New Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report Spotlights Impact of Vehicle Repair Restrictions

On March 21, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a new report detailing how automaker restrictions on vehicle data access can "disadvantage" independent repair shops and leave consumers with fewer choices, higher prices, and more difficulties when it comes time for car repairs.

"Vehicles are becoming more technologically advanced and increasingly transfer…repair data…directly to automakers. This trend may cause challenges for independent repair shops in conducting repairs as they may not have access to that data as automakers may not share it with them."

– U.S. Government Accountability Office

It's time to pass bipartisan right to repair solutions, like the Right to Equitable and Professional Auto Industry Repair (REPAIR) Act (H.R. 906), to ensure that consumers and repairers of their choice have access to the vehicle data, tools, and software needed to maintain modern vehicles.

With 50 bipartisan cosponsors in Congress and unanimous approval from the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce last fall, support for the REPAIR Act is at an all-time high.

Diving Deeper: Vehicle Repair Restrictions

GAO's report makes clear that vehicle repair restrictions are creating headaches for businesses and consumers.

FEWER CHOICES, HIGHER PRICES, LESS CONVENIENCE: "If independent repair shops face limitations in access to the information, data, and tools needed for repair, consumers might have fewer repair choices. If independent repair shops face disparities in access, it could make repairs more expensive or inconvenient for some consumers."

DISADVANTAGING INDEPENDENTS, REDUCING COMPETITION: "These evolving vehicle technologies impose challenges on all repair shops…In addition, challenges in repairing vehicles with advanced technologies may especially affect the ability of some independent repair shops to be competitive."

Independent repairers are facing real problems now with vehicle repair restrictions.

"…**problems using a third-party scan tool** that provides basic diagnostic data but **does not provide access to certain vehicle components**"

"…data limitations…result in the shop **needing to take some vehicles to dealerships** to complete repairs"

"…**difficulty programming parts** installed in many vehicles because they **do not have the access needed** to do so"

"**unable to use third-party scan tools with newer vehicles** from one automaker and instead **must use the tool sold by that automaker**"

Equitable vehicle data access does not come at the expense of safety and security.

"Two stakeholders we interviewed with **expertise in cybersecurity** indicated that it could be **possible for automakers to provide secure access to telematic diagnostic and repair data to independent repair shops**… NHTSA has also stated that **cybersecurity should not be a reason to justify limiting who can conduct repairs**…"

Other Facts & Figures

2X MORE — Since 2000, vehicle repair costs have **more than doubled**.

70% — Independent auto repair shops perform **more than 70% of all after-warranty vehicle repairs**.

NEARLY 40% — Nearly **four out of every ten** U.S. vehicles have at least one repair affected by limited data access.

The CAR Coalition, of which LKQ is a founding member, is proud to support a national campaign for right to repair legislation, like the REPAIR and SMART Acts. Learn more at www.CarRepairChoice.org.