

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup of H.R. 5865, the “American Manufacturing Competitiveness Act of 2012;” and
H.R. 5859, to repeal subsection (c) of 49 U.S.C. 32302, which requires motor vehicle
insurance cost reporting Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
June 6, 2012

Today the Subcommittee will consider two bills.

The first bill up today is Mr. Lipinski’s H.R. 5865, the “American Manufacturing Competitiveness Act of 2012.” The purpose of this bill is to require whoever may be serving in the Office of the President in each of the next two terms to develop a comprehensive manufacturing strategy for this country. I commend Representative Lipinski on his continued effort to shine a light on this important industrial sector and I support this measure.

America needs a strong manufacturing sector. This sector has long been a source of good paying jobs with good benefits and a key building block for a strong and stable middle class in this country. Manufacturing is important to making sure we remain a nation of big ideas and big innovations, and it’s important to our overall security.

This is something we all recognize; and it is something that President Obama and his Administration clearly recognize. Both within the White House and at the Department of Commerce, the Obama Administration has a number of initiatives underway to bolster American manufacturing.

Congress has also recently done some work in this area by calling on the Commerce Department to update its 2004 manufacturing strategy report, to create a task force on manufacturing growth, and to establish an Economic Security Commission to advise Congress and the President on long-term competitive challenges for the manufacturing sector.

I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for working with me to improve the bill. Tomorrow, I expect the Chairman to call up a bipartisan Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute that helps ensure balanced recommendations and works to reduce duplication with other governmental initiatives on manufacturing.

Today, we are also considering H.R. 5859, a bill to repeal a little-known provision enacted in 1972 to inform consumers about the costs associated with repairing damages to vehicles involved in minor collisions.

This is not about crash worthiness. This is not about passenger safety. This is about low speed collisions where cars sustain expensive damage.

Cars that are easily damaged are more likely to have higher insurance costs. The purpose of the provision that H.R. 5859 would repeal is to give consumers a basis for comparing damageability risk at the point of sale. It was also intended to create an incentive for manufacturers to produce cars which are more resistant to damage and less expensive to repair and service.

Questions have been raised about the utility of the cost comparison data as currently presented by NHTSA. It appears that few consumers even know to ask dealers for copies of the cost comparison. I agree that this is a signal that the current law is not working as intended.

Madam Chairman, I am not opposed to ending the current mandate that dealers make pamphlets available to consumers. But I don't think we should repeal this mandate without putting in place a better way for consumers to get the information.

I hope you will work with me on this issue so we can report a bill that removes a burden from dealers but doesn't leave consumers in the dark.