

The Quality Parts Coalition Applauds Re-introduction of the PARTS Act to Preserve Competition and Protect Consumer Access to Affordable Collision Repair Parts
Bipartisan and Bicameral Legislation is Well-Positioned to Advance in the 114th Congress

February 25, 2015 – Washington, D.C. – The Quality Parts Coalition (QPC) overwhelmingly supports the “Promoting Automotive Repair, Trade, and Sales Act” or the PARTS Act, companion legislation reintroduced today in the U.S. Senate and House to fight for and preserve American drivers’ access to alternative auto replacement parts, which are up to 50 percent more affordable than car company parts and save consumers \$1.5 billion every year.

The QPC applauds Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) and Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), senior members of the U.S. Senate and House Judiciary Committees, for their continued leadership in cosponsoring this important consumer legislation.

Over the past 10 years, major car companies have secured nearly a thousand U.S. design patents on individual cosmetic collision repair parts such as hoods, fenders and mirrors. The number has dramatically increased since the 1990s, after failed attempts to get Congress to grant them special copyright-like protection for repair parts. The PARTS Act would fix U.S. design patent law by reducing how long car companies can enforce their design patents against alternative suppliers from 14 years to 2.5 years. Similar legislation was introduced in the 113th Congress.

The PARTS Act is good for consumers, businesses and the U.S. economy. It would help to keep the costs of car repairs down by safeguarding access to affordable, quality alternative parts at more than 40,000 collision repair shops nationwide.

Enacting this legislation would put the U.S. in line with the United Kingdom, a number of other European countries and Australia, which have already passed similar repair clause laws to benefit consumers.

“For decades, consumers have benefited from competition in the collision repair parts marketplace between car companies and alternative parts suppliers,” said Ed Salamy, executive director of the QPC. “Even though car companies already control more than 70 percent of the collision repair market, they are using a little-known patent maneuver to grow their monopoly and stifle competition at the expense of consumers.”

“We need to address this important consumer issue now more than ever, and we urge Congress to move swiftly with these bills to preserve a 60-year tradition of free markets and fair prices in the collision parts industry,” Salamy continued.

ABOUT QPC

The Quality Parts Coalition represents the interests of the independent parts industry, repairers, insurers, consumers and seniors. The goal of the Quality Parts Coalition is to develop and secure a permanent legislative change to U.S. design patent law to protect the consumer’s right to benefit from quality, lower-cost alternative replacement parts and to preserve competition. For more information, visit www.KeepAutoPartsAffordable.org.