

All Americans should have the freedom to fix

You, Freedom 250 pit race crews share right to repair

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This weekend, some of the fastest cars in the world raced through the streets of the nation's capital. The inaugural Freedom 250 Grand Prix of Washington brought IndyCar to Washington for the first time. For anyone who cares about cars, the pit lane can be just as fascinating to watch as the race itself.

When a car comes into the pits, the crew can make repairs quickly because it has access to the vehicle, the information and the parts needed to do the job. The crew does not need permission from a dealer to diagnose the problem or worry that using a different part will put the warranty at risk.

It fixes the car and gets it back onto the track.

Now, think about the car in your own driveway. You own it. You picked it out, paid for it and kept paying every time something broke. However, if you try to fix it yourself or take it to the mechanic you trust down the street, you may not have access to the same information, tools or parts available to that pit crew.

Modern cars are computers on wheels, and the repair and diagnostic data they generate do not belong to you. They belong to the automaker. Increasingly, so do the tools and the information your mechanic needs to do the job.

If you use a recycled or aftermarket part, you may be warned that your warranty is at risk.

The people fixing that race car can do in seconds what you are increasingly told you cannot do at all.

Restricting repair choices drives up costs.

Americans are paying roughly 46% more to repair their vehicles today than they did in 2020, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That is nearly twice the overall rate of inflation.

The independent repair industry has helped keep those costs in check. It accounts for about \$392 billion in sales and services and handles roughly 70% of the repair and maintenance work performed in this country. When that competition disappears, you pay for it — often without ever knowing you used to have a choice.

Ownership should mean something. If you bought the car, you should be able to repair it yourself or choose who repairs it. The manufacturer should not retain permanent control over the information needed to keep your vehicle running simply because the car now contains more software.

That is why I was proud to help introduce the REPAIR Act with a bipartisan group of my colleagues. The bill guarantees what most drivers already assume they have: the right for you or the shop you choose to have access to the same data, repair information and tools that automakers provide their own dealer networks.

It puts the owner of the car back in charge of the car.

Earlier this summer, President Trump signed a presidential memorandum on the “Freedom to Fix,” directing the Environmental Protection Agency to clarify what Americans may lawfully do to repair their own vehicles and to open faster, fairer certification for aftermarket parts.

He put it plainly: Too many Americans are being told that “nobody’s allowed to fix their car.” The EPA acted within weeks. I thank the president. This was a real step toward lower costs and more choice.

Still, a memo goes only so far. It can direct an agency, but it cannot change the law. That job belongs to Congress, and Congress has not finished it.

A narrower version moved through committee earlier this year. That was progress, but it left out the wirelessly transmitted repair data that today’s vehicles increasingly depend on. A bill that locks in the status quo is not the reform drivers need, and I do not believe it is the one the president’s action envisioned.

So I continue to call on my colleagues and House leadership to bring the real REPAIR Act to the floor and pass it. The votes are there.

We must remember what those pit crews from the weekend’s race represent. The freedom to fix what you own should not stop at the pit wall. Let’s make it law.

Warren Davidson represents Ohio’s 8th Congressional District.