time. If the cop had not stopped me and I didn't
23 have the car inspected, I would have scored my brakes.
24 The gentleman is right.

25 MR. PHILLIPS: He said the stations are going

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to go out of business.

MR. PETRACA: He said it's going to cost the consumer more.

MR. DAVIES: Gentlemen, let's put it in the context of questions rather than commenting. That's the way I'd like to handle this.

Any other questions?

MR. STEIGHNER: Mr. Messner, I have at least a little problem with one of your statements. You said something to the effect that people do not bring their cars in until they have a problem or until they hear something. We have a great reputation in government of always knowing what's good for the public, so to speak, and we find out many times when we're done that we really didn't know. This may or may not be the case with this Bill, but I don't happen to believe that the public is that inept or irresponsible that that's the only time they bring the car into the garage.

We had testimony, and I don't have it in front of us, from inspection mechanics and dealers who said they only repair thirty to thirty-five or thirty to forty percent of the cars that are actually brought into their garages. So if that's true, if we're only repairing thirty to forty percent, how do we end up

1 with so many clunkers so to speak coming in for
2 inspection?

3 MR. MESSNER: They're going out and buying
4 these stolen stickers. When a man comes in to have
5 his car inspected, if there's an excessive bill and
6 he doesn't get it inspected, he goes out and buys a
7 sticker. I can take you out on the highway any time
8 of day and get you an inspection sticker.

9 I had a fellow come in there one day talking
10 about they're not going to issue inspection stickers
11 at the inspection stations. I had a fellow come in
12 my shop one day with a suitcase and he says how many
13 titles and owners cards do you want to buy.

14 MR. STEIGHNER: Did you turn him in?

15 MR. MESSNER: No, I just told him I wasn't
16 interested.

17 MR. DAVIES: That's one of the problems that
18 we address as far as concerns with what's happening
19 ostensibly in the southeastern Pennsylvania area where
20 we can identify it as a large problem or a significant
21 problem, and we--or should I say I am under the
22 assumption that if there is a change, it would diminish
23 the difficulty with that system.

24 MR. MESSNER: Well, anything that the crooks
25 can get ahold of --

1 MR. DAVIES: I didn't say that, sir. I said
2 it would diminish significantly. I did not say that
3 we are ever going to pass something that is not going
4 to get--that gets away from those who want to
5 circumvent the law. I never said that. I've been
6 here too long to make a statement such as that. I
7 said it would diminish significantly. I didn't say
8 it would disappear.

9 Are there any other questions?

10 MR. STEIGHNER: One thing. The conditions of
11 our roads, you know, maybe we should wait a year to
12 even discuss this Bill because it's true; I mean we're
13 getting these potholes, we pull off a muffler, you
14 blow tires, and these people that have--we'll say a
15 faulty muffler because it was jarred loose, Mr.
16 Chairman, I think they would wait, like you say, and
17 then have carbon monoxide, etc. When you say what
18 does PennDOT do, we have a number for a hotline. When
19 the potholes got bad last winter, they went for another
20 sixty thousand dollars for publicity to tell the people
21 if you see a pothole, call us. Can't they fill the
22 potholes?

23 In my district the people are going out--who
24 it is, I don't know, the boy scouts, they are painting
25 a white ring around them with a big arrow; yet we

1 vote for PennDOT budgets and the PennDOT tax and
2 they're doing a hell of a poor job. Now they say
3 one inspection a year and these are the reasons.

4 Then you had two auto mechanics here today
5 that wanted to talk because they had to go to work,
6 and you can't talk, and that man who testified, with
7 all due respect, got up three more times. It's
8 starting to be stacked now. I'm willing to come to
9 public hearings, but I want to hear both sides.

10 MR. DAVIES: That gentleman was offered all
11 the opportunity in the world to come back.

12 MR. PETRACA: He's trying to make a living.

13 MR. DAVIES: He's trying to make a living, and
14 we're trying to get the testimony in the order and
15 due process that we're supposed to conduct the hearing.

16 MR. PETRACA: Next time this gentleman gets up,
17 I'll be leaving.

18 MR. DAVIES: That's your privilege.

19 MR. PETRACA: It's your Bill, you are the prime
20 sponsor; you're pushing too hard. I want to hear both
21 sides.

22 MR. DAVIES: You can bring in whatever sides
23 you want. We have Erie and Valley Forge.

24 With that, we'll adjourn for lunch.

25 - - -

1 (Whereupon, the luncheon recess
2 was taken.)

3 - - -

4 AFTERNOON SESSION

5 - - -

6 MR. DAVIES: In the interests of time, we'll
7 go on. This is reminiscent of the proceedings on the
8 floor of the House. They call you into session and
9 as long as there isn't a quorum challenge, you know
10 you're allowed to go on. Since this is a subcommittee
11 and we do not have a quorum requirement, we are going
12 to go on and hopefully the gentlemen that are--might
13 have been delayed by not being able to get finished
14 up in time or otherwise will come in without disrupting
15 the testimony at hand, and we do have the written
16 record as well; so that we'll now call on Edward A.
17 Zendron, the First Vice President of the Pennsylvania
18 Automotive Wholesalers Association. Mr. Zendron.

19 MR. ZENDRON: Good afternoon gentlemen and
20 thank you for the opportunity to appear and testify
21 before you on the vitally important subject of vehicle
22 safety inspections.

23 My name is Edward A. Zendron, and I serve as
24 First Vice President of the Pennsylvania Automotive
25 Wholesalers Association, an organization representing

1 nearly three hundred companies in fifty-one of our
2 sixty-seven counties which sell at wholesale and retail
3 a variety of automobile parts and accessories. I am
4 an owner of an auto parts store in Sarver, Pennsylvania,
5 a very small town near Pittsburgh.

6 I am certain that you gentlemen know by now
7 that the PAWA strongly opposes passage of House Bill
8 Number 562 which would change our present periodic
9 motor vehicle inspection from semiannual to once
10 yearly. At a hearing held on July 16th in Harrisburg
11 the Association objected to the fact that its numbers
12 will not be adversely affected if once a year motor
13 vehicle inspection becomes law. This statement bears
14 repeating.

15 Many PAWA members believe that once yearly
16 inspections will increase their business three fold
17 within a period after passage despite claims to the
18 contrary contained in a questionable study undertaken
19 by the governor's Office of Budget and Administration.
20 May I remind you gentlemen that PAWA members are far
21 more capable of assessing the financial impact of
22 this proposed change on the motoring public than almost
23 anyone else because we sell to the firms which make
24 the required repairs and we sell to those people who
25 do it themselves. We're on the firing line, the

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bureaucrat isn't.

I've had an opportunity to briefly review those arguments in favor of changing our system from semi-annually to once yearly, and two important points keep returning to mind. First, those dedicated to change our system rely heavily on statistical studies, some of which are quite outdated and many of which place undue emphasis on fatal and injury related accidents. They point out that other states without a system as good as ours have no more fatalities than those which we experience in Pennsylvania. Well, what about the hundreds of thousands of non-fatal, non-injury producing accidents that occur in these other states for which no explanation is offered?

Second, those in favor of this change insist that the state is not under law given the responsibility to regulate vehicle maintenance. That's true, but what about the safety factor? It's a matter of record that people are keeping their cars much longer than in past years because of the uncertainty of today's economic conditions. Wouldn't you say that that alone would be sufficient reason to think twice before changing the once yearly inspections?

My own experience is on both sides of the fence. As an auto mechanic, service manager, and now owner

1 of an auto parts store, I feel that once yearly
2 inspection increases the chances for brake failure,
3 steering failure, exhaust system malfunction, floor
4 rusting, holes in the body, frame, and the like. Once
5 yearly inspections would not prevent floor rusting or
6 other rusting, the result of which has caused some
7 terrible accidents; and such are rarely attributed to
8 an adequate inspection systems.

9 Another point you ought to consider very
10 carefully is human nature. People will wait until
11 the last minute to get their cars inspected, even
12 under the proposed staggered registration inspection
13 system. We sell more brake drums and shoes during
14 the last week of inspection than at any other time
15 during the actual inspection period. If brake shoes
16 were replaced before the drums were ruined, think how
17 much the customers would save.

18 The same holds true for power steering
19 components. The customer cannot know if there is a
20 problem with the power steering but at a semiannual
21 inspection instead of once a year. You gentlemen don't
22 have to travel too far from here to view the end
23 result of a lack of vehicle safety inspection. Across
24 to Ohio you'll find cars without headlights, no
25 taillights, fenders literally flapping in the breeze,

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broken windshields and windows, and many more defects. Is this what we want in Pennsylvania in the name of getting government off peoples' backs?

I'd like to make one point before I close. I ask because I have neither the time or resources to ascertain the answers for myself. What effect would once yearly inspections, state inspections, have upon automobile insurance coverage costs? Would these costs go up? Certainly this question needs answering before any final decision is reached.

To sum up, PAWA strongly recommends your subcommittee and the full house transportation committee address the issue of modernizing the present system rather than toss it out in favor of once yearly inspections. We think this makes good sense. We believe the restoration of public confidence in the present twice yearly system is absolutely necessary. People want to know that inspections are performed by honest, competent mechanics. They also want to and deserve assurance that when something has to be repaired, that the work needed is done properly, and is at a fair price.

Unfortunately, in part due to bad nation and statewide news of our system, the public presently views our inspection program and those entrusted to

1 operate it and to whom the public must turn to enforce
2 it with a jaundiced eye. A change in timing, once
3 from twice yearly, will not do anything to change
4 that public view. If anything, the once yearly plan
5 will only reinforce peoples' suspicions that they
6 are being ripped off.

7 One very effective position would be to
8 eliminate the so-called cosmetic inspection, the
9 requirements as failing to pass it because of a
10 malfunctioning dome light, inconsequent window cracks
11 that do not affect the driver's vision, rust spots
12 that have nothing to do with safety. In other words,
13 items which do not adversely affect a third party.

14 I understand that streamlining is already under
15 consideration; I certainly hope so. Gentlemen, the
16 power to restore this confidence lies in your hands.

17 Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear
18 and testify. I'll be more than happy to answer any
19 questions that you may have.

20 MR. DAVIES: I won't take your time, but for the
21 record, Paul did research on the matter as far as
22 insurance was concerned, and we received back an answer
23 from a recognized insurance analyst; and in the nature
24 of saving time, your concern about that is addressed
25 in this and some time later on if we do have the time,

1 we'll read it into the record or I'll make it part
2 of the record so that if anyone wants any part of the
3 record, we will have that placed in there; so we didn't
4 leave that stone unturned. I want you to know that
5 concern.

6 Relative to that, why do you think the confidence
7 lies in the legislative aspect of it for other than
8 overall? This is something that I've been trying to
9 say for years without success, that an education of
10 the public of just exactly, you know, that; it is their
11 responsibility to themselves and everyone else the
12 minute they get behind the wheel of a vehicle to
13 realize that what they're handling requires the same
14 type of caution or preventive maintenance that any
15 other thing does, that their own body does, and which
16 again preventive medicine is becoming I think more of
17 a factor in our society than ever before; but I
18 certainly wouldn't go out and mandate that yet. Yet,
19 I think if it's a matter of making it available, it
20 should be made available.

21 Do you have any comments to that end or why--
22 wherein do you see the failure of that? You seem to
23 place it with the legislature, and I don't share that
24 concern, if I read you right.

25 MR. ZENDRON: If I understand your question

1 correctly, in other words, you're telling me that it's
2 up to the individual to have his car inspected and
3 kept--maintained properly. Is that what you're talking
4 about?

5 MR. DAVIES: Essentially that's been my concern.

6 MR. ZENDRON: O.K. Now as I mentioned in my
7 letter, being on both sides of the fence now for the
8 last two weeks of inspection, you talk about the
9 controllers having stress? They'd come in there in
10 droves. "My car needs inspected. I've got to get
11 to work. Put a sticker on it, and I'll bring it back
12 later," and things like that that you really have to
13 contend with. It's just a situation that I would say
14 that no--the cars would not be safe, not really. You
15 can see that in Ohio.

16 MR. DAVIES: But don't we fence around with
17 that with practically every government rule and
18 regulation? Don't we start to build in a reaction
19 like that every time that I see--no matter what area
20 we legislate in, we always are asking the people to
21 more or less build up an aversion to it and a reaction
22 to it, and I see that with--I think I realize that
23 probably more myself now and again, somebody disqualified
24 me this morning because I am not normal they said in
25 the fact that I drive thirty-three thousand miles a

1 year and I take that car in quite frequently in between,
2 and I can only say good things about the people I take
3 it to, although I did research the other way already,
4 and I just don't think, you know, that government can
5 legislate that kind of factor; and I believe we start
6 building those aversions, that's my honest opinion.

7 MR. ZENDRON: Well, you know, I go back to when
8 the inspection period started back in twenty-nine or
9 whatever it was. Our forefathers must have realized
10 that this situation was necessary, you know. It's the
11 same thing I mentioned to another person that O.K.,
12 you got these fellows that's flying, they've got two
13 parachutes; they don't need two, take the one off.
14 Where's the safety there?

15 I feel it's a safety factor that we're concerned
16 with, with human nature. If they're getting away with
17 it, they go for the year. They just refuse to. It's
18 not a situation where you're mandating it, it's the
19 law you've got to get inspected; and it's strictly
20 safety. That's my only testimony as to safety.

21 MR. DAVIES: And I don't think we have even
22 half the success we've had with trying to educate
23 people on defensive driving and to other things that--
24 we've tried in the name of safety, you don't think
25 that that is an awareness of the problem?

1 MR. ZENDRON: People know about the exhausts
2 and what they can do. Right near our home up there
3 there were three youngsters in the back of a station
4 wagon dead of carbon monoxide. If that car would have
5 been inspected--I'm not saying--it may have been in
6 the interim. It was inspected. How many times would
7 that happen if it was a yearly situation, and people
8 around are aware of that. How are they going to know
9 that? They aren't mechanics and they don't know what
10 their car is doing. That was the primary point. Those
11 people aren't educated, are not mechanics; there's
12 maybe twenty percent of them that might be, but the
13 other eighty percent have no more knowledge of the
14 car than the man in the moon.

15 MR. DAVIES: You don't feel in the interim of
16 time with your experience in the business and in the
17 improvements that we've made with those systems that
18 it has been--the need has been reduced with the
19 equipment that you're selling or the replacement
20 equipment you're selling?

21 MR. ZENDRON: That would be total education
22 for them, the mechanics.

23 MR. DAVIES: I mean as far as the equipment
24 you're selling, not the people. I'm talking about
25 what you are selling in mufflers and things like that

1 and the system that you're selling. With the quality
2 of those systems, isn't there a substantial reduction
3 for need there?

4 MR. ZENDRON: Not really, no. Even though they
5 do have lifetime guarantees and so forth, it just
6 isn't--your brakes are designed for twenty thousand
7 miles. The rods--once the brakes go bad, the rotors
8 go bad, and the people aren't educated to that fact.
9 They don't know. They all bring the car after they
10 hear the noise, and that's too late. After that he
11 might as well forget it, new rotors, new drums, the
12 whole bit.

13 If they're going to do it with something like
14 this, it's going to be a total education problem for
15 all the drivers. My wife--she doesn't know the first
16 thing. My daughters drive, they don't know anything
17 about a car. They bring it to me to get it inspected,
18 and if it's once a year--tires, they don't know if
19 the tires wear out, they don't even look at them.
20 You're going to have to educate them.

21 MR. DAVIES: Listen, I'm not denying the
22 education. I never did and never will. I never will
23 as far as education because education is just as
24 intricate a part of this as any other aspect of it.
25 There is no way that you can delineate the--that need;

1 and as far as--the same thing I'm saying, the projection
2 on savings--I have never agreed that that savings in
3 many ways does not have to be passed on in some sort
4 of form of education for the driving public, and I
5 think that's been a long time in coming; but that is
6 a side issue.

7 Any other questions?

8 MR. TIGUE: Mr. Zendron, you are referring in
9 your testimony to various things which you deem as
10 unnecessary in the current inspection standards or
11 procedures. Is there anything that we are not doing
12 now that you would like to or in your opinion should
13 be included in the inspection?

14 MR. ZENDRON: That we're not doing now? I don't
15 know of anything, no, other than the cosmetic situation
16 and cracked window and so forth, that's not necessary.

17 MR. TIGUE: I understand that. You're saying
18 in your testimony that's not necessary. My question
19 is: Is there anything that we're not doing that we
20 should be doing in your opinion?

21 MR. ZENDRON: In way of inspection, no; I think
22 it's a very fair inspection.

23 MR. TIGUE: Another question I have is you
24 alluded to the fact that people sort of look with
25 disdain upon the--really on the inspector himself

1 rather than on the system. There's no complaints on
2 the system. Do you have any ideas or any thoughts on
3 how we can in fact insure the inspections are done
4 properly, because we can't, as Mr. Davies has said,
5 we can't legislate morality. We can't--if you're a
6 certified mechanic, you know, it's the burden which
7 is upon you that when I bring my car in, that you do
8 what you're supposed to do.

9 Now we all know we don't live in a vacuum. We
10 all know that there are people who for reasons of
11 money or time or whatever excuse come up with like
12 you said, will just slap an inspection sticker on it.
13 Do you have any thoughts on how we can be able to
14 improve the system of watching the mechanics, because
15 really, as Captain Rickert testified, the state police
16 check the record keeping procedures. The mechanic
17 himself is responsible once he's certified.

18 MR. ZENDRON: If there is a problem, and I have
19 seen it happen in the past, they go right up to the
20 state police barracks and report the problem. If they
21 feel they've had a faulty inspection, the state police
22 in charge of that particular station goes down and
23 checks on it; that's happened.

24 MR. TIGUE: I understand that's current. I
25 know that's the current system.

1 MR. ZENDRON: I can't answer that, no.

2 MR. TIGUE: I thought maybe just a personal
3 opinion of yours --

4 MR. ZENDRON: Not really, because all that
5 will do is create a can of worms, really because they'll
6 find situations that really isn't necessary. I've
7 run across problems where they thought they got a
8 faulty inspection, and it was proven otherwise. If
9 they do have a legitimate beef, they think they got
10 ripped off, the place to go is the state police
11 barracks, and they will follow it up. I think that's
12 as good a program as you want. I don't know you can
13 add anything more on it.

14 The first question you did ask--one thing I
15 always thought when I was a mechanic and service
16 manager, when a guy came in with a brand new car, I
17 didn't feel he had to pay the same amount as the man
18 who has three hundred dollars worth of repairs, but
19 that's one thing.

20 MR. TIGUE: Isn't that up to you to charge him?

21 MR. ZENDRON: It's an inspection fee, correct
22 me, but I'm saying that it's part of the situation;
23 but other than that, I think it's a very fair inspection.
24 Whatever they're being charged for the safety factor,
25 I just can't--I can't see anything wrong with it, really.

1 MR. TIGUE: The reason I'm asking you questions
2 and we're having testimony this morning was that, you
3 know, the price is going to increase. What I am
4 concerned with is not only increasing the price to
5 the consumer but the fact that if this does occur,
6 what Mr. Messner alluded to, that if this occurs where
7 inspection stations double their rate let's say or
8 increase--well, let's say substantilly increase the
9 cost for once a year inspections and the reaction that
10 Mr. Punt had was we will legislate, I am afraid of
11 that and maybe some people want it. If the costs go
12 up that way and the legislator gets involved in it,
13 it's going to end up that inspection stations are
14 going to refuse to be inspection stations, we're still
15 going to maintain a once a year inspection, and it's
16 possible that the state is going to end up with some
17 kind of system, and this is a concern of mine, and
18 that's why I was curious as to some thoughts you may
19 have.

20 MR. ZENDRON: I hope it doesn't turn out to
21 be that way.

22 MR. TIGUE: I hope so too, but right now we
23 don't know.

24 MR. ZENDRON: I just can't understand why the
25 change, that was my question also. I can't figure it

1 out. I don't see any safety--I mean any savings to
2 the customer. I can't understand where they got those
3 figures at, but again, that's the situation.

4 MR. TIGUE: The figures are simple. Their
5 figures are based on so much per inspection; you've
6 got twice a year, and if you go to once a year that's
7 half. That's saving \$61 million, and it's that
8 simple statistically. We can argue all day on whether
9 it's good, bad, or indifferent. It's at the point
10 now where I think it's going to be a judgment on the
11 representatives when this comes up to a vote.

12 There are concerns about, you know, why inspect
13 the--this was brought up in Harrisburg, why inspect
14 the school bus that only goes five thousand miles three
15 times a year? Are people overly concerned with school
16 children and not concerned with the driving public,
17 or is it unnecessary? I don't know the answers, that's
18 why we have people like you testifying. That's all,
19 thank you.

20 MR. ZENDRON: Could I add something to that?

21 MR. DAVIES: Yes, sir, just as soon as we--
22 with the time restraints, when I get the questions,
23 I'll be glad to come back to you; just one minute.

24 MR. STEIGHNER: Mr. Zendron, you mentioned
25 about how the public views not necessarily your

1 operation, but the operation of inspection stations
2 in general with a jaundiced eye. I think it was
3 Representative Wilson at our hearing in Harrisburg
4 to take heart, you are still viewed with a high degree
5 of confidence in the state legislature.

6 You have mentioned on page four, I believe, of
7 your testimony and other speakers have alluded to it,
8 about a--I believe it one hundred percent--about the
9 degree of activity an inspection station has in the
10 last week or so. I have no idea or maybe one of our
11 speakers later on this afternoon might know what
12 percent of inspections would that represent, how many
13 people wait until the last week?

14 MR. ZENDRON: Percentagewise, I would say
15 probably like twenty-five percent, maybe thirty percent;
16 I'm guesstimating that. With what I've seen and it
17 varies, in other words, with my business and so forth,
18 I can see it escalating quite a bit in the last two
19 weeks of the inspection period, and then also the week
20 afterwards there's still an escalation, and then it
21 gradually levels out maybe the second week. The last
22 two weeks of inspection and the next two weeks you can
23 see it, a gradual elevation of business. It's just
24 unreal how it goes, and then it drops back down to
25 normal.

1 MR. STEIGHNER: I would think from area to area
2 also there would be a high possibility that it would
3 vary too, wouldn't that be so?

4 MR. ZENDRON: Very probably, yes, depending
5 again on population. You just have a situation where
6 they--you talk about going to the doctor, you know,
7 and it's the same situation as cars. They put it off
8 till the last minute and hopefully they can get through
9 without too many problems at the inspection, and the
10 other guys are busy and hope they don't get caught
11 with too many things wrong with their car; but I think
12 they're more stringent at that point in time than at
13 almost any other time in the inspection period. They
14 know what they're getting in, they're getting the cars
15 that are in need of repair.

16 MR. STEIGHNER: That's all I have.

17 (Off Record Discussion)

18 MR. DAVIES: Now, sir, you had a comment
19 relative to the price?

20 MR. MESSNER: On the price of inspection, now
21 I don't know what--whether you are familiar with the
22 law of state inspections or not, but we're required
23 to pull two wheels or we're responsible for four.
24 On a once a year inspection I'm going to make sure
25 that all four wheels are pulled if I'm responsible

1 for them. But at six month intervals you can more or
2 less check two and be pretty sure that the other two
3 are good; so it's going to be more time consuming to
4 inspect your car once a year than it is twice a year.

5 MR. DAVIES: All right.

6 The gentleman back there, and I can only
7 recognize those who have testified or if you're on
8 the schedule to testify or you want to testify, we'll
9 be glad to take it at the end. Otherwise, I'm only
10 letting those people respond when their name is
11 mentioned in either a question or in the exchange;
12 so that I will give you ample time to testify to
13 whatever it is at the end of the program. I'm not
14 trying to shut anybody off or anything like that, as
15 the other gentleman intimated, and I was given the
16 fact that his association was invited as well; so that
17 this is not a gag rule or anything like that. When
18 somebody's name is mentioned or their testimony is
19 questioned, and they do have a response, I think it
20 is necessary that if we can keep within the framework
21 to allow that to occur, and anyone that wants to add
22 anything or is going to testify at the end, I'll stay
23 until as long as it takes to get that.

24 Any other questions? All right, thank you
25 very much, sir.

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MR. ZENDRON: Thank you.

MR. DAVIES: We appreciate it.

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1 MR. DAVIES: Mr. Robert W. Samuelson, Treasurer
2 of the Automotive Supply House in Altoona, Pennsylvania.

3 MR. SAMUELSON: Good afternoon, and thank you
4 very much for the opportunity to speak before this
5 committee concerning the annual inspection legislation,
6 HB 562.

7 As I read the analysis of the bill, it was
8 apparent that a great deal of thought has gone into
9 the proposed legislation. We would like to offer
10 some--several suggestions concerning the Bill,
11 reflecting concerns of something over nineteen thousand
12 service stations and repair shops and over sixteen
13 hundred fifty jobbing stores in the Commonwealth.
14 Although we are concerned as small businessmen in
15 the Commonwealth, our remarks are primarily oriented
16 toward the individual vehicle owner and drive and
17 the effects of this legislation on him.

18 We do consider it a very positive move to provide
19 for the inspection of vehicles to be spread out over
20 the available time span rather than to continue the
21 costly and inconvenient deadlines that are now mandated.
22 There is a great deal of strain on the state inspection
23 and repair system when half of the vehicles to be
24 inspected have the same inspection deadline. By
25 spreading the deadline over the available time period

1 and still allowing up to ninety days for the inspection
2 itself, you will save much wear and tear on the system
3 and on the owners of vehicles.

4 As we focus on the concerns we all have for
5 the safety of people and property, several items come
6 to mind. Number one, it seems critically apparent
7 at least to me that if a vehicle is in need of a
8 repair as a result of normal wear and tear or as a
9 result of an accident in month number four or five of
10 an inspection period, that vehicle will be driven only
11 one or two months with semiannual inspections. But,
12 with annual inspections that same vehicle will be
13 driven seven or eight months, if there is no other
14 influencing factor. Whether we are referring to a
15 missing headlight or worn brakes, I would have a deep
16 concern both for the driver of the unsafe vehicle and
17 for the people and property near the unsafe vehicle.

18 In the February 24, 1981 analysis by Mr. Landis
19 there is a reference to a report issued by the American
20 Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research which
21 stated there is no correlation between safety and
22 those states that have no inspections, once a year
23 inspections, and the several states that have semiannual
24 inspections. If that report is accepted, then we
25 should all be quite willing to eliminate safety

1 inspections entirely. However, with my limited
2 education, I really understand that the word
3 correlation is a very precise technical term and
4 statistical term. Normally the use of statistical
5 terms and studies would be accompanied by the study
6 reference to allow the verification of its validity.
7 It is tempting in this case to conclude that the
8 present use of the word correlation is a layman's
9 attempt to give credibility to some very wishful
10 thinking.

11 Attached to the back of this report that has
12 been presented to you is a very simple graph of
13 highway fatality rates for three categories of states:
14 those with no safety inspection, those with annual
15 inspections, and those with semiannual inspections.
16 Not surprisingly to me, the states with no inspections
17 show a higher fatality rate per hundred million miles
18 travelled compared with states which have a safety
19 inspection program. In this study, which is for 1980,
20 the states with no inspection had a twenty-four percent
21 higher death rate than states with semiannual safety
22 inspections.

23 In looking further down the chart, we note that
24 the states with annual inspections have a six percent
25 higher death rate than the states with semiannual

1 inspections. Please note I make no claim for
2 correlations or scientific or statistical validity.
3 It is just a confirmation of what seems to be common
4 sense.

5 It is very easy for me to understand that there
6 would be occasions when a vehicle with a safety defect
7 would go undetected longer in a state with annual
8 safety inspections compared with the same vehicle in
9 a state with semiannual inspections, but I am at a
10 complete loss to understand any circumstance in which
11 a vehicle with a safety defect would be corrected
12 earlier in a state with fewer safety inspections.

13 Point three, it is significant to me that school
14 buses are to be required to have safety inspections
15 twice each year, and I quote the analysis dated
16 February 9, 1981, because of the large number of people
17 that mass transit vehicles and school buses carry,
18 these vehicles will still be inspected twice a year.

19 If we are to believe that we are just as safe
20 with an annual inspection, why are the school buses
21 to have a semiannual inspection? On the other hand,
22 if we recognize the greater safety of semiannual
23 inspections, are we really to believe that there are
24 more passengers riding school buses than there are
25 riding in passenger cars that you and I see on the

1 road daily? It is very tempting to view the great
2 interest in annual inspections as an expedient reaction
3 to the lobbying efforts of groups who are pressing for
4 less hassle in their driving; but what price should we
5 be willing to pay for the six percent more deaths that
6 would apparently be expected with a reduction of safety
7 inspections to once a year?

8 Point number four, the bill analysis prepared
9 by Mr. Landis on February 24th of this year raises the
10 rhetorical question: Is the Commonwealth's responsibility
11 to protect the motorist from himself? That statement
12 really seems to apply much more appropriately to a
13 related but not directly related question concerning
14 mandating seat belts rather than safety inspections.
15 With seat belts, the motorist himself is the only one
16 who's being endangered. However, join with me in
17 recognizing that the safety of the vehicles on the
18 road is very much a concern of the innocent passerby
19 who is subject to being hit perhaps head on by an
20 unsafe vehicle.

21 Point five, the Landis analysis states that
22 the department and the governor indicate that the
23 bill would save the motorists of the Commonwealth
24 approximately \$63 million annually in out of pocket
25 expenses. Since the state fee will be increased from

1 one dollar to two dollars, we note that the governor
2 cannot be referring to the revenue change at the
3 state level. Would that \$63 million be savings
4 resulting from safety defects that will not be
5 corrected? And which car on the road that's heading
6 toward you would be the one with the problem?

7 It seems unlikely to me that the savings will
8 be realized from lower charges from garages and
9 service stations, since they must have a proper return
10 for their time and investment in their facility. This
11 seems very similar to the electric utility which has
12 to raise its rates when usage is reduced. The costs
13 still have to be recovered.

14 A minor point that I would like to refer to
15 relates to re-inspections. The wording of the analysis
16 in section 4703 seems to indicate that a vehicle that
17 has been out of the Commonwealth for thirty days has
18 ten days within which to get inspected. It seems this
19 section must surely refer to a vehicle that has no
20 current inspection and registration rather than applying
21 to all vehicles that have been out of the Commonwealth
22 for thirty days.

23 A final point, the Landis analysis indicates
24 that with the advent of new materials in automobiles,
25 the need for semiannual inspections has been questioned.

1 I really and truly hope that we are building them
2 better for many reasons. However, we note that we
3 have had new materials and automobiles each year for
4 the full time that automobiles have been made and
5 there are still many repairs required on the vehicles
6 year after year. To reinforce this point, even if our
7 automobiles were to be built perfectly this year, we
8 still have quite a few older and less perfect
9 automobiles riding around waiting to unleash their
10 defective fury on some unsuspecting soul.

11 Gentlemen, thank you very much for the opportunity
12 to present these thoughts to you today. This is very
13 serious business that you are considering, and we
14 respect and appreciate the time that is being devoted
15 by all.

16 MR. DAVIES: Thank you. The comment on the
17 school bus thing is not that I disagree with that
18 analysis, but that is not my own concern. My own
19 concern on that is that--and to a limited degree the
20 experience with the system itself is the fact that
21 you may have somebody take a morning run, you then
22 have another fellow take a shuttle run for a field
23 trip, you then have the other driver go back at noon
24 and after school to take it for the run, or then
25 somebody else may take it on an athletic trip. That

1 kind of use prompts me in the drafting of the bill
2 to have that concern about school vehicles.

3 I expressed that same concern in a hearing in
4 Harrisburg that any time that you have--you do not
5 have a driver who is completely familiar with the
6 vehicle or using that same vehicle, I think you add
7 another factor that gives me serious concern; and I
8 think if you had been privy to the testimony by the
9 private sector of Pennsky, a manager for Pennsky
10 Leasing, I think essentially he was telling us the
11 same thing about the short term lease vehicle as well,
12 and that's why I expressed that concern this morning.
13 So, it isn't that I disagree with any one of the
14 analyses, but my concerns are not the same as were
15 expressed in that analysis. My concern is different
16 drivers driving the same vehicle, even though it's
17 over a short distance, they do not have the same feel
18 or understanding of what's working and what isn't
19 working in that vehicle; and I was always taught that
20 is a responsibility of the driver and that's the
21 thing I've been pushing since year one although I know,
22 you know, I'm not getting through--at least they keep
23 telling me that.

24 Gentlemen, questions?

25 MR. TIGUE: I just have a question I would like

1 to ask John, and it just occurred to me in discussing
2 this. What happens-- you need to receive the
3 registration, you need to have your car inspected.

4 MR. PACHUTA: Uh-huh.

5 MR. TIGUE: What happens if the car is sold
6 and I have to get a new registration?

7 MR. PACHUTA: As a new owner?

8 MR. TIGUE: Right.

9 MR. PACHUTA: We're trying to work that out.
10 I think the bill states the vehicle must be re-inspected.
11 We would consider establishing some period during
12 which if the vehicle was inspected within so many--
13 sixty or ninety days or whatever prior to your renewal
14 of registration, that the new certificate could be
15 issued based on that previous inspection.

16 MR. DAVIES: What does Maryland do?

17 MR. PACHUTA: There is no inspection other
18 than at the time of transfer of ownership, as I
19 understand it.

20 MR. MURPHY: Mr. Beeman, in light of the
21 testimony Mr. Samuelson gave concerning the death
22 rates, I would be curious as to how you compare that.

23 MR. BEEMAN: That's a stop in time, a single
24 year. If you remember, the end of the chart that I
25 showed, we could show the opposite situation occurring.

1 There is natural variability in accident rates in
2 any given state from year to year or from period to
3 period, whichever it might be, and we have to determine
4 whether that variability, whether the differences
5 shown here are larger than that natural variability
6 in accidents. I suspect that the differences between
7 semiannual and annual here are probably not significantly
8 different than you normally would find just on a year
9 to year measurement.

10 MR. MURPHY: You're suggesting in 1981, for
11 example, the semiannual might be 3.3 and annual might
12 be 3.8?

13 MR. BEEMAN: You're exactly correct.

14 MR. MURPHY: You mean there's that kind of
15 variation?

16 MR. BEEMAN: Yes.

17 MR. MURPHY: Could you chart out up to 1978
18 when you said you had the information; could you
19 provide those numbers?

20 MR. BEEMAN: I will do so.

21 MR. MURPHY: Is it in depth for one hundred
22 million miles travelled?

23 MR. BEEMAN: It is fatal accidents per one
24 hundred million vehicle miles.

25 MR. MURPHY: Is that your --

1 MR. BEEMAN: Yes, it is.

2 MR. MURPHY: Your deaths are fatal accidents?

3 MR. BEEMAN: Yes.

4 MR. MURPHY: Could you provide that information
5 to us?

6 MR. BEEMAN: On accidents or deaths?

7 MR. MURPHY: Deaths.

8 MR. BEEMAN: Sure.

9 MR. MURPHY: Thank you.

10 MR. BEEMAN: Sure.

11 MR. SAMUELSON: May I respond partially to that?

12 MR. DAVIES: Yes, I would like to have that.

13 MR. SAMUELSON: If I may, I'm a great believer
14 in statistics. I'm a numbers man, and that's part of
15 my life. I've been called worse. The use of statistics
16 I think is a very vital part of our current everyday
17 life, including what you folks are considering now,
18 and to me statistical significance is a very valid
19 and important concept. But yet, in this study that
20 we're talking about and referring to the only single
21 significant piece of data says that there is a
22 significant reduction of accidents including injuries
23 in states with no vehicle inspection.

24 Now as much as I am a numbers man, as much as
25 I appreciate statistics, I have to say let's make sure

1 we apply common sense, and it doesn't make any sense
2 in any way, shape, or form to say it's been
3 statistically significant that a state with no vehicle
4 inspection can be significantly more safe or have
5 less accidents than states with semiannual or annual
6 inspections.

7 I tend to say let's apply some common sense
8 to what we're looking at, and I say reject those
9 things that absolutely cannot make sense.

10 MR. MURPHY: I want to respond. What you're
11 saying does make sense, if in fact accidents caused
12 by vehicle failure or component failure is the major
13 cause. I think if that--would you agree that automobile
14 accidents taken generally, that a very small minority
15 or a fraction of those accidents are caused by vehicle
16 failure?

17 MR. SAMUELSON: Most assuredly yes.

18 MR. MURPHY: Most of them are human error one
19 way or the other.

20 MR. SAMUELSON: Yes.

21 MR. MURPHY: I'm curious. You deal with
22 automotive parts in your profession, and I am curious
23 if you would in a subjective kind of way agree that
24 technology, the technology of automobile manufacturing
25 and the kind of parts you're selling compared to what

1 you were selling ten years ago have improved safety.
2 We hear the horror stories of a tire being called
3 back, but overall --

4 MR. SAMUELSON: I can't answer that as to
5 technical aspects. I deal with numbers. I do have
6 an impression of what you're saying is right. Really,
7 we have improved in technology, the companies in the
8 United States have given us premium new materials,
9 and yes, I do believe that subjectively we do have
10 better materials that we're dealing with now.

11 MR. MURPHY: O.K., thank you.

12 MR. STEIGHNER: Mr. Samuelson, on the third
13 point you brought up, and I think Representative Tigue
14 touched on it, it's a very serious situation and
15 raises some serious questions why we are excluding
16 school buses, and the Chairman has his concern with
17 different bus drivers going to different places; but
18 I think he raised a very valid point inasmuch as the
19 family car could be used as an example where you have
20 two, three, four drivers. Somebody drives it eighty
21 percent, some drive it five percent, someone drives it
22 conservatively, and someone who drives all over the
23 country.

24 MR. SAMUELSON: I was attempting to respond
25 earlier, but I didn't. My wife has her car and honest

1 to goodness she doesn't know anything about it. If
2 I didn't make sure that it got down to the service
3 station, if I didn't drive it once a month to see
4 what was happening, it wouldn't have any maintenance
5 at all; so there are people in this world who do not
6 become aware that you do have to take care of a piece
7 of mechanical equipment.

8 MR. DAVIES: I must live on the wrong side of
9 the tracks or something. My wife will tell me if
10 that car is pulling to the left or pulling to the
11 right, and she is no mechanic, and that thing goes
12 to the garage. Her car doesn't show any kind of
13 mileage like thirty-three thousand, it's lucky if it
14 hits seven, but she'll tell me and that thing better
15 be taken care of or my name is mud.

16 MS. SKOLNICK: I wanted to indicate in the
17 packet of materials that I gave you there are comments
18 on the American Enterprise Institute report entitled
19 Vehicle Inspection Safety Systems. That's the Nitzer
20 response to that report, and you might want to look
21 at it because they refute the report; and I don't know
22 whether you are aware of that.

23 MR. DAVIES: O.K. Paul assures me that what
24 we have from that report will be duplicated and shared
25 by the committee.

1 MS. SKOLNICK: O.K.

2 MR. DAVIES: If you want to be on that mailing
3 address, I suggest that you do give your name to Paul
4 so that we are sharing some of the same information.
5 I think this is that important.

6 Now, any other concerns?

7 MR. BEEMAN: Could I just make one response,
8 sir?

9 MR. DAVIES: Yes.

10 MR. BEEMAN: We did find one significant
11 difference, but we measured accidents in about six
12 different ways and over a three year period of time.
13 In one year and in one measure we did find that non-PMVI
14 states did have a significant lower accident rate
15 per population, not per vehicle mileage or per
16 registration, per population in one of the years.
17 We did not consider that consistent enough. It didn't
18 pop up in the other years, and it didn't pop up in the
19 other measurements; so we concluded that there was no
20 difference.

21 MR. DAVIES: That was also in one of the
22 university reports, the same thing, it had the same
23 sort of thing so that it does shake you up a bit if
24 you are a statistic man, how are you going to buy it?
25 I have to share your concern because I have the same--

1 I shook my head three or four times when I went over
2 that, so that I share your concern with, you know,
3 how do you evaluate it; and I can't--it's hard for me
4 to accept it as well.

5 Any others? O.K. Thank you very much.

6 MR. SAMUELSON: Thank you.

7 MR. TIGUE: I just wanted to ask Mr. Beeman
8 something. This morning you said that we needed once
9 a year inspections to partake of federal dollars, is
10 that correct?

11 MR. BEEMAN: Yes, that is current.

12 MR. TIGUE: How many states don't have
13 inspections?

14 MR. BEEMAN: Twenty-three.

15 MR. TIGUE: How many do not have inspections?

16 MR. BEEMAN: Twenty-three do and twenty don't.

17 MR. TIGUE: O.K. The number is insignificant.
18 What I'm trying to straighten in my mind is do you
19 mean there's approximately twenty states who don't
20 take federal money for highways?

21 MR. BEEMAN: No. The federal government hasn't
22 placed a sanction on them and withheld those monies.
23 However, it's a regulation that those monies could be
24 withheld.

25 MR. TIGUE: O.K., that clarifies it.

1 MR. DAVIES: Excuse me, but I better add to it,
2 As I understand, my understanding is, and I wish
3 someone would have any additional information of it
4 rather than the grandfather, but that was an understanding
5 of those that had been in existence, but that the
6 possibility I guess would exist because the law reads
7 the other way. They were not grandfathered in by
8 legislation, but no one ever regulated against them.
9 That's my understanding of it.

10 MR. TIGUE: So in essence, we have another
11 federal regulation that's not being enforced.

12 MR. DAVIES: That's right.

13 For the record, this is again in answer to
14 the challenge that we had this morning. The Post
15 Gazette did carry the notice twenty-four hours before,
16 and the Erie Morning News also carried the announcement
17 of the meeting, so that the chief clerk is in keeping
18 with the Sunshine law of the Commonwealth; so I thought
19 I'd add that because we did get that challenge this
20 morning.

21 - - -

1 MR. DAVIES: Mr. Arthur Miller, President of
2 Chapter Four of the Automotive Service Councils of
3 Pennsylvania.

4 MR. WEISBURG: Mr. Chairman, before Mr. Miller
5 testifies, I'm Joel Weisburg, and I am counsel to the
6 Automotive Service Councils of Pennsylvania. I wanted
7 to indicate to the committee in addition to Mr. Miller's
8 presence I am here and Mr. John Hamilton, who is the
9 secretary statewide to the Council, are present and
10 that the three of us will be available for questions
11 after the prepared statement.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. DAVIES: Thank you.

14 MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I don't think that
15 you're abnormal, but I don't think you're the average
16 motorist, not the average motorist that most of us
17 garage people see. I do have sympathies with the
18 gentleman who was loud and volatile this morning,
19 although I wouldn't use his methods, nor did I think
20 he came correctly.

21 I'm convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that
22 our present semiannual vehicle inspection program is
23 superior to any annual program one may propose.
24 Twenty-two years of being right there under the
25 vehicle day by day have shown me why, and my reasons

1 are following:

2 First, I offer the results of monitoring my
3 own inspection records for 1977 and the first two
4 quarters of 1978. Vehicles needing repairs of some
5 kind which related to safety averaged 70.4 percent
6 for the period. Vehicles needing repairs to the
7 brake system averaged 20.9 percent. Repairs needed
8 to the exhaust system averaged 19.6 percent. Steering
9 and suspension repairs needed, 17.4 percent. A more
10 recent survey of our records have given similar
11 statistics which supports our convictions, and I can
12 document that for anyone who is interested.

13 If one can believe the manufacturer's ads,
14 modern vehicles will practically run forever without
15 problems and very little maintenance. Now, the owner's
16 handbook that comes with the vehicle is more realistic.
17 It recommends long service intervals for ideal
18 operating conditions and shorter intervals for other
19 operating conditions. Very few vehicles operate under
20 ideal conditions in Pennsylvania. If there are people
21 who want to know, I can describe what those are.

22 Nevertheless, most people opt for the longer
23 service interval. Until perhaps the 1960's, the
24 average vehicle was brought in for lubrication and an
25 oil change every one thousand to two thousand miles.

1 We raised it on the hoist and that gave us an opportunity
2 to detect cracked brake hoses, steel brake lines
3 badly rusted or rubbed almost through by a misaligned
4 tail pipe, or one with a broken hanger, bald tires,
5 loose steering and suspension parts, leaking axle
6 fuels, broken spring leaves, and frame and underbody
7 defects. This gave four to six more opportunities
8 to prevent trouble than the present service intervals,
9 and those years would coincide with the large chart
10 you looked at this morning, by the way, with the
11 accident rates.

12 Most experienced service people discount the
13 validity of the published results of some surveys
14 which show accidents are seldom caused by the
15 mechanical condition of the vehicle. A couple of
16 reasons: a vehicle in good condition can be very
17 forgiving of driver error. Now you've all seen black
18 tire marks on the pavement, and you've also seen
19 black marks, space, black mark, space, black mark,
20 space, on down the road. I don't know if you know
21 what caused that or not. Someone drove too fast,
22 couldn't stop properly, and those dots and dashes
23 were caused by faulty shock absorbers. Shock absorbers
24 are not on the automobile to make it ride smoothly
25 and cushion your ride so much as they are to keep the

1 tires on the road. The primary function and the
2 primary engineering concerns on a shock absorber is
3 to keep the tire in contact with the pavement.

4 Dropping off the pavement, due to poorly
5 maintained berm, and the swerving across the center
6 line into an oncoming vehicle or overturning in the
7 medial strip are common accidents. Many could have
8 been prevented with better tires, shock absorbers,
9 or other properly functioning steering and suspension
10 parts. These malfunctioning parts will go undetected
11 up to twice as long with just one safety inspection
12 per year.

13 Some vehicle safety related parts fail in
14 proportion to time as well as mileage. In our area
15 floor pans, frames, brake lines, fuel lines, and fuel
16 tanks and exhaust systems rust more rapidly than they
17 do in most areas of the United States. When one
18 reaches an advanced stage, it needs to be checked at
19 least twice a year to avoid fires and accidents. You
20 take a sharp object like a chip hammer that welders
21 use or a steel bar, and you go along that car, punch
22 the same, especially when there are several cars
23 subject to the frames rusting through in recent years,
24 and everything is fine. Six months later you start
25 jabbing, and it goes right through. Sometimes in six

1 months, sometimes it eight or nine. With our present
2 system an automobile can go nine months less one day,
3 you understand what I'm saying, and still be legal in
4 Pennsylvania now with the present system that we have.

5 Tires get cut and broken any time and may fail
6 suddenly, and this is especially true with our pothole
7 situation. We see more bent wheels and broken tires
8 since the deterioration of our highways. One year is
9 too long an interval for checking such components.
10 Now many people believe months of tread left on the
11 tires, because if you look down, it looks good. All
12 you see is the edge, especially with winter treads,
13 and then you get down far enough, and most people
14 don't. On a lift you can see easily the tire is worn
15 out or soon will be.

16 The resurrection of older vehicles from
17 salvage and recycling yards since gasoline and car
18 prices have gone sky high is another reason for
19 maintaining our present twice a year safety inspection.
20 That's a common practice the yards tell me. I have
21 no personal experience with that, except in a couple
22 instances.

23 Pennsylvania traffic conditions demand more of
24 a vehicle than many areas. You've all been in an
25 airplane over the central states. The roads go like

1 that and that, that's it. Where do you find one in
2 Pennsylvania? There's more stopping, more starting
3 and accelerating into fast traffic lanes, and this
4 accelerates wear on brakes, tires, steering, suspension,
5 and turn signal bulbs, switches and flashers.

6 Exhaust components are weakened more from
7 internal corrosion than external. This is especially
8 true of mufflers and low spots in tail pipes. This
9 goes undetected by the motorist until a leak develops
10 wide enough for the motorist to hear or breaks off
11 and drags on the pavement or falls off altogether.
12 You've all seen that off the road or on the road.
13 Twice a year inspections is none too often to examine
14 the average exhaust system to avoid carbon monoxide
15 poisoning of the occupants.

16 More miles are being driven than ever before.
17 I know we're using less gasoline and we hear lots of
18 figures, but the most conservative thing that I've
19 seen, and I wish I would have brought it, and I didn't
20 bring it, I don't know what study it was, but it was
21 federal figures, a three percent in highway miles
22 travelled in 1979, I believe. I'd have to get that
23 before I could prove it. Items such as brakes, tires,
24 and steering wear are proportionate to miles travelled
25 under average conditions, all things being equal;

1 miles is what covers.

2 Just a few years ago Carnegie-Mellon students
3 conducted a survey of the Pennsylvania inspection
4 program. Very prominent in their findings, which
5 received great publicity, at least in this area, was
6 the conclusion that new vehicles needed no safety
7 inspection for the first three years of use. Now the
8 very day this hit the news media I had in my shop a
9 Ford station wagon less than two years old. In fact,
10 I think it was thirteen months. It needed not only
11 new front disc brake pads, but also a brake rotor.
12 The old brake rotor was worn too far to resurface.

13 Now I knew the vehicle belonged to a mechanical
14 engineer who was very highly regarded in his field
15 and a professor at Carnegie-Mellon. When he picked
16 up his vehicle I said, "I bet you were the faculty
17 advisor to the students who did the study of the
18 inspection program." He said, "I was." And I'll let
19 you imagine the discussion which followed. He told
20 me that his wife was hard on brakes. I guess he
21 thought that nobody else's wife was hard on brakes.

22 New cars have misaligned exhausts sometimes,
23 sometimes brake hoses are installed so as to rub on
24 adjacent surfaces, and these items I mentioned in this
25 area are things which have been in our shop, I'm not

1 talking about anything else except what happened in
2 our shop, often improperly adjusted headlamps,
3 sometimes body sheet metal not joined properly
4 underneath, such as a pinched weld down at the rocker
5 panel, sometimes fasteners are missing. I think just
6 as important as all of this is even those people who
7 intend to take the best care of their vehicles often
8 do not, not because they don't want to, but they're
9 so busy, you put it off; and other people don't have
10 the money and say, "As soon as I get this paid for,
11 O.K."

12 Twice per year safety inspection is the
13 incentive and motivation most people need to keep
14 their vehicles in safe, economical operating condition.
15 Most motorists will save money through the preventive
16 maintenance encouraged by mandatory inspection twice
17 each year.

18 One of the things that was just touched on here
19 once today is brake fluid. You have a large--depending
20 on the size of the car, anywhere from that large to
21 that large of a piston in the brake caliper. It's
22 about that high on the average. As your brake shoes
23 wear, the piston moves out in the caliper. Well,
24 something has to fill up the void. It's the brake
25 fluid out of the master cylinder. You have to check

1 that once in a while because it will get too low.
2 Before the brake shoes wear out, you can be out of
3 brake fluid. If we have steel against steel, we can
4 still stop if you have the proper hydraulic pressure.
5 You can have the best brake lining there is and if
6 there's no brake fluid in the master cylinder, you
7 can have trouble. We tend to overlook such a small
8 thing.

9 I repaired ninety-nine percent of all the
10 defects. I have never had one customer complain
11 about inspecting the car twice a year. I've been in
12 the business since fifty-four and had an inspection
13 station since fifty-nine. I can't remember one person
14 complaining about having their car inspected twice
15 a year.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. DAVIES: Again, I would have to say that
18 would speak for the quality of the shop and the way
19 in which you probably conduct your business. I have
20 no complaints because I'm the sponsor of the bill and
21 naturally I would get those complaints. I'm not too
22 assured that many of those complaints would have come
23 from those people that are not customers of yours,
24 but have expressed those concerns about the fact of
25 the once a year--or many of the arguments that, you

1 know, are counter to what you're saying as far as the
2 mechanics and the technology of it. They are out
3 there, but they're probably not your customers.

4 MR. MILLER: I admit that there are mistakes--
5 I mean complaints, and I admit some of our members
6 of our association get complaints because they tell
7 me that they do. One man who was supposed to come
8 with me, and I suppose it's probably the most
9 reputable shop in our area, he said, "I got to thinking.
10 This thing is kind of crazy. My customers are
11 complaining about having an inspection twice a year.
12 I'm going to make a lot more money with it once a
13 year, so I'm not going."

14 MR. DAVIES: I had just a personal experience
15 with a very reliable--what I consider a reliable firm;
16 and since I sponsored it, the man thought it was an
17 effrontery to his integrity; and I said no way is it
18 an effrontery to his integrity. I think I have a
19 legitimate consumer complaint, and we went around the
20 mulberry bush on that; and it was a matter of a lease
21 vehicle in which, you know, I didn't think that I had
22 abused it, but there may have been some other reasons
23 for the brakes going in the interim that they did.
24 So, I can speak from personal experience that even
25 though I wouldn't hesitate to take my car back to that

1 guy because I have had good service in the past, but
2 I think we would get into areas of whether it's almost
3 a judgment call by the person with the lack of
4 experience as to the person who has a great deal of
5 experience or has the mechanical wherewithal that
6 you have; so I have had differences with even some
7 people that I have dealt with over the years. You
8 know, problems with vehicles inspection and, you
9 know, I don't hold any personal differences with them;
10 but I still think that, you know, it can even occur
11 in I guess the best of business ethics and personnel.

12 I have had other complaints, you know, relative
13 to the matter of the once a year as opposed to the
14 twice a year. The matter of the percentage, that's
15 70.4 percent. The question I get on there is those
16 include all the bulbs and so forth.

17 MR. MILLER: Any type, bulbs, brake fluid,
18 wiper blades, the floorboard.

19 MR. DAVIES: Right, right; so in that 70.4
20 percent, the other figures speak for themselves, but
21 those are exact figures as to what in the braking
22 system--that includes the replacement of fluid as
23 well?

24 MR. MILLER: No, but I wish it did. That's
25 something that we neglected. That's something you

1 don't have in the association figures. It should
2 have been included, brake fluid, because as I say,
3 it is perhaps more important than any other part.
4 Other things will function being not in the best
5 condition; but if you don't have brake fluid, no
6 matter how good everything else is, it's not going
7 to function; and they do not include it.

8 MR. DAVIES: That's not included in that figure?

9 MR. MILLER: No, sir.

10 MR. DAVIES: All right, thank you. Questions?

11 MR. TIGUE: Mr. Miller, we've been sitting
12 here and we did it in Harrisburg, and there's
13 arguments against once a year, twice a year, should
14 it be based on mileage or time. Maybe we shouldn't
15 have any inspections. In your considered opinion,
16 what would you say would be the ideal setup for
17 periodic inspections, if at all?

18 MR. MILLER: Based on my experience, I think
19 twice a year is the best system you could get because
20 here again you'd have to check out my records of my
21 customers. Doing it twice a year for the average
22 person, you just don't have much trouble in between.
23 It gives them trouble free driving almost, almost
24 trouble free driving. If you tune up this car once
25 a year and with inspection, if you do an inspection

1 right and tune up a car properly, what we call a
2 tuneup in our association, one hundred thirty-eight
3 checks, and some are very quick, some visual, some
4 you take the pressure with a gauge, some instrument,
5 but very quick, many of them, one hundred thirty-eight
6 checks on your car twice a year and ten dollars for
7 an inspection is really cheap to know that your car
8 is in safe operating condition at least at that
9 moment.

10 Now, anything can happen, as we indicate. You
11 know, you can run over a pothole and bend a wheel,
12 blow out a tire, and even steel belts or radials blow
13 out. The belts break, or a brake hose that looks
14 good--people don't think about brake hoses much.
15 Brake hoses are made like tires, rubber inside to
16 maintain the liquid, a cord braid like a tire for
17 strength, and outside rubber to keep the weather out.
18 The outside rubber drags and nobody ever knows unless
19 you look.

20 I think twice a year is very good, it's
21 excellent, and that's based strictly on my own
22 experience with my cars, and with customers' cars.
23 I think it's important enough that--there's no way
24 I can prove this. Eighteen days my car set in the
25 corner of my shop without me driving it until I got

1 it inspected because I hadn't looked at it for six
2 months. I wasn't driving my car, I hadn't looked at
3 it.

4 You see the figures the gentleman had here on
5 the chart. When you used to look at it, that one
6 thousand or two thousand miles under that chart,
7 those years you had less accidents. When you quit
8 doing that, you had more accidents. Cars aren't made
9 better in a lot of instances because of modern
10 technology because of the gasoline mileage and front
11 wheel drive and the unit body construction, they are
12 more subject to rusting out frames; the frames of a
13 unit body car is very light metal, will rust very
14 quickly, rustproofing or no rustproofing. Ask the
15 rustproofing companies about their claims.

16 Ball joints are made much better, you used to
17 change them by the dozen, but hardly ever now. Brake
18 lining, not much difference. Newer smaller cars use
19 the metallic lining because you want to keep the
20 weight down, smaller pads so they'll wear longer,
21 that's true. The scraper that makes the squeal when
22 the lining runs down, it's the one shot. What if the
23 outboard wears instead of the inboard? That's what
24 happened with the gentleman who had the squeal. It
25 was worn down, but it wasn't scraping against the

1 rotor because the other shoe wore the facets.

2 What about the replacement lining that doesn't
3 have the scraper as the original linings on the car;
4 there's no scraper on so much of the replacements.
5 Some do, some don't.

6 I think that there's a lot to be said about
7 modern technology and some of that's true; you do
8 many things better today than before, but much
9 because of circumstances isn't better. The old heavy
10 steel frame would last much longer, for instance.
11 The brake lines are made out of the same steel they
12 always were. They wear just as fast. The fuel lines
13 and tanks, they rust the same way. We have faster
14 rust because of the acid rain; it's a real life story.

15 In case anybody doubts it, it's really true.
16 You put galvanized chicken wire out in your back yard
17 and you look. You all remember as children how long
18 that lasted. Not today, and the same things happen
19 to the cars.

20 MR. MURPHY: Mr. Miller, you're convinced if
21 we go to once a year inspections, it would cost people
22 more money?

23 MR. MILLER: Not the inspection itself would
24 cost more money unless you do pull the four wheels.

25 MR. MURPHY: You would have to do that, right?

1 MR. MILLER: But that would only increase it
2 a small amount, but what would cost more money is the
3 repair bills that would be bigger. Instead of paying
4 \$5.50 to resurface the drum, if it's not a motorist
5 such as yourself who checks the car anyway, whether
6 there's any inspection or two or three, he lets it
7 go too long, and a brake rotor and a hub for the front
8 wheel of most cars is going to be sixty-five, seventy
9 dollars each instead of paying eleven and a half to
10 have it resurfaced. Those kinds of things.

11 Instead of catching that tail pipe hanger
12 that's broken and the exhaust system that is always
13 rusted--as soon as you start driving a certain amount,
14 as it progresses, they get weaker. You neglect the
15 hanger, you know, but for want of a nail, the shoe
16 was lost, then the horse. It's true about exhaust
17 systems. You don't replace the hanger because it's
18 not banging loud enough for somebody to hear or you
19 always drive with the radio wide open, and then you
20 don't come in for six thousand miles for a lube job,
21 so you're not going to catch it that way. You're
22 going to catch it when the pipe breaks off and the
23 muffler breaks off and falls on the pavement, you're
24 going to have a lot bigger bill. Two or three dollars
25 for labor, two or three dollars for a hanger, and you

1 could have saved thirty or forty.

2 Some of you have bought mufflers--all of you,
3 you know what it costs. Lifetime guarantees don't
4 mean a thing. That's a merchandising thing. Nothing
5 lasts a lifetime. You shouldn't make those kind of
6 statements, but generally speaking that's true. Very
7 few things will last. A lifetime muffler doesn't last
8 any longer than any other muffler. Certainly, it's
9 guaranteed, and you get another. I'm not saying they
10 don't back up the claim, they do. Lifetime brake shoes
11 don't last a lifetime. They wear just as fast, but
12 they do replace them.

13 MR. DAVIES: Thank you very much.

14 MR. WEISBURG: May I add something briefly as
15 part of his testimony? I want to make two brief
16 statements on some testimony we had by the state.

17 We were told first that doubling the time
18 period would not increase the standards for brakes
19 and tires and things of that sort. We were told that
20 because the standards were obviously based on miles
21 and not on time; and to some extent, that's true.
22 Very clearly, the standards are based on the average
23 number of miles that people are going to drive over
24 a given period of time, in this case six to nine
25 months. If you double the time period, you must

1 double the average number of miles; and if you double
2 the average number of miles, you've got to increase
3 the standards, and nothing else makes any sense to
4 me whether you call it time or whether you call it
5 miles. Double the time, you double the average
6 mileage, and you must increase the standards. There's
7 no way around that.

8 We were also told this morning, and we were
9 told very very clearly, that according to the reports,
10 two percent of the vehicles that are involved in
11 accidents--the accidents are caused by defects, and
12 we were told two percent, and we were told that was
13 a state police report. Maybe you believe it, but I
14 find it very difficult to believe that; and every
15 accident in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is
16 characterized by one factor and one factor only, that
17 there were no accidents, that maybe there were two
18 or three things, some environmental or some driver
19 defect, some driver problem and some vehicle defect.
20 If the state police report says that is two percent,
21 absolutely eighty-one percent of the accidents are
22 caused by driver problems? Seventeen percent are
23 caused by environmental problems and two percent--
24 that makes exactly one hundred percent, every accident
25 having one factor; it can't be.

1 Also, those very statistics were not based on
2 going out and looking at the accident and going out
3 and looking at the vehicle and trying to determine
4 the factor. They were based on a police report that
5 was made after the fact and said yes, he got a little
6 bit too much to drink or he was too sleepy, and they
7 took the easiest solution. The one report, and I have
8 a lot of problems with the Indiana report, but the
9 one report that went out and actually looked at the
10 vehicles at the time of the accident, we were told
11 that the Indiana report this morning showed a hard
12 core of two percent also, but I'm looking not at
13 anybody's report except the Office of Budget
14 Administration's report, the same one we heard about
15 this morning, and I'm looking at page eight and nine
16 of that very report, and I'm looking at the Indiana
17 report which we were told showed two percent and
18 reading from that, it said vehicle factors were
19 definite causes, definite causes in six percent of
20 the accidents. Where we got two percent this morning,
21 I'll never know.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 MR. BEEMAN: The very next page says two to
24 three percent. I can point it out specifically.
25 Page thirteen at--the end of the first paragraph and

1 page nine, also the end of the second paragraph,
2 vehicle factors acting alone were identified as
3 definite or probable causes in two to three percent
4 of the accidents investigated, and that's the Indiana
5 results, nearly verbatim.

6 MR. DAVIES: All right, thank you.

7 We'll add to the representatives present that
8 Representative Gambol is here. Thank you for joining
9 us, sir.

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1 MR. DAVIES: Mr. Kenneth Boice, the Butler
2 County Inspection Association.

3 MR. BOICE: Honorable Members of the House
4 Transportation Committee, I represent the Butler
5 County Inspection Association, as well as myself,
6 Kenneth M. Boice, an independent garage owner and
7 operator. Included with the copy of this speech you
8 have received a copy of a petition of opposition to
9 the bill, House Bill 562, on the once a year inspection
10 program. This petition was signed by the majority
11 of the members of our association in the Butler County
12 Inspection Association.

13 In your minds, I know that you are asking why
14 is this man and his association opposed to a bill
15 which would cost the public more money and put more
16 money in his own pocket. First of all, gentlemen,
17 we are concerned with the safety of our customer.
18 Your administration states that we now have longer
19 lasting brakes and front end parts. I do not believe
20 this to be so. Brakes purchased within the past year
21 are only about one half as thick as before.

22 Recently, I bought a set of new Raylor, not
23 relined, but new brakes. Owner of the vehicle was a
24 salesman for an auto parts center. The shoes were
25 riveted lining and had three thirty-seconds of lining

1 above the rivets. Now keep in mind they need one
2 thirty-second to pass inspection. Taking the old
3 time percentage inspection gauge, you would get
4 about a sixty percent reading on these brand new
5 brakes.

6 We concluded that the brakes were just a
7 defective set. We went to this auto parts store and
8 checked fifteen sets at random from the shelves. We
9 found one set with only two thirty-seconds of lining
10 above the rivets, two sets with four thirty-seconds,
11 and the rest had three thirty-seconds of lining. It
12 is obvious that these are not of better materials,
13 they are just another cost saving device for the
14 consumer.

15 Regarding the front end parts, on fifty to
16 sixty percent of the replacement parts it is no longer
17 possible to lubricate them because they don't have
18 grease fittings. This is fine as long as the salt
19 and stones and so on from the road don't puncture the
20 rubber seal and drain out the lube that's in them.

21 During the May, June and July 1980 inspection
22 campaign I inspected in my little rural shop two
23 hundred fifteen automobiles. The manufactured year
24 of these cars ranged from 1959 through 1980, with the
25 average year being 1975. The total cost of inspection

1 on these two hundred fifteen cars was \$5,411.75, or
2 \$25.17 per car for the six month inspection. The
3 average mileage driven between inspections was fifty-
4 seven hundred miles. Keep in mind this \$25.17 per
5 car was only for the work I did. About thirty percent
6 of my customers take the car home, do the work
7 themselves, and then bring it back for their sticker.

8 May, June, and July of 1981, again for two
9 hundred fifteen cars, the year of manufacture was
10 from 1966 through 1981, the average 1974. It came
11 down a year. The total cost was \$6,281.72, or \$29.22
12 per car. The average mileage driven between inspections
13 was forty-two hundred miles. That came down.

14 Right now in our area we have about a ten
15 percent unemployment. I feel that this factor
16 combined with the cost of gasoline is what makes the
17 difference in the mileage between 1980 and 1981.
18 Also, note that the average year of manufacture went
19 down one year and the miles driven decreased in 1981.
20 The average cost of inspection per car went up \$4.05
21 per car, meaning people are keeping and repairing
22 their older cars.

23 I also found from my records that thirty-three
24 percent of the two hundred fifteen cars, each six
25 month period, needed repairs to pass inspection.

1 Therefore, if we go to a once a year inspection,
2 thirty-three percent of the cars will need repairs
3 after six months but still be permitted to drive an
4 additional six months in an unsafe condition. If
5 these cars are allowed to be driven for the additional
6 six months with one or more unsafe parts, at the time
7 of the next inspection the car will need more repairs
8 at a greater cost to the customer.

9 The administration claims that once a year
10 inspection will save the consumer \$61 million. We
11 feel that from our records and experience that it
12 would cost the public at least that much additional
13 instead of saving it. We could not get any of the
14 auto parts stores to sign our petition or back us
15 in any way. That tell us all something.

16 The OBA report states that Pennsylvania is
17 having as many or more accidents than some states
18 with the once a year inspection or no inspection at
19 all. If this is so, why did we just spend so much
20 money on the Greentree hill runaway ramp to protect
21 Pittsburgh from the bad condition of these out of
22 state trucks? One thing sure contradicts the other.

23 Our association feels that our present state
24 inspection laws are good, except for a few minor
25 things, the main issue being that PennDOT and the

1 state police are not enforcing the code. We in Butler
2 County have one of the best state police inspection
3 officers you can find, but he can't do it all. He
4 has three hundred and fifty-seven inspection stations
5 to check on. In addition, he has all the school buses
6 to personally inspect. He takes phone calls at the
7 barracks for one hour each morning and one hour each
8 afternoon, not leaving him much time on the road. He
9 also has to locate stolen stickers and bad inspections.
10 He visits each garage only once a year to review our
11 books. Remember, out of the three hundred fifty-seven
12 stations, ninety percent are independent garages and
13 fifty percent of those are in the country. Also keep
14 in mind that the customers at these country garages
15 have larger repair bills because of the condition of
16 our roads.

17 As you know, PennDOT has a system we must
18 follow on the rejection of a car for inspection. The
19 new campaign just begun on August 1st. Let's say
20 the sticker on your car is still good until October
21 31st, but you come into my shop for inspection today.
22 I find one bald tire, one bad tie rod end, and the
23 front disc brakes are completely. I fill out a
24 rejection slip, three copies, I send one to the
25 department today, at a cost of eighteen cents to me

1 by the way, keep a copy for my file, and give you,
2 the customer, the third copy. Your copy states that
3 you must have the work done within five days or pull
4 the car off the road. If you get the work done, an
5 inspection mechanic signs your copy and you mail it
6 to the department.

7 Or, you could be the person who gets busy,
8 forgets to get your car repaired, and keep driving
9 until October 31st in a very unsafe car. PennDOT
10 is not and has not followed up on these rejections
11 for a long time. I proved this myself because two
12 years ago I rejected my wife's car, on purpose, and
13 still I have not heard a word about it. Concerning
14 this, we would like to offer a suggestion. When a
15 car comes in for inspection, the first thing to do
16 is take off the old sticker, inspect the car. If it
17 passes, put a new sticker on it. If not, then put
18 a special five day fluorescent orange or some colored
19 sticker on there with a big letter on it, rejected.
20 Embarrass this guy. This way the state police and
21 everyone else can see this and stop this car and
22 check it, see if he's gone more than his five days
23 before he gets it inspected or takes it off the road.

24 Our association and I personally would welcome
25 your committee to be present in my shop or any of the

1 other shops on any one day the last week of an
2 inspection campaign to see the cars that come in for
3 inspection. Cars that I inspected just six to nine
4 months previous and cars that someone just hung paper
5 on. Gentlemen, if you would see this, I'm convinced
6 you would fight to keep our twice a year inspection.

7 In conclusion, as a business man, I could use
8 the old television commercial. Pay me a little bit
9 now, or pay me a whole lot at the end of the year,
10 but please do not approve House Bill 562. The life
11 you save might be yours or your neighbor's or friend.

12 I have two more things that came up since this,
13 since I made my speech and so on. I had an automobile
14 come into my shop last Wednesday for tires. This car
15 was in my shop on April the 23rd of 1981 for a state
16 inspection. That was the first time that the car
17 had ever been to my place of business. This vehicle
18 is a 1979 Plymouth Volari. It's owned by a retired
19 couple that do a lot of travelling, and they pull a
20 house trailer.

21 They came in the other day--by the way, that
22 car when inspected, it had thirty-five thousand three
23 hundred twelve miles on it. The left front wheel had
24 eight thirty-seconds riveted disc brakes on it. The
25 right rear wheel had three bonded. When I do a car

1 in my shop for the first time, I always pull all four
2 wheels. This car was in perfect shape.

3 The car came in on the 17th of this month for
4 tires. The car has forty-four thousand one hundred
5 eleven miles on it. The car travelled eighty-seven
6 hundred ninety-nine miles. When I went to put the
7 one front tire on, I saw that I had a little brake
8 problem; and I'd like to pass these and show you.
9 This is the brakes that was on the left front wheel,
10 the wheel that I had pulled not four months ago.
11 Here's the brakes from the right side, they are still
12 in perfect condition.

13 Along with that, in checking and putting the
14 brakes on it, I found these two brake hoses which
15 the gentleman before me had been talking about, and
16 I wish you'd look at them. The outside rubber is
17 completely gone through in both of them. They are
18 dry-rotted all over. If this was going to be a
19 once a year inspection, this guy was in trouble. He
20 still has nine or ten months to go yet, and this would
21 have been a tragedy. I said these people were pulling
22 a house trailer and travelling. Nine thousand miles
23 since the 23rd day of April.

24 When I went around to the back of the car, I
25 found the trailer hitch was ready to fall off the

1 automobile, and they're pulling a great big house
2 trailer.

3 I had another car come in last Wednesday.
4 This may seem a little funny to you, but this
5 automobile after I went into it a little bit, I almost
6 would have bet that this committee sent it there.
7 I just had that in my mind.

8 This gentleman came running in at lunch time
9 and he said to me, "could you inspect my car today?
10 I'm seventeen days overdue, and I just got caught by
11 the state police this morning." This is going a
12 little farther with our thoughts that the law isn't
13 being enforced well enough, and this is why the OBA
14 report is what it is today we feel.

15 He said, "The state policeman stopped me this
16 morning, and my car needs inspected. Could you do it
17 while I'm working this afternoon?" I said, "Yes, sir;
18 leave me your owner's card and your keys." We were
19 eating lunch, and I said after lunch we'd inspect the
20 car. The car is a 1976 Plymouth Arrow. It has
21 seventy-two thousand eight hundred fifty-two miles
22 on it.

23 The man says, "Well, I can't leave you my
24 owner's card; I lost it." I said, "Well, I'll check
25 it over for inspection anyway," and I said, "right

1 next door to me is a Notary Public." He said, "By
2 the way, I have the title. Can you do it on that?"
3 I said, "No, sir; no, I can't. The car must have a
4 license plate on it that I know is for that car.
5 When you come back after work, this evening the Notary
6 will be open, and you can go in and apply for a new
7 owner's card, and then I'll take her slip and be able
8 to inspect your car."

9 So, I went over that car that afternoon,
10 gentlemen. Now remember, it's seventeen days overdue
11 to start with. The left rear side window--he had it
12 tied in with rope. The four tires on the car were
13 all four different sizes. Two of them were as bald
14 as this table top, but they were all four different
15 sizes. There was no rubber on either the clutch
16 pedal or the brake pedal, no rubber to keep the pedals
17 from sliding under your feet. The backup lights
18 weren't working. There was no battery box in the car
19 to hold the battery. The battery was laying up against
20 the fender wheel. The left outer tie rod end was bad.
21 The right inner tie rod end was bad. The front disc
22 brakes were in the condition of these that I showed
23 you. The gas tank was leaking terribly. The muffler
24 and tail pipe were shot, was loud, real loud. Both
25 rear wheel cylinders were leaking; and, naturally,

1 he had no owner's card. When I walked back and looked
2 at the license plate, it had expired March 31st.

3 When he came back that afternoon, he handed me
4 the card from the state police officer, and he said,
5 "Can you sign this and get it sent in for me so that
6 I--" and here it was just a warning. The cop had
7 given him a warning, and he--there was no way he
8 could have checked the registration or looked at the
9 license plate because there was--it was expired
10 October 31st.

11 Thank you, gentlemen.

12 MR. DAVIES: Up until that last point, I would
13 have interjected did Joey Chitwood have one of those
14 destruction things in the locality but I wouldn't
15 after you told me about the registration.

16 MR. BOICE: I had one other thing I passed by.
17 The qualifications for being a state inspection
18 mechanic, I had the opportunity to take my son up
19 to the school for two nights at Butler County Community
20 College and having nothing better to do than wait for
21 him, I sat in on the school; and I would venture to
22 say that I could go out on the street and get any
23 ten year old boy or girl and take them in there and
24 in two nights of four hours a night they can be a
25 certified state inspection mechanic.

1 The law used to state that they had to have
2 so much experience in garage work, it doesn't now.
3 They are very, very lax, and we still feel, our whole
4 association feels that this is part of the reason
5 why your OBA report is the way it is, because of these
6 things, and it seems to me to be a tendency for our
7 whole society today to be more lax in things than
8 they used to be, and we're taking for granted too
9 much. Believe me, we all feel that this would be a
10 bad mistake to go to a once a year inspection.

11 MR. DAVIES: Any questions?

12 MR. STEIGHNER: Mr. Chairman, can I--I am
13 obviously personally familiar with your sincerity
14 and also your business reputation, along with Mr.
15 Black. First of all, I can assure you it was not our
16 committee's car. I think the Chairman had that car
17 in Philadelphia last week.

18 You mentioned in your testimony that approximately
19 thirty-three percent of the cars that come in there
20 need repaired. That seems to be along the lines as
21 what we've heard.

22 MR. BOICE: And this was a comparison, and we
23 took eight of our stations from our whole Butler
24 County area and surveyed eight stations, and then
25 combined that into a report, and this is a report

1 from eight stations, and they--all eight almost came
2 out the same way.

3 MR. STEIGHNER: So you would agree this would
4 be as best representative as you could be at least
5 in Butler County?

6 MR. BOICE: Yes, yes.

7 MR. STEIGHNER: I think that's all I have.

8 MR. DAVIES: Just one thing about those eight.
9 Did you take a good--on the eight did you take one
10 from the city and then one from the country or the
11 others from --

12 MR. BOICE: Yes, sir. We went through the
13 whole area, and we took I think three that were rural,
14 country like myself, that only do about two hundred
15 twenty, two hundred thirty; and we went up as high as
16 a station that does four hundred fifty; one does six
17 hundred sixty-six.

18 MR. DAVIES: Now, your figures on cost, I don't
19 know, I may be wrong, but I think as far as down our
20 way, they may run a little bit higher than what you're
21 quoting.

22 MR. BOICE: Well now, you're talking down east
23 a little ways and in the more urban areas where the
24 labor costs and the costs of inspection, I presume,
25 are higher.

1 MR. DAVIES: Let's say suburban-urban. You
2 don't have any trouble with the other figures that
3 have been given as far as the averages that we've
4 been dealing with in our reports so far?

5 MR. BOICE: No, I don't. I can't--I'm a little
6 bit like the lady here from the League of Women Voters.
7 I just can't comprehend some of these figures on the
8 accident rates because I have seen too many wrecks
9 and I have tried to look at that pile of scrap there
10 and determine what caused that accident, and I don't
11 think we're capable of that. I don't think we can go
12 by these figures on the accidents and on what rate
13 was caused by what particular item, especially in the
14 rural areas. There is just so many different things
15 that could cause it.

16 MR. DAVIES: Any others?

17 MR. PACHUTA: I wanted to clarify with regard
18 to the inspection mechanic certification. The newly
19 developed regulation will require experience again
20 for the mechanic; but in addition, the current
21 regulation does call for a two part passage for the
22 inspection mechanic. While the ten year old may pass
23 examination at the Vo Techs, there's also a hands on
24 performance portion which they must pass to the
25 satisfaction of the state police investigator before

1 they'll be certified as a mechanic.

2 MR. DAVIES: That's in the bill?

3 MR. PACHUTA: No, that's existing.

4 MR. BOICE: That's in force right now, sir?

5 MR. PACHUTA: Right now. There are further--

6 MR. DAVIES: And the experience?

7 MR. PACHUTA: Yes, they must perform.

8 MR. BOICE: They must perform before the
9 garage inspector, the state police garage inspector,
10 which could be two, three or four questions, or it
11 could be an actual full inspection before this man,
12 depending on what sort of mood he's in that particular
13 day.

14 MR. DAVIES: Well, O.K. That's like the horror
15 stories we used to hear about the driver license
16 questions at times, and I won't go back to that one.

17 Any others? All right, thank you, sir.

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1 MR. DAVIES: Mr. Seymore G. Heyison, former
2 director of the Bureau of Traffic Safety for the
3 Commonwealth, and a consumer.

4 MR. HEYISON: Mr. Chairman, members of the
5 House Transportation Committee, members of the media,
6 and ladies and gentlemen, for the record my name is
7 Seymore Heyison, and from the middle of 1975 until
8 October of 1978 I was the Director of the Bureau of
9 Traffic Safety. I would like to thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman, for granting the privilege of appearing here
11 to testify before this committee.

12 I have read House Bill 562, printer's number
13 589, and I would like you to know, Mr. Chairman, that
14 I endorse the concept of once a year safety inspection;
15 but there are changes in the bill that I think should
16 be made for the benefit of the consumers, the benefit
17 of industry, and the benefit of government; and I would
18 like to elaborate, if I may.

19 In House Bill 562, the section of 1961, evidence
20 of inspection, it states that there shall be a charge
21 of \$2.00, and I think some people misunderstand that
22 it's going to be an increase from the state to the
23 inspection station operator. It is not an increase,
24 it is just retained at the same cost because today
25 we have a semiannual inspection at a dollar per period,

1 so it's still \$2.00 per year; but I guess what I
2 object to, and I'd like you to refer to it, to the
3 bottom of page 31 of the motor vehicle inspection
4 from the Office of Budget Administration, I'd like to
5 read it if I may, "Reducing the frequency of vehicle
6 inspections would have different monetary impacts on
7 motorists, official inspection station operators, and
8 the Commonwealth. Changing from a semiannual to an
9 annual inspection cycle could save Pennsylvania
10 motorists at least \$61 million in vehicle inspection
11 fees and an additional \$16 million in time and travel
12 cost. Conversely, the official inspection stations
13 would stand to lose at least \$54 million in revenue
14 from vehicle inspection fees under an annual inspection
15 cycle."

16 Later on in that same paragraph I'll start
17 with the words "but under an annual inspection cycle
18 the state revenue derived from the sale of inspection
19 stickers to the official inspection stations would be
20 reduced by about \$6.8 million. This revenue could be
21 recovered by doubling the fee charged per inspection
22 sticker from a dollar to two dollars." That could
23 mean possibly that if the Commonwealth is not ready
24 to accept the decrease in income, which maybe they
25 could conserve as I may state later on, are they by

1 any chance saying because we need to recoup our losses,
2 industry should recoup theirs also? I know of no
3 industry to my knowledge that if an increase in cost
4 is passed on to the industry, that it is not passed
5 on to the consumer; so I expect that if the increase
6 is permitted, that it will be passed on, not maybe.

7 Later on I will elaborate on it a little further,
8 but it probably will be passed on to the consumer.

9 Now I read continuously in periodicals and
10 information that has been sent out that we're going
11 to save "the motorist \$61 million." How many people
12 in the Commonwealth know what \$61 million is? How
13 many people will ever have \$61 million? Now if you
14 tell a person on a limited income that I'm going to
15 save you nine, ten, eight dollars for an inspection,
16 they will understand what it means to them; but when
17 we talk these high figures and statistics which I
18 heard all day, people don't have any idea or any
19 concept what \$61 million is. I have an idea what
20 a ten dollar bill is because I know that's coming out
21 of my pocket, or I may save ten dollars on that basis.

22 Section 4703, it's a little confusing, on page
23 six, section D, numbers one, two and three. I am
24 reading it that if there is a sale of a vehicle,
25 within ten days of a sale or resale, I can understand

1 entering into the Commonwealth of a vehicle that's
2 never had a Pennsylvania sticker before, but am I
3 reading this correctly that if I purchase a vehicle
4 from anyone, that within ten days after I buy the
5 vehicle, that must be inspected? Is that correct,
6 Mr. Chairman?

7 MR. DAVIES: That is my understanding, yes.

8 MR. HEYISON: Does it make any difference if
9 a vehicle has a Pennsylvania official inspection
10 sticker, such as we are driving today, have a valid
11 inspection sticker? Does it make any difference
12 whether I own the vehicle or you own the vehicle,
13 Mr. Chairman? It was inspected, so we're not going
14 back to the concept of once a year inspection. I may
15 buy a vehicle five times a year and be under the
16 requirement. I may buy it twice a year, and I'm
17 actually going to have to have that vehicle inspected,
18 whether it was inspected yesterday or not. I think
19 there's an additional charge. If a vehicle was
20 properly and legitimately inspected and if they carry
21 a Pennsylvania official inspection sticker, then we
22 assume that they were inspected. Why should I be
23 required to go get that same legitimately inspected
24 vehicle inspected because I am the new owner; and if
25 I wasn't, and if I had retained my vehicle, I wouldn't

1 be required to get it. So, therefore, Mr. Chairman,
2 I would recommend that regardless of whether it's a
3 new purchase or whether it's not a new purchase, if
4 the vehicle is to be inspected, no matter who the
5 new owner might be, if it's a valid sticker, that
6 that inspection suffice because exactly what's going
7 to happen--I know the majority of the cars are sold
8 through automobile dealers. They'll just pass that
9 cost on, even though they're not required to have a
10 vehicle reinspected as long as it's in their ownership.

11 In section 4724, and I believe it's on page 7,
12 I read the proposed bill, and I assume, if I remember
13 correctly, that any new changes are usually underlined
14 that are not in the present statutes, is that correct,
15 Mr. Chairman? I haven't been there for awhile, so
16 I wouldn't know; but I'm looking at the section that
17 says the department shall supervise and inspect
18 official inspection stations and may suspend the
19 certificate of appointment, or in other language in
20 effect suspend the inspection station operation.
21 The vehicle code that I had, and I guess it's on
22 4724, it says the department shall supervise and
23 inspect official inspection stations and shall suspend.

24 MR. LANDIS: That was changed in 1980.

25 MR. HEYISON: I'm telling you what--I don't

1 know how it got by the Pennsylvania State Police.
2 You couldn't do that while I was there, no matter
3 when. If you want enforcement and you want teeth
4 in your inspection regulations and statutes, how can
5 they have teeth? I assume there are not many
6 departmental hearings. We used to have them published
7 in the paper when a station was suspended, and I have
8 yet in the last couple years failed to see any
9 newspaper notice, and it would be published in the
10 newspaper that was nearest to that station, just as
11 the Liquor Control Board publishes suspensions of
12 licenses.

13 Now, people don't want to see their name in
14 print because they were suspended for whatever reason.
15 If you leave it discretionary, it leaves it wide open.
16 They can violate and violate and violate; and when
17 they come to a hearing, somebody will say, "Well,
18 there was a reason because we have discretion." It's
19 not mandated shall. The Pennsylvania State Police
20 when I was there, and we had many many discussions
21 on this, would never ever adhere to it; and I don't
22 know how that even got by, so I would recommend that
23 would be shall so there'd be teeth in the enforcement
24 of any inspection program that we might have in
25 Pennsylvania.

1 My past experience, Mr. Chairman, is not just
2 a government official; but I was in the automobile
3 business for twenty-three years. I had an inspection
4 station for twenty-three years, and I had an auto
5 body shop for over fifteen years; so I don't speak
6 from statistics. I don't speak from periodicals.
7 I speak from experience on both sides of the fence,
8 from industry and from government. I started out as
9 a supervisor in the Bureau of Traffic Safety. I was
10 then advanced to a regional director of motor
11 vehicles and traffic safety. I became director of
12 the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, I became director of
13 the Bureau of Traffic Safety; and last, I was Deputy
14 Director for Safety Administration. The things that
15 I'm hearing here today, I was conducting when I was
16 in Harrisburg; but more so, we listened to industry,
17 we listened to people.

18 During the previous federal administration I
19 was offered to go to Washington with USDOT. During
20 the present federal administration I was contacted,
21 am I interested in coming to USDOT. I thanked them
22 all, but I had enough of it.

23 In my opinion Secretary Larsen is one of the
24 best secretaries of transportation I've seen. He's
25 one of the best, and we had some beauties; but he is

1 one of the best. I got along with him at the time
2 I was there, I respected him; and one thing I did
3 before I was dismissed, knowing that you don't stay
4 in that position, I understand the game, no problem,
5 I said to him, "If at any time you want to ask me
6 a question, you want a suggestion, or you want my
7 advice because of my experience, here's my unlisted
8 private number. Please contact me and feel free to
9 do it." I also made the same statement to Deputy
10 Secretary John Sarby, who I had recommended to the
11 Secretary to be my replacement. Well, today I have
12 never received a phone call, and I don't play politics
13 when it comes to safety.

14 In my fifteen years in the auto body business
15 I towed many wrecked vehicles into my shop, had them
16 towed in. I had never even seen an investigator,
17 whether he be from the government, from the insurance
18 department, or from any agency to investigate the
19 cause of an accident. No one ever came out to pull
20 the wheels, but the insurance adjuster just came out
21 to see how much it's going to cost, whether it's a
22 total or whether it's repairable. Where people get
23 statistics, yes, they may have been gotten--remember
24 the Carnegie-Mellon investigation of six vehicles.
25 When we asked them, "When you went into the station,

1 did you ask the inspection station operator to inspect
2 the vehicle or did you ask them to just look at the
3 tires or check this?" We never received an answer
4 because even the state police were investigating it
5 with us. There was no validity. When you take six
6 vehicles and say this, they're purposely defective
7 vehicles, and if you would have gone into the stations
8 and say to inspect it, "give me a complete inspection,"
9 they'd have had a different review; but they failed
10 to answer our questions. They failed to have me go
11 down and talk to them personally. They would not want
12 to talk to me, so I discount some of those investigations.

13 When you hear that two percent or three percent
14 are because of mechanical failure, out of how many?
15 In fifteen years I never saw an investigator at my
16 shop. Three years ago I had my car demolished, it
17 was a total, a new car, total. I was standing still.
18 No one ever pulled that man's car and said, "Let me
19 pull the wheels to see if the brakes were defective
20 or the gas pedal stuck or something happened." There
21 will always be from here on in an isolated case where
22 you'll hear that, "I bought a new car, five hundred
23 miles on it, and defective brakes."

24 I visited the plants in Detroit, and I went
25 through the assembly line, and I've seen coca cola

1 bottles or any other bottles dropped in the motors
2 as it was going by. Does it mean all the cars are
3 bad? Isolated cases will happen wherever you go,
4 any type of industry.

5 There's some recommended changes for safety
6 that they should put in. If we're talking about
7 safety, let them recommend it. I recommended in
8 Cordaline, Idaho, there could be a possible cause
9 of an accident when a tractor or a bus was going
10 down a highway in the rain or snow. How many times
11 does a big tractor pass you or you pass a tractor
12 and your windshield and side windows are splattered
13 and you can't see? Yet, they mandate flaps for the
14 rear and just to put a little inch flap on the side,
15 maybe metal. If that means safety for the highways,
16 why won't we listen or why won't they listen? Those
17 are recommendations that were made, but they come up
18 with a statistic that Indiana said 2.26 percent or
19 whatever they said out of how many vehicles tested,
20 was it a tractor trailer tested, a commercial vehicle?
21 What kind of a vehicle was tested? Specifically how
22 many in what area? I've never read how many in what
23 area, but I hear a lot about statistics; and I can
24 make a statistic do what I want it to do. I can put
25 a statistic out here and justify it and document it

1 and say it's a computer printout and who is going to
2 question me and say, "Let me check your computer."
3 What I put in a computer is what's going to come out
4 of that computer.

5 When you hear about thirty-one percent and
6 \$61 million and \$54 million, all I'm hearing are
7 numbers that are not related to the average every day
8 individual who understands layman language and we like
9 to print documents when I was there that can only
10 be understood by sixth graders on down. Then everybody
11 understands instead of all the legalese, mandated
12 percentage, etc. You say, "I couldn't read it because
13 I couldn't understand it."

14 The two dinners in 1978--that lady has gone.
15 I was one of the principal speakers in Pittsburgh at
16 the Automotive Service Council's dinner. By the way,
17 I am still a member of the Automotive Service Councils
18 of Pennsylvania. They asked me would I speak at the
19 dinner. The service station operators of Pennsylvania
20 asked me would I speak at a dinner. Rudy Molnar was
21 the president and still is president. I respect him
22 highly, and he is one of the men I had recommended be
23 put on the inspection advisory board.

24 At the dinner then three years ago in 1978 I
25 asked the audience, and they were all inspection

1 station operators, some of the service station
2 operators did not have an inspection station, but I
3 said, "How do you feel about once a year safety
4 inspection?" They were all up in the air against it,
5 no way. There's a lot of things that enter into that
6 answer, but before I was finished and after I finalized
7 my statements and my reasoning and my suggestions,
8 I asked another show of hands. "Are you for it now?"
9 It was almost unanimous, almost unanimous that they
10 were all for the concept of once a year safety
11 inspection because there's a way of operating
12 successfully and professionally, and that's what the
13 changes must be.

14 One of their articles that I received in July
15 of eighty-one, the automotive service reports, on
16 page twelve, it tells them when you pull out your
17 file on a car, and that's exactly the way I spoke,
18 when you pull out a file, and in their August news
19 that I received the question is asked who will survive
20 in the eighties? They're talking about automotive
21 people, they're talking about garages. Page three,
22 personalized selling, inspecting a car, advising the
23 customer, asking for the job, asking again in three
24 days if you don't get a yes, getting a date one or
25 two months in advance, maintaining an up to date list;

1 so when I spoke about it three years ago, you'll never
2 please one hundred percent of the people, I don't
3 care, and you know it, Mr. Chairman, no rule, no
4 statutes, no regulation will satisfy one hundred
5 percent of the people, and one of the most knowledgeable
6 men in the motor vehicle administration, the MVA in
7 Washington, that I had the privilege of knowing said,
8 "Seymore, if you can pass something that satisfies
9 ninety percent and only ten percent are dissatisfied,
10 you'll be a winner."

11 When I read this, you wonder whether inspections--
12 safety inspections are necessary if only two or three
13 percent are involved; and yet, I don't know what the
14 statistics--how you're going to derive them and show
15 me where that vehicle was in an accident because of
16 a defective brake, because of a defective spot on a
17 tire; there will always be those cases. We have banks
18 robbed, but we don't close up all the banks. We have
19 to take preventive measures, discuss it, discuss it
20 with industry; and I recommended to the stations, and
21 I talked to Rudy today, I said, "Rudy, you know I'm
22 going to speak again on a once a year inspection;"
23 but in the same vein, one other suggestion that I make,
24 as I did in seventy-eight, that there be a maximum of
25 the charge to the consumer.

1 Now I can't see how you can permit the state
2 to get another increase which technically only
3 guarantees them the same revenue they're getting now
4 under a semiannual inspection and not say anything
5 about industry because the representative--I think
6 he's not here now--but he said earlier if we find
7 out you're going to double the charge, we'll do
8 something about it. Don't do something when the cow
9 leaves the barn, do it now.

10 There are seventeen or eighteen thousand
11 inspection stations in the Commonwealth, and I believe
12 we have a heck of a lot more of consumers; but I don't
13 want to knock the industry. I want to help them, I
14 want to help them now as I did then. When you buy a
15 new car, later on you get a card from Detroit or
16 wherever it might be saying to change your tires;
17 then you get another card that says to change your
18 oil, well, as the article said, who will survive in
19 the eighties? Start changing your practices.

20 With the maximum of inspection fees--at that
21 time they agreed at the meeting on eight dollars and
22 fifty cents, by the way, and four dollars if we ever
23 went into an emission inspection. Costs have gone
24 up since then. If an inspection station operator
25 says he can't make money like that, if you're just in

1 the business of inspecting cars, you won't make money
2 on ten dollars or fifteen dollars for the cost of a
3 sticker; but I heard on the radio today an automobile
4 dealer advertising to come into his place for a three
5 dollar fifty cent complete inspection. The same way
6 in industry and the same way in department stores,
7 the same way when they say we have a fifty percent
8 sale; so as the artic said, we have to have personalized
9 selling.

10 You will not make money in the automotive
11 business by strictly only inspecting cars, unless
12 you are a lickem stickem dealer; and by that, I mean
13 you get it in, put the sticker on, get them out. Yes,
14 you'll make a lot of money; but that's what gives a
15 bad name to the industry and will be taken out when
16 you change it instead of the end of May. When you
17 analyze some of these states, and by the way, I doubt
18 very much whether every mechanic in the Commonwealth
19 of Pennsylvania is an inspection station owner, I
20 would doubt it very much, and yet a lot of mechanics
21 are very successful and don't even want an inspection
22 station. How are they surviving? How are they
23 surviving in California, in Michigan, in Illinois,
24 in Maryland. Now in Florida they discontinued
25 inspections, Colorado, how are those mechanics

1 surviving? Simply by being better business men; and
2 if a business man will not try and upgrade and
3 professionalize his industry; then he should get out
4 of that particular business because there's always
5 room for mechanics.

6 How they make money--we don't have a semiannual
7 inspection in Pennsylvania, we appear to have one;
8 but technically, it's not semiannual. If I take my
9 car in and get it inspected in the first week of
10 August, I don't have to go back until the last week
11 of April; that's between eight and nine months. You're
12 going to tell me the difference of three months--and
13 it's legal right now, August 1st, last week--at least
14 that's what it was, maybe it's changed, but that was
15 the cycle that I remember; but I think we have the
16 same thing today. It's technically an eight or nine
17 month period; and if I took it in August 1st and back
18 April 30th, it's exactly a nine month inspection.
19 So far three months you hear all the rhetoric with
20 safety increased costs.

21 If someone would bring an automobile into an
22 inspection station that had a forty percent lining
23 today, it's impossible, as I remember the regulations.
24 I think it was thirty-two percent. If it was forty
25 percent lining on front and rear, it would be passable.

1 You're not going to put lining on my car because I
2 don't need it. I still have wear and tear to use.
3 That's what I pay for. What do you do?

4 Do you just inspect the car and go out of my
5 shop and it ruins the drums and the rotors and
6 everything else, fine, that's your problem--huh-uh,
7 that's not a professional operation. That's not a
8 businessman that's interested in the customer.

9 So why don't we take a card file, even though
10 you put it on the inspection bill and say, "You're
11 brake lining is forty percent, I recommend you come
12 back at such and such a time," you take that bill and
13 you put it in the drawer and it's forgotten; we all
14 know that. I'm not going--people don't keep a card
15 file, they're not in business, they're average people.
16 What does a dentist do? You get your teeth cleaned,
17 you get them worked on, and your appointment is at
18 such and such a time. He gives you a card, but the
19 good dentist doesn't stop with a card. The good one
20 and the successful one now will have a card sent to
21 you that your appointment is next week or in two
22 weeks; that dentist is successful. If you don't want
23 to take care of your teeth, you won't have teeth. If
24 you don't want to take care of your car and listen
25 to the card and read the card that's sent to you,

1 that's your problem.

2 Grown people are driving those vehicles,
3 mature people are driving those vehicles; it's up
4 to them. You can take them to water, but you can't
5 make them drink. So why should the majority of the
6 consumers--and if you put a referendum on it, I will
7 probably guarantee the majority of consumers don't
8 even want an inspection of a new car--why should I
9 get it inspected at all? How many vehicles go down
10 the highway that law enforcement look at and see a
11 broken headlight, a broken fender, no tail light,
12 cracked windows, and they don't get stopped? They
13 should, but how many get stopped? A busy highway in
14 the afternoon rush, you mean the officer is going to
15 leave his corner in downtown Pittsburgh and write a
16 citation because of a defective vehicle? I've never
17 seen it done. It's possible it was done, but I've
18 never seen it.

19 So let's not put our heads in the sand. Let's
20 say there is a change, let's not fight it. Let's see
21 how we can work it out not to hurt industry, I'm not
22 here saying look, I'm going to take the bread out of
23 your mouth because you're only going to inspect cars
24 once a year, but meet with industry. We have an
25 inspection advisory board, I met with them any time

1 they called me. When I was in Pittsburgh, for instance,
2 Rudy Molinaro called me and came down, Bud Neehouse,
3 if he was here, always came down or talked with me;
4 I contacted him in Harrisburg, we had meetings in
5 Harrisburg with the inspection advisory board.

6 I asked Rudy today, "When was the last time
7 you had a meeting?" He said, "About a year ago."
8 I said, "Rudy, is your input in here?" He says,
9 "No." Now that's what I heard today, but you must
10 discuss it with industry. You must discuss how it's
11 going to affect them. You can't shut them out. You
12 must try to help them as well as you're trying to
13 help the Commonwealth by getting the additional dollar.

14 There may be ways that maybe you won't need
15 to get the additional dollar because every dollar you
16 charge that inspection operator is going to go right
17 to the consumer. No one goes to that cost and puts
18 it in their pocket, don't expect them to; you don't
19 want to do it. You'd say, "Fine, it costs me more
20 money. I'm not going to lose. Instead of a dollar,
21 they're liable to charge two dollars more."

22 In 1978 I took a computer printout, maybe it
23 could be done in this manner, and I wanted to know
24 all the stickers, all the vehicle identification
25 numbers in the class under seventeen thousand pounds,

1 as you have here, and I wanted how many were from
2 one to zero; and they came out in the area of five
3 hundred fifty thousand. That's about a real good
4 figure for the month. When I had that information,
5 I suggested that may be we'll combine them with
6 inspection and registration because we visited--I
7 was with my chief counsel at the time, who is now
8 chief counsel of the state police, and we visited
9 Boulder, Colorado, and we went to inspection stations
10 because I was intrigued by a sticker on a windshield
11 that had a one with a green color or a two with a
12 red color, and I didn't know what it meant; and I
13 asked--I said, "What is this about?" He says, "We
14 combine our registration and inspection with the
15 sticker on the windshield."

16 Since then, they've dropped inspection; but
17 it intrigued me. If the stations now operate and,
18 as we heard today, the last two weeks--and from my
19 experience and the experience of all stations--the
20 last two weeks of any cycle and the first two weeks
21 of a new cycle are jammed. I mean you know, you can't
22 get in. It's like making a doctor's appointment.
23 Everybody waits until the last minute. Why, I don't
24 know; I do it too.

25 If it's done in a matter of staggering, as we

1 do it now, they would better be able to know exactly
2 and regulate the hours of their mechanics as their
3 booklet states. The shop management program, better
4 start checking your shop because if all you're doing
5 is getting the last two weeks of a period and the
6 first two weeks of a period, what are they doing in
7 between? Are they repairing the cars? If a car
8 needs repaired for inspection, you have to repair it
9 then before you release it. So I think you would be
10 able in industry to better regulate your operation
11 and be busy twelve months a year because May and
12 October would be used for commercial, use it for
13 semiannual commercial, those two months and the buses;
14 not school buses, but the buses or any vehicle that's
15 required to be inspected twice a year. It's a very
16 simple operation; but then the operators would know
17 what their business is doing. They would know that
18 whole month they would be busy because there's going
19 to be five hundred fifty thousand cars across the
20 Commonwealth coming in average-wise ten months a year.

21 If you operate and put some of these changes in
22 with let's say--I don't know what the program is now
23 or how they'll compensate implementing the program;
24 but if you put it on the registration plate, a little
25 sticker, my goodness, they're small enough, you can

1 hardly read them; it's not good.

2 It has to be part of this implementation, and
3 their input has to be in there because they're the
4 ones that have to enforce this. I met with them then.
5 They thought it was a nice idea if we ever went to
6 once a year, but we may be able to reduce personnel
7 if we utilize one of the most respected organizations
8 in the Commonwealth, if not the country. We've done
9 it for the past ten years in Pennsylvania, I think
10 it's almost ten years, am I right? John, how long
11 have you handled temporary registration plates? It's
12 almost ten years.

13 MR. PATTERSON: Yes.

14 MR. HEYISON: Never to my knowledge in ten
15 years, and there's eighty-seven or ninety Triple A
16 offices, and I don't own a Triple A office, but before
17 I left, I discussed this with Jack Donovan in
18 Harrisburg concerning the photo license, for example.
19 There is nothing wrong with having the Triple A issue
20 the inspection sticker with the once a year registration
21 renewal to be done. I imagine in the same manner
22 you could be doing it with the photo license. You
23 send the money to the appropriate place, they send
24 you the approval, and you can go to a photo licensing
25 center to get your picture taken.

1 Maybe we can send the money in for registration,
2 if you're doing it now, you can get registered
3 without your vehicle being under any kind of inspection.
4 What are you worried about in the Commonwealth, whether
5 a vehicle is inspected or not inspected? Let that
6 be the job of the inspection station. When you come
7 in, you have your registration card issued by the
8 Commonwealth that you have now registered your
9 vehicle. You come in--that's what they did in
10 Colorado. They only looked at one document, your
11 registration approval, which could be your card; and
12 if you don't get your vehicle inspected, you're in
13 violation. You'll get stopped on the highway.

14 So, the inspection station issued the certificate
15 that had designated that it was now legally inspected
16 and also registered because you have the proof of
17 payment of registration. If it's maintained in
18 Harrisburg--the reason we put--opened an office in
19 Pittsburgh and Philadelphia to issue stickers, there
20 was only two employees in Pittsburgh and two employees
21 in Philadelphia at the time, and by statistics--not
22 mine, but every Monday I required them to have on the
23 desk to justify why we opened an office for the benefit
24 of industry and cost to the government, I had to know
25 why in answer to the secretary, and these are the

1 reasons we have that information. It costs so much
2 money to mail stickers from Harrisburg to all inspection
3 stations, and that's what they were doing, unless you
4 drove up, which is expensive to the operator.

5 Let's assume you are out of stickers now and
6 it's the last week of the cycle, and you happen to
7 have a good month's business and you run out of
8 stickers. You either drive to Harrisburg--you're not
9 going to mail it because you're not going to get it
10 back in time. You say, "Hey, I'm out of stickers."
11 If you're a regular customer and happen to be out
12 of stickers when they came in, you couldn't supply
13 him with an inspection. We now had a possibility
14 that he went elsewhere. You had a chance of losing
15 that customer.

16 So, we put two people on in Pittsburgh and
17 two in Philadelphia, and I kept records to this
18 extent. We knew how much it cost to mail out five
19 stickers from Harrisburg, ten stickers, twenty-five
20 and on up. As they issued stickers, they put on this
21 sheet that I had every Monday and once a month compiled
22 how much they saved by issuing the sticker in the
23 Pittsburgh and Philadelphia office, and the records
24 should still be in there; and the information that
25 we have, which can be attested to, was at least

1 thirty-five or forty percent of the total stickers
2 issued in the Commonwealth were issued from the
3 Pittsburgh office, thirty or thirty-five percent
4 because of the location in the Philadelphia office,
5 and twenty or twenty-five percent from Harrisburg.
6 There was a considerable savings of money, if you
7 didn't have to mail and handle it.

8 Go up to Harrisburg in the inspection division
9 and see where you where you received the requisitions,
10 pass the requisition on, verify the signature, then
11 mail them out. It's expensive, there's a lot of
12 handling. Every job you touch is money. Now I
13 understand they sent it out registered mail. I'd
14 like to know the cost of the registered mail fee for
15 sending out inspection stickers to stations.

16 Since we discussed security, maybe somebody
17 will say, "Well, heck, we can't leave our stickers
18 lying around in the Triple A offices." We leave the
19 registration plates lying around, and they haven't
20 lost one. They may have more security than the
21 inspection stations have when they have stickers in
22 a drawer locked up and they're broken into and the
23 stickers are stolen. I would recommend that change
24 in the interests of saving money, and maybe you would
25 not be able or not be required to recoup that dollar

1 extra and reduce some personnel with that program.

2 I read in one of the periodicals, once of the
3 statements that were made in Harrisburg, and somebody
4 brought it up, and I advocated it many years ago,
5 and one of the Bureau of Traffic commissioners and
6 the state police at that time was ready to implement,
7 and one of the legislators asked that question today,
8 how long does the garage supervisor stay at the same
9 area? It's forever, as long as he does a good job.

10 They're human beings, and they are really
11 hard pressed when you have about sixty-seven garage
12 supervisors in all this, and they do a heck of a job
13 to go out and supervise this program; they are to
14 be commended; but, when you put someone in an area
15 for a length of time, they do become friendly and
16 maybe this person is overlooked and maybe that one
17 is overlooked, so I recommended at that time that
18 they be changed; but I further recommended that why
19 do we have the state police implementing our enforcement
20 program or any part of inspection? They're very very
21 expensive employees.

22 I apply for a station, I send my documents in
23 to Harrisburg, they send them back, in comes the
24 state police; and if you have it done and everything
25 else, that's that, and they're in uniform. I don't

1 have a person like that to come in. We gave a
2 certified mechanic a chance four times to take the
3 test. I really remember, and the legislature says
4 look what happened, and it was discretionary how many
5 times he should take it. I don't think it should be
6 mandated. He was a foreigner, one of the best
7 mechanics I ever took my car to; but to be frank,
8 when he saw the gun, he froze. He couldn't answer
9 any questions. I said, "You're going to have to
10 answer in front of that man." I talked to him, and
11 he passed in flying colors.

12 We don't have state police investigating sales
13 tax, corporation tax, income tax; we have civilians.
14 Are not those civilians to be trusted? Are only the
15 state police the ones that have integrity in the
16 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania when many many states,
17 many jurisdictions in the country--the state police
18 are not involved with implementing an inspection
19 program for the states that have an inspection program.
20 Why can't it be done by the Vo Tech schools? They're
21 federally subsidized, I think, and state subsidized,
22 I think; but when a station is approved, we send out
23 a lot of papers, we send out a lot of information to
24 them, and we send somebody to investigate them and
25 audit them; but when they receive that certificate of

1 appointment, no one pays anything. There should be
2 a charge for that certificate, that's a respected
3 document. Why shouldn't there be a charge for the
4 certificate to recoup some money for our investigations
5 and for our paperwork? What's fair for one should be
6 fair for the other.

7 It's a respected program, and I would recommend
8 that the Vo Tech schools be contacted to see if they
9 could take over the inspection program. That is a
10 means of considerable money and I'm certain the state
11 police could be utilized in other area of the
12 Commonwealth.

13 I tried to find out how the new proposal--the
14 new proposed program is going to be implemented. I
15 gave my suggestion of what I thought Colorado had,
16 a tremendous program, and it was very very easy to
17 implement; and I think it would be a cost saving
18 factor. You know, Mr. Chairman, when you hear all
19 these statistics, all day long, you hear them in
20 Harrisburg and you're going to hear the same thing
21 in Erie and you're going to hear the same thing no
22 matter where you go, it's hard. I don't envy you,
23 I don't envy any of you people in the House
24 Transportation Committee; but I heartily recommend
25 that industry and consumers be consulted. That's

1 what the inspection advisory board is. Let them meet
2 together, let them discuss together; I don't want to
3 discuss sixty-one million and I don't want to discuss
4 a three percent or thirty-one percent, I am discussing
5 actual every day living for every day people of modest
6 means.

7 They must put a mandate and a maximum on the
8 amount of money that is going to be charged. If you
9 go down the pike, I understand if you keep reading
10 statistics, and one of the most respected men in the
11 country is the commissioner of state police of
12 California, Glen Craig, and I had many many rounds
13 with him, and he is respected in Washington, he was
14 a national president of the automotive motor vehicle
15 administrators, it was an international organization,
16 and he said, "Seymore, why do you have inspections
17 in Pennsylvania?" I said, "Glen, we want safety."
18 He said, "I'll give you all the safety you want. You
19 don't have any more vehicles than we have in California,
20 and you don't have any more dangerous drivers than we
21 do in California. We have a random check. We stop
22 them, and we give them five days to get that bomb
23 off the road; we do that, and our accident ratio is
24 just the same as yours, if not less. Tell me that
25 that car that had an accident had a defective brake;

1 did anybody pull the tires?"

2 He has an extensive report, if you wish to
3 contact him. I would recommend it heartily. That
4 was Commissioner Glen Craig. I think he's still in
5 California with the California State Police; get his
6 experience and expertise, and maybe you'll find out
7 that we don't need an inspection station because the
8 mechanics in California are surviving. They're
9 surviving where they don't have an inspection program,
10 and the mechanics in Pennsylvania will survive if
11 they operate in a business-like manner because they
12 can't make money just inspecting a vehicle. They
13 must repair it; and if they operate with a file and
14 talk to their customers and sell, as their periodical
15 states to them, why do you belong to an organization
16 if you don't read what they say? They conduct
17 programs of how to improve your business. The ones
18 that can't do it are the ones that will go by the
19 wayside, so we'll be left with successful consumer-
20 oriented business people.

21 The ones that violate -put the word shall and
22 get them out of business, they're the ones giving the
23 bad name, and there aren't that many, but get them
24 out for our sake. I told the operators at the two
25 dinners, I said, "Just face me. How many of you

1 road test a car?" You members have had cars inspected.
2 If you happen to be there, was your car road tested?
3 One of the safest things you have to do--if you have
4 a front end collision--I could sit the car right here,
5 inspect the brakes, lights, tires, windshield,
6 everything and it passes; but when you have a front
7 end accident, you have a collapsed steering wheel.
8 It collapses, it's broken, and when you go down, you're
9 doing this. That's the most important part of the
10 inspection. You can check the front end if you don't
11 have an alignment, but you must check that steering
12 wheel; so don't come up and say how safe you are.

13 I respected the gentlemen today because I
14 think they operate in a respectable manner with
15 integrity, but there are too many that don't; and
16 those are the ones that--they have to police their
17 own industry and get them out and say, "Let's give
18 our industry a good reputation."

19 Again, Mr. Chairman, I'm not here to speak on
20 behalf of the administration that I was involved in.
21 I'm not speaking about the programs of this administration
22 I'm speaking about the programs that will benefit the
23 people and industry of Pennsylvania. Thank you very
24 much.

25 MR. DAVIES: Thank you, sir. Any questions?

1 With the knowledge of that, sir, in Colorado, why--
2 were they in the transition of making a switch when
3 you were there or do you know why they made a change
4 since then? Do you know the inner workings of that?

5 MR. HEYISON: They didn't think inspection was
6 necessary. I don't know, but they may be going into
7 a random inspection; but, they switched. The state
8 of Florida did also because the inspection that
9 Florida was doing was just senseless, and they
10 switched from inspection.

11 MR. DAVIES: Now, also you said about the
12 road inspection. Is that part of the California
13 program?

14 MR. HEYISON: The random inspection?

15 MR. DAVIES: No, the road inspection. You
16 said to road inspect. Does California not only make
17 the random, but after they get the correction, do
18 they road inspect? Do they road test?

19 MR. HEYISON: I would doubt it, sir. No, sir,
20 they have a random inspection. If it's bad, you have
21 a certificate to get it back.

22 MR. DAVIES: And you do say that their figures
23 are very valid?

24 MR. HEYISON: I would contact Commissioner
25 Craig. Yes, very very valuable information.

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MR. DAVIES: All right. Now, sir?

MR. MILLER: I hope no one has the impression that the safety inspection program is to keep the garage people in business or to make it more profitable for them. I know it wasn't initiated that way, and I don't think it's continued for that reason, and I think in listening to Mr. Heyison, you could get that impression, and we're scared to death we're going to go broke. That's not the case. We will actually, after the first year, make more money. Go ahead and go to once a year and see if that's not true.

Mr. Heyison, you are correct. You did speak to our association, but you're not correct that the majority of the people put up their hands and said they favored a once a year inspection after you were done speaking. Now the records have the facts; me and him could argue all day. You can go look at the records of the association on that.

MR. DAVIES: All right, thank you. Any other questions?

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1 MR. DAVIES: Mr. John Patterson, Director of
2 Public Affairs of the West Penn Motor Club. Mr.
3 Patterson.

4 MR. PATTERSON: Mr. Chairman and Committee
5 members, that's a tough act to follow. I don't have
6 Mr. Heyison's credentials, as a head of the Bureau
7 of Traffic Safety. I don't have the credentials of
8 an expert automobile mechanic.

9 I've heard some horror stories about people
10 who don't take care of their cars unless they're
11 inspected twice a year. I wonder if we shouldn't
12 change the whole emphasis and say you should have
13 your car inspected once a week, otherwise you can't
14 take care of it. The best thing I can do is to keep
15 it simple.

16 I will say that I would like to present the
17 club's viewpoint. We have two hundred sixty thousand
18 members. I would not be presumptuous enough to say
19 that I speak for two hundred sixty thousand people,
20 and I know there are members of Triple A probably in
21 this room who will agree with me. I also have heard
22 what statistics have been given earlier today are
23 practically useless. Whenever we get the statistics
24 what does the Office of Public Administration--do
25 they think these things up? I just don't think they do.

1 There must be some validity to them.

2 To make it very short, I'd like to present
3 the club's viewpoint on once a year inspections.
4 This is safety inspections, not maintenance, and I
5 will repeat the position we took editorially in the
6 last issue of the club's publication, the Western
7 Pennsylvania Motorist, and the title of the editorial
8 tells how we feel about once a year inspections, in
9 a nutshell. It's O.K says Triple A.

10 The editorial goes on to say once every six
11 months Pennsylvania motorists put their cars under
12 a safety stethoscope as a requirement to assure
13 mechanically safe cars and trucks on our streets and
14 highways; but are the semiannual trips to the car
15 doctor necessary?

16 Pennsylvania Triple A Federation has taken a
17 close look into the question since 1979 and feels that
18 one major inspection a year is sufficient and was the
19 first major organization to come out in favor of once
20 a year inspection. West Penn Motor Club, as a member
21 of the Triple A Federation and its safety committee
22 cites national evidence that once a year inspection
23 will not increase highway accidents.

24 Many highway safety studies, one conducted by
25 Indiana University of Pennsylvania and another which

1 you have been discussing most of the day from the
2 Office of Budget Administration of the Commonwealth,
3 states that human factors caused between eighty and
4 eighty-five percent of accidents and that vehicle
5 factors came to less than six percent. There was a
6 little discussion whether it was six, five, four or
7 three, but look at the difference. For example, I
8 will deviate for a moment to say National Highway
9 Traffic Administration says there are fifty thousand
10 fatalities a year, twenty-five thousand caused by
11 drunk drivers. How much more important that is than
12 worrying about once or twice a year inspection.

13 Anyhow, the figure of less than six percent
14 does not change in states where once a year or random
15 inspections are now in effect. The opponents of once
16 a year inspections say that anything less than twice
17 a year is unsafe, and these statistics show that not
18 to be true.

19 Many inspection stations feel that individual
20 car owners will not maintain their cars properly
21 unless forced to undergo twice a year inspections,
22 and I'm not denying that in many cases that might be
23 true; but maintenance and safety are two different
24 things. If we had inspections four times a year,
25 this might still be true, but we should not confuse

1 safety inspection with periodic maintenance.

2 A once a year inspection law should concentrate
3 on the major items that are related to the safety
4 of the vehicle: brakes, steering, tires, and head
5 lights. I don't think you have to knock on the side
6 of the frame. I'm not so sure that the frame or a
7 small hole the size of a quarter of rust in a fender
8 is a safety factor in driving an automobile.

9 We have a reputation at Triple A for being in
10 favor of safety. Sitting right over there in the
11 corner is our safety manager, who spends every waking
12 moment thinking about safety from the school patrol
13 safety, pedestrian safety, automobile safety, every
14 kind involving the motorist and the person who walks
15 the streets. The nitty gritty down here is safety,
16 and twenty-two states have once a year inspection,
17 five I believe now have twice a year inspections, and
18 the others have random inspections. The accident
19 rates have very little difference.

20 Annual inspection, Triple A believes, would
21 have no detrimental effect on vehicles and, therefore,
22 highway safety. Thank you very much.

23 MR. DAVIES: Thank you, sir. I guess the ever
24 waking moments were rather testing this afternoon as
25 compared to the lively exchange we had this morning.

1 But nevertheless, we're just about through in time.

2 Would you venture as far as the leadership
3 and the editorial and your own opinion, would you
4 venture a consensus as far as the leadership as
5 compared to has there been any sampling of members
6 at all out there in your vast numbers?

7 MR. PATTERSON: We did a legislative survey
8 two years ago locally by the West Penn Club and just
9 recently the Federation did a survey asking members'
10 opinions on various things involving driving, emissions
11 inspection was one, once a year safety as opposed to
12 twice a year safety. I don't find as a result of
13 those surveys that there are a lot of people who
14 really are silently opposed to twice a year inspection;
15 but sixty-five percent of those surveyed in a
16 computerized survey--not a random KQV survey whether
17 we don't know whether this is right or not kind of
18 thing, but sixty-five percent did favor once a year.
19 Thirty percent favored the present system, and five
20 percent had no opinion.

21 MR. DAVIES: As far as the leadership, does
22 that pretty much follow through as far as their--those
23 people that--I mean those people that have some--are
24 policy formers?

25 MR. PATTERSON: Our policy formers believe in

1 once a year inspection. I know the Safety Inspection
2 Committee in Harrisburg strongly advocates you, as
3 Bob Miller told you in the previous meeting.

4 MR. DAVIES: All right. Gentlemen?

5 MR. STEIGHNER: One quick question. Your
6 sixty-five/thirty, etc., how many people were involved
7 in your survey?

8 MR. PATTERSON: The survey was set--we received
9 fifteen hundred replys. That's a computerized survey
10 by zip code, by income, very carefully done to get
11 a cross section of the membership, not to get an
12 opinion by calling people on the phone or having them
13 call in and--you know.

14 MR. STEIGHNER: So you had fifteen hundred
15 responses?

16 MR. PATTERSON: Yes.

17 MR. STEIGHNER: All right, that's all.

18 MR. GAMBOL: Of this sixty-five percent, were
19 the reasons given why you wanted one per year?

20 MR. PATTERSON: No.

21 MR. GAMBOL: So we don't know if half of that
22 sixty-five want the one per year perhaps because they
23 would have to pay less, we don't know that.

24 MR. PATTERSON: No.

25 MR. DAVIES: All right. Any others?

1 MS. SKOLNICK: I just wanted to tell you I
2 asked a member in good standing of the Triple A for
3 four years, and all the members of my family are.
4 We have never ever been contacted about our opinion
5 on anything, and many of my friends are too, by the
6 way.

7 I would like to know how they selected--was it
8 a random selection?

9 MR. PATTERSON: Yes. Yes, it was, Marilyn.
10 It was a random selection out of our computer.

11 MS. SKOLNICK: You serve on a committee that
12 I serve on, and there are several Triple A members,
13 all of whom are opposed to what Triple A is saying
14 the membership agrees to.

15 MR. PATTERSON: That's several members, and
16 you get one garage to tell you that he had ten people
17 who did thus and so on or didn't do thus and so on
18 to their car. That's ten people. You kiss off a
19 survey made by the Office of Budget Administration
20 which apparently has dealt with many more than ten
21 people.

22 MR. DAVIES: Yes, sir?

23 MR. MESSNER: Could I ask you are these comments
24 from the West Penn Triple A or the National Federation?

25 MR. DAVIES: No, his survey is from West Penn.

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MR. MESSNER: His comments.

MR. PATTERSON: I am representing the West Penn Motor Club, as I said, as a part of the Western Pennsylvania Triple A Federation.

MR. MESSNER: It's not national?

MR. PATTERSON: No, it's not national. The national has no policy, national policy, on this specific one.

MR. MESSNER: This is just West Penn?

MR. PATTERSON: The state.

MR. DAVIES: O.K. Any others?

Thank you, sir.

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1 MR. DAVIES: Jack Weaver of the Weaver Motor
2 Service.

3 (No response.)

4 MR. DAVIES: Vaughn Hamlin, a garage owner.

5 MR. HAMLIN: I appreciate much the chance to
6 say a few things in regards to the testimony as you
7 have heard. I have none, I was just listening to
8 what's been said.

9 When you leave here to make up your own mind
10 from all the stories you've heard, which ones are
11 true and which are false, which will help, which will
12 hinder, they have to do one of the two, they can't
13 do it any other way. I've made some notes down here
14 that I'd like to go on to if I may.

15 First of all, you may say who am I and why am
16 I here. I'd like to throw something in the pile here.
17 I was fifty-two yesterday, I painted my first car
18 when I was thirteen. I've been in business since 1950,
19 for about a half a million dollars gross now. The
20 secretary, when I asked her what percentage of business
21 we did via check, she said about eighty percent of
22 the people paid by check. We haven't had a bad check
23 in my place in over two years.

24 Now I think my relationship with the customers
25 has to be pretty good. I was hearing from Mr. Miller

1 his percentage of cars that pass with just the
2 inspection fee, and I know that I had the secretary
3 go back through our charts and fill in the information
4 for all my service accounts, the survey, and off the
5 top of my head today I'm sure that at our place it's
6 between seventy and seventy-five percent of the cars
7 that need something done. We are not selling people
8 something they don't need; I'm an independent. I
9 don't have a Midas sign hanging up there, that I can
10 afford to rob people. What I have is a competitor
11 that business-wise has moved into town and will be
12 there when a lot of independents get buried.

13 We don't have the ability as an independent
14 to sell a customer something they don't need. If we
15 respect our reputation--Midas will do it, and they
16 will think nothing of it. I will prove the statement
17 if anybody wishes.

18 If I tell you you need a new manifold and a
19 new exhaust system and that man fixes the car for you
20 for ten dollars, what would you think? I'm speaking
21 of one example. Nobody's going to move toward that
22 issue.

23 I heard here that Colorado in a cost saving
24 venture changed their system. Colorado's changed
25 the system, and it's got a system out there that maybe

1 we could with thought on this implement in Pennsylvania
2 and save a lot of money. There's no guard rails out
3 there. Fourteen thousand feet of mountains, and they
4 don't need them. Why does Pennsylvania have a super
5 guard rail system?

6 Now, if the things that haven't been discussed
7 here such as guard rails, the white lines and the
8 yellow lines on our highway,-- I'm a firm believer
9 that my tax dollars are being well spent when I see
10 those things in good repair and where they're mostly
11 needed. There are states that don't have those things,
12 and yet on the graphs they come in fine. Why? Please
13 ask yourself that question.

14 The statistic, if our pull our guard rails and
15 pull our white and yellow lines, that is not going
16 to change our statistic? Is that not going to change
17 the miles travelled without accidents? We're talking
18 about millions of deaths. How many people get like--
19 for instance, one of my employees was raised by his
20 father from the time he was seven years old. His
21 mother died last year. That boy is twenty years old,
22 and she was in a home all that time. That wasn't a
23 statistic, she didn't die.

24 I'm of the opinion that when you smash a car
25 up, whether a person gets killed or not, it's still

1 a statistic. It should be in there, it should be
2 mentioned; it's important.

3 The question was asked why in the urban area
4 there was a difference in the cost. I know that if
5 you want to tear a car apart in Pittsburgh, and we
6 had one of our customers drive from a heated garage
7 to a heated garage at the hospital and do it three
8 times a day, and the salt on that car because of the
9 heat speeds up the chemical process and the car
10 literally falls apart, and I saw it on several of
11 his cars, the floorboards come apart. The guy that
12 can't afford a garage can fit it outside and he
13 doesn't have that problem. The car in the urban area
14 will probably be exposed to salt, and it was mentioned
15 today, acid rain, something we didn't have when I was
16 a kid.

17 I heard about an even flow if we hook up the
18 inspection system to a registration system. We just
19 went through a spell here where people bought few
20 cars. I'm in the rustproofing business. The rust-
21 proofing business is tied directly to new cars. When
22 there's no new cars sold or very few, the business is
23 slow. Registrations are going to be slow, too.

24 I know now that it's very easy for a policeman
25 to look at a sticker and tell whether it's current

1 or not. I wonder if there got to be twelve if that
2 same fast glance would bring the same results. When
3 the law was put in--you talk about 1929, and I have
4 letters here from a zillion people. One of them,
5 Mr. Spino, and he said that it's an outdated law.
6 Therefore, changes have to be made. When that law
7 was put in, my dad drove his Franklin for twenty-five
8 years. We see people now with two hundred thousand
9 miles on a car. It used to be a trip to go to my
10 aunt's place eight miles south of Pittsburgh, all
11 the way to East Liberty. Now people run seventy-five
12 to one hundred miles a day and think nothing of it.
13 It's a new ball game.

14 Pennsylvania started off with probably as good
15 a state inspection system as you could get. I really
16 hate to see something that is going backwards. I
17 would like to see something that is good made better.

18 When I hear about how many state garage
19 inspectors there are versus the amount of garages,
20 there's something wrong and you need help. Those
21 fellows cannot do the job properly. If you build a
22 good system, why not put some help out there so they
23 can lean on the people and get rid of these guys that
24 you heard mentioned, by a sticker. That should not
25 even be considered, not even possible.

1 A man came to my shop for a state inspector,
2 got an estimate of over two hundred dollars. That
3 man comes from California, what you heard is a very
4 highly regarded state for state inspection. It was
5 a Volkswagen car, and man, the left front outer pads
6 are bent, don't move, the right front inner pads, bad,
7 doesn't move, the back lining on the rivets--a whole
8 series of things that are wrong with the car. This
9 man, by the way, came here to teach at a college in
10 Pittsburgh, the intelligentsia. He was not happy
11 with what he heard the estimate was. Three days later
12 that car was brought in our place because the
13 windshield wiper didn't work. He went to the K-Mart
14 that night and got a sticker.

15 My shop foreman is a college graduate. I'm
16 not, but he has his degree. He is a knowledgeable
17 person. The garage inspector came in and he said,
18 "Would I love to see an inspection on that car."
19 The fellow asked what he meant. He said, "would you
20 want to inspect it?" He said, "I'd love it." The
21 garage inspector scraped the sticker off the windshield
22 and called that man and said it was not fit for the
23 highway, and it doesn't move. "If you drive it, you're
24 going to run it under the chance of getting fined."

25 The things that we had on our list were not

1 accomplished. The only thing accomplished down there
2 was K-Mart got ten bucks. The man did not get a safer
3 car; and if there had been a problem, he wouldn't have
4 made it.

5 I think Pennsylvania can be proud we have a
6 good system that has loopholes. I'd like to see the
7 loopholes clogged up, but I can sit next to Art
8 Miller and know you could not get a car through his
9 shop that was defective. I'm proud. I would like to
10 feel that way about all the shops in Pennsylvania.

11 You can't do it by giving a man twice as much
12 work as he can possibly handle, and I heard a while
13 ago I think that--I will mention one more thing,
14 please. A seventy-nine automobile, a Plymouth Champ
15 that was just last week, and what we're faced with
16 when a customer comes to us for repairs is having a
17 happy smiling face when a customer leaves. On these
18 new front engine front wheel cars that have rubber
19 boots on the axles, this customer wasn't aware that
20 the boots were bad on both sides. How would you like
21 to be faced with a five hundred dollar bill plus
22 a car that's two years old? It could happen, it could.

23 In Florida we hear they're dropping the state
24 inspection system. I have a woman that called me
25 from Florida whose husband was my wife's boss. He had

1 a stroke and retired down there. She called me for
2 advice, fourteen thousand miles on the car, and they
3 want to replace the frame in it, a Monte Carlo. The
4 Pennsylvania state inspection system would have caught
5 that, and it would have been repaired, and the factory
6 would have paid for it; but the car was two years old
7 plus. The Chevrolet division says it was not their
8 concern. I finally flew a friend of mine from here
9 to there, got somebody to fix the frame and fix the
10 car for her so it's safe. That woman didn't know it
11 was broken.

12 Their state inspection down there doesn't
13 catch it. It's a poor excuse for a state inspection
14 system. They might as well throw it away, they
15 didn't do any good.

16 Pennsylvania is doing good. We should make it
17 better. The best transportation we've got in the
18 country is the airlines, and they're watched like a
19 hawk. If you fly that plane for one minute, one hour,
20 or whatever, it gets inspected once a year. When the
21 aircraft industry is watched closely and can provide
22 the best transportation we have, why can't we follow
23 suit? Why do we have to go the opposite way and lose
24 what we're already three quarters of the way to
25 obtaining.

1 One more thing and I'll close my mouth.
2 Rental cars. How many rental agencies in the Allegheny
3 County area, if you people are familiar, are based in
4 Ohio? The girl next door is dating a fellow, I hear
5 the car going down the street, and I hear metal on
6 metal. It's not even my daughter, but I called her
7 parents and told them what I heard. I said, "Why
8 don't you have that man get that car inspected if
9 he wants to date your daughter." They found no brakes
10 on that car; I was right. The man is a very
11 intelligent person in his living.

12 It's an Ohio based firm, and they run scot
13 free on the same street that I'm travelling on. I
14 don't like that.

15 The dentist who mails that card and reminds
16 you to come in, and if you don't go, you hurt yourself.
17 When you don't get your car inspected, and, you know,
18 there's something wrong or we change the system so
19 you can run along, and as an example, the cars at our
20 place as I say, seventy to seventy-five percent need
21 something, I high percentage of those cars are going
22 to remain on the road for a longer period of time,
23 not safe now. The degree of safety is determined by
24 whatever the job is.

25 If you don't go to the dentist, you hurt yourself.

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If you don't get your car fixed, you may hurt me.

There's one me. I think about that.

MR. DAVIES: Any questions? Thank you very
much, sir.

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1 MR. DAVIES: Anyone else that we missed? Our
2 gentleman didn't get back on the invitation.

3 I want to thank everybody again, and we will
4 convene tomorrow in Erie at 10:00 o'clock.

5 - - -

6 (Whereupon, at 4:30 p.m., the hearing
7 was concluded.)

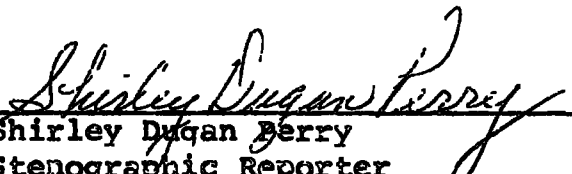
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter,
that the foregoing proceedings were taken
stenographically by me, and thereafter reduced to
typewriting by me, or under my direction; and that
this is a true and accurate transcript to the best
of my ability.


Shirley Dugan Berry
Stenographic Reporter