

EXPERT TESTIMONY REGARDING S2882

POSITION: OPPOSED due to Structural and Fiscal Infrastructure Failure.

My name is Zachary Gauthier. I am an expert of this subject with direct experience. I am here to speak about the human implications of this bill. When we talk about policy, we are talking about people's lives, and that is where the stakes are highest.

My analysis of this situation is simple: You don't put a car up on the lift, see that the ball joints are missing, and then decide to ignore them while you fix something else. If the foundation is broken and you try to add more weight, that car is still going to fall apart the second it hits the road.

I want to be clear that I believe in holiday time and higher wages for the people who do this work. However, we cannot trade the quality of the program for a few dollars. **We must have new money appropriations.** Supporters point to the "automatic button" they put in the amendments, but that button doesn't matter if the car is up on the lift with broken parts. Without a dedicated budget and the proper infrastructure, the application of this law will fail.

It is a human error to believe you can apply these rules without fixing the infrastructure of our program first. Without real money behind the words, the math won't work, and you will eventually be forced to change the rules in our homes to cover the cost.

I have accepted the Amendments that protect our autonomy, but those protections mean nothing if the car is structurally broken. If the application of these rules leads to a system I did not agree to in my own home, then you have taken the "Self" out of Self-Direction. Do not break my program. Fix the ball joints before you try to drive this car, because for us, there is no backup.

Respectfully submitted,

Zachary Gauthier

Expert Consultant & Participant