

Testimony of the Alliance of Automotive
Service Providers of Pennsylvania before the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency
Preparedness Committee and the Transportation Subcommittee on Highways
Public Hearing
House Bill 1414
Tuesday August 15,2017
Pennsylvania Fire Academy
Lewistown Pennsylvania

Thank you to Chair Barrar, Chair Sainoto, Chair Schlegel Culver, Chair Keller and members
of the committees for the opportunity today to speak on HB 1414 and share our
experiences with you to discuss how to make our job safer as tow operators.

Further, we greatly appreciate the new bill passed, providing for stricter penalties to the
Move Over Law. However, it is important to realize that it is just one piece of the puzzle in
keeping everyone safe.

My name is Mike Hippensteel. My family has owned and operated (name of company)
located in Newville Pa for Cumberland County for X years

Joining me on the panel is Ken Lenhart , Lenharts Service Center ,North Huntingdon PA,
Westmoreland County and Jeff Walter. Zimmermans Auto Service, Mechanicsburg and
Amanda Henry, Executive Director of the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers of
Pennsylvania (AASP-PA)

AASP-PA is a trade association representing over 1000 independent mechanical, collision and towing business across the state.

We are here to testify in strong support of House Bill 1414 which would allow limited use of red lights by towing vehicles attending to vehicular accident and recovery incidents.

AASP-PA is very appreciative to Chairman Barrar for introducing this legislation that addresses a very serious safety concern in the Commonwealth.

This bill would allow operators of towing vehicles the OPTION of incorporating red lights to be included in the currently authorized amber light displays.

The use of these red lights would be limited to towing vehicles called to accident scenes or other incidents through 911 calls or police dispatch and at the site of retrieving abandoned or disabled vehicles along the right away.

There are serious penalties in the legislation for use of red lights outside the perimeters expressed in this bill.

Towers are proud to serve in partnership at accident scenes with state and local police, fire departments and ambulance companies.

This is dangerous work for all involved. This bill would provide parity for our part of the team in regard to safety and visibility -and for the motoring public.

It is estimated that a tow truck operator is killed weekly while working alongside the road. Unfortunately, that statistic and others like it are not concrete as they are difficult to compile based on tow trucks not being considered emergency responders. Tow trucks are often at accident scenes with "emergency vehicles," however, they are not considered an emergency vehicle as well. Instead, tow trucks are classified as "authorized vehicles."

Typically at an accident scene the following are on site: ambulance, fire rescue, police and a tow operator. Ambulances are obviously the first to leave the scene, with fire rescue leaving shortly after. At that point, all that are left on the scene are the police and the tow operator.

However, if the police officer has to leave to get to the hospital, take someone to the station, etc., which often times happens, the tow operator is on their own for vehicle recovery. They are still part of the emergency response effort, but with only amber lights, it is difficult for drivers on the road to understand the importance of their role and appreciate the danger they are in.

Another set of red lights reinforces to others that there is an accident and they should slow down and/or move over. That is why we feel that red lights would help in the safety of tow operators.

Again, thank you Representative Barrar, and others here today for giving us the opportunity to share our experiences with you.

* Finish with sharing personal stories & showing Mike's videos *