218th New JErsey Legislature

senate higher education Committee

HoN. sandra cunningham—Chair

Testimony

Sal Risalvato

Executive Director

New Jersey Gasoline-Convenience-Automotive Association

S-1922

Support

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Committee room 7

Trenton, NJ 08625

**Testimony of Sal Risalvato**

**S-1922: Support**

Chair Cunningham, members of the Committee, my name is Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of the New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience Store, Automotive Association (NJGCA), here representing nearly several hundred independent auto repair businesses across this state.

As you all well know, small businesses face a wide variety of challenges in our state. The problem that I am increasingly hearing about from my membership, at least from those who own auto repair shops, is an inability to find quality, well trained employees to fix their customers’ cars.

While part of this is the result of cultural shifts, and fewer young people being “gearheads” who want to grow up and play with cars all day; an even bigger issue is the amount of training it takes to diagnose and repair the modern automobile. The modern auto has more computing power on it than the Apollo 11 moon lander, and things are only getting more complex. Increasingly auto repairers are less and less referred to as “mechanics” and more and more referred to as “technicians”.

The difficulty in finding already qualified workers leads some business owners to hire newcomers and help them learn on the job, or send them off to various certification programs. A bill like this will be a great boost in giving them a further incentive to help some of these young people enroll in our various technical schools and eventually receive not only a degree, but more importantly the valuable lessons they will need to prepare for themselves, their employer, and ultimately our whole community.

NJGCA looks forward to working with the members of this Committee on other ways to promote workforce development in the automotive repair sector.

I ask that you support this bill.

Thank you.