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FREE

Car repair bill promises consumers a better deal

By OMID GHOREISHI
Epoch Times Staff

Much to the delight of many consumer groups and independent automobile repair shops, the "Right to Repair" bill passed second reading in Parliament last week.

Bill C-273, a Private Member's Bill sponsored by New Democrat MP Brian Masse, aims to ensure non-dealer repair shops have access to technical information and tools required to service vehicles that have so far been exclusively accessible to dealerships.

The issue has come under the spotlight in recent years with the increased use of computerized technology and embedded systems in vehicles, making it difficult or sometimes impossible for independent repair shops to service newer vehicles.

The bill has also been supported by some environmental organizations claiming consumers need to have adequate access to vehicle maintenance service to keep their vehicles in a good state and minimize pollution.

"Today, the House of Commons chose to side with every vehicle owner in the country, with protecting the environment, with the public's safety instead of a group of foreign companies," Masse stated after the bill passed second reading.

Preferring an industry-led voluntary-based approach, Industry Minister Tony Clement asked auto makers last month to provide means and mechanisms so independent repair shops can have access to the required tools and information.

"Maintaining the status quo is not an option," Clement said.

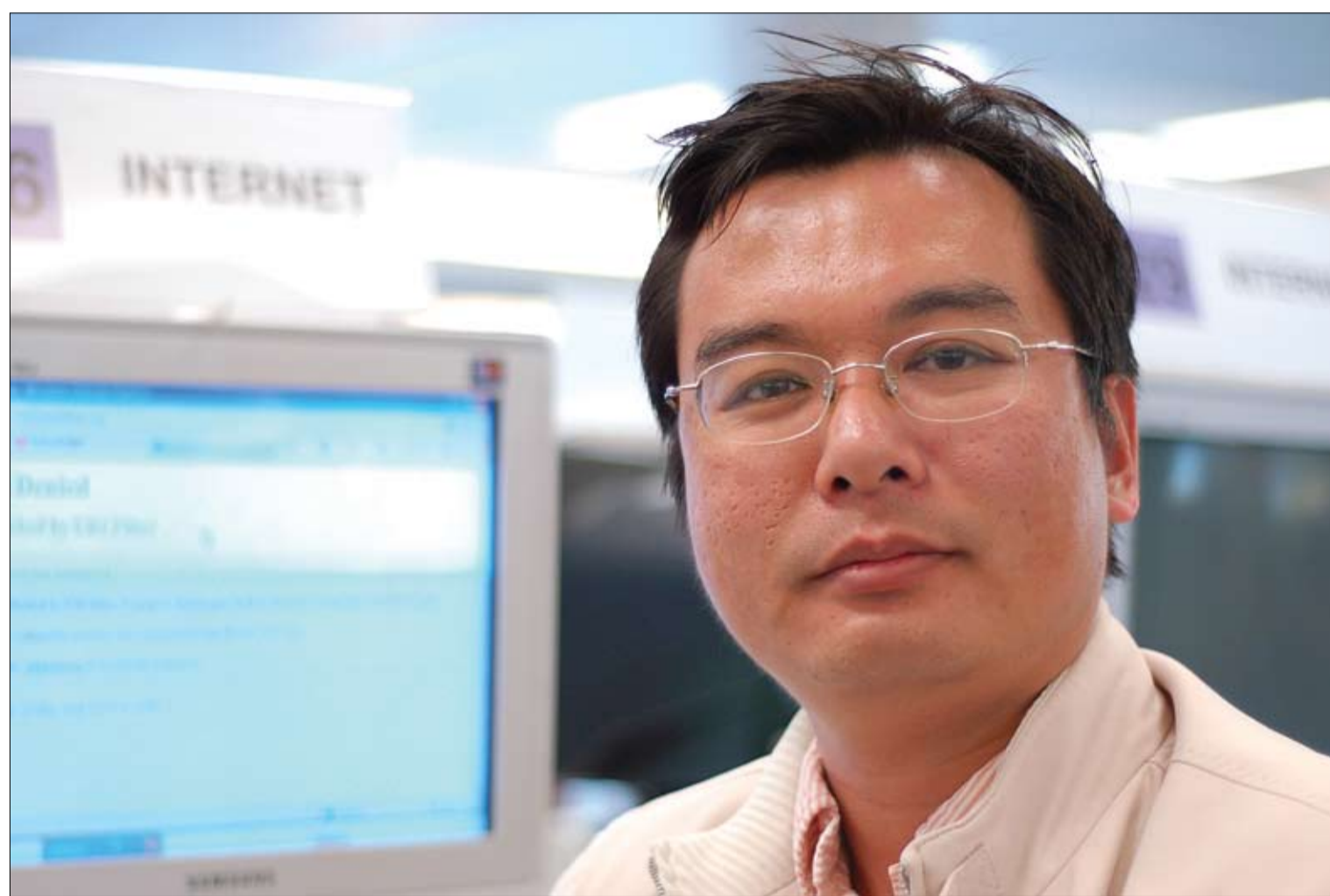
In a letter of intent released early this month, major auto manufacturer associations and one auto trades association, NATA, committed to coming up with a voluntary approach similar to the one currently in place in the U.S.

However, the voluntary approach has been denounced by some organizations including the Automotive Industries Association (AIA) of Canada, a national trade association representing the automotive aftermarket, which says the legislated solution is "the only real mechanism" to resolve the issue.

MP Masse also argues that the voluntary approach would not be effective since "no environmental or consumer protection rule is voluntary."

"A law is the only real protection for vehicle owners that is available," he said.

CONTINUED ON P3 NATION



Long Tu sits in front of a computer screen showing a blocked website at the Mississauga Central Library.

MATTHEW LITTLE/THE EPOCH TIMES

Shadow of Chinese censors found in Mississauga Internet

Sites documenting Chinese repression classed as 'hate' by city's library computers; filtering company promises change

By MATTHEW LITTLE
Epoch Times Staff

Web-filtering technology left City of Mississauga computers restricting the Internet in a way similar to one of the world's most repressive regimes, one Chinese library user has discovered.

Mississauga resident Long Tu stumbled on the problem more than two months ago when he tried to visit Chinese websites that covered topics the Chinese communist regime considers sensitive, including the repression of Tibetans, controversies during the 2008 Olympics, and Falun Gong.

Mr. Tu said he understands the library needs to have some sites blocked but he was startled that websites like China21.org, which documents the repression of Christians in China, were being filtered.

"It really gave me a surprise," he said.

The Great Firewall

In the 1990s, Chinese authorities enlisted the help of western companies like Cisco and Sun Microsystems to create the world's most advanced Big Brother internet, where search results are sanitized and internet police, aided by filtering systems, monitor and control the con-

tent Chinese surfers can access. Chinese authorities can block websites they don't approve of and see who is looking for them.

Human rights groups around the world have slammed the companies involved in creating China's "Golden Shield" for turning the internet, which was once promised to help China enter a new era of free information, into a mechanism heavily censored and monitored by the state.

Mr. Tu, who moved to Mississauga last December, is the co-author of a recently published book about the persecution of a family of Falun Gong practitioners in China who are friends of his. One of the family members, Bai Xiaojun, was tortured to death in one of China's notorious "re-education through labour" camps.

CONTINUED ON P2 NATION

Greenland to become a nation

A new beginning for island long ruled by Danes

By JOSHUA PHILIPP
Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—A new page of history is about to turn for Greenland, as the Danish province becomes a self-governing country on June 21. Several changes will be seen as the country takes its first steps toward becoming a larger player in the global economy.

After being under the rule of Denmark for nearly 300 years, this is a historic moment for Greenland.

To speak about the change taking place, Inuuteq Holm Olsen, Greenland's deputy minister of foreign affairs and Mininnguaq Kleist, the head of the department of the self-governance office, met with The Epoch Times on May 19 in Manhattan, N.Y. The two are in the city for a week to answer questions about Greenland's switch of power.

"This is not an ethical issue of Greenlanders against the Danes. It's more of a legal recognition that is important to us," Olsen said. "The Danish government has been supportive of this."

The Self-governance Act that is being implemented will expand on the current Home Rule political system used in Greenland that was implemented in 1979. When it goes into action on June 21, the people of Greenland will be recognized as a nation in international law and will be granted 33 new areas of responsibility in governing their country, such as control over the police force and court system—although complete independence from Denmark is still a ways off.

Kleist said that the current Home Rule system is becoming too limiting for Greenlanders. He compared it to a platform with several rooms that they've already explored. "Now the Self-governance Act is a new platform, a different platform with new doors we can open," Kleist said.

"For the first time we'll be recognized by a people of our own right, legally. That was not the case before," he said.

CONTINUED ON P5 WORLD

'We shake our heads when some decisions are made down in Copenhagen'
—Mininnguaq Kleist

Female journalists under fire in Afghanistan and Pakistan

By GENEVIEVE LONG
Epoch Times Staff

The job of a journalist can be a challenge in any country. But getting the story in Pakistan and Afghanistan, especially for female journalists, can be more like a mission.

According to a March report on press freedom in Afghanistan, the number of women training to be journalists there has sharply declined during the seven-year tenure of President Hamid Karzai. The report, issued by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), says that in the past few years, the percentage of female journalism students in Herat, Afghanistan, has dropped from 70 percent to 30 percent.

"They have the same problems as male journalists but stronger," said Vincent Brossel, RSF's Asia director. "Some of them have been threatened by the Taliban and extremists because they are women."

Brossel spent a week visiting sev-

eral cities in Afghanistan and interviewing government officials, journalists and advocacy groups. He said the situation for journalists in the conservative Islamic state has deteriorated, and women specifically are sometimes targeted.

For many female Afghan journalists, the pressure and dangers present too great of a risk. According to RSF, in the past seven years, several dozen female journalists have switched from reporting to administrative jobs, or quit the profession altogether.

Farida Nekzad is not among those who have backed down. A veteran journalist and Afghan native, Nekzad has worked as a reporter, editor, producer and trainer for 10 years, and has helped to train almost 200 young female journalists. In 2008, she was honored by the International Women's Media Foundation with their Courage in Journalism Award for her work.

CONTINUED ON P5 WORLD

EPA confirms toxic substances in Chinese drywall

By CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON
Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—Chinese drywall has been confirmed to contain toxic materials after test results by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were released Tuesday. The Chinese drywall was tested alongside U.S.A.-made drywall.

Sulfur was discovered in the Chinese-made drywall, and not in the U.S.-made drywall, according to a press release by Florida Senator Bill Nelson.

Strontium at levels ten times as high as in U.S. drywall were found, as well as two other organic compounds generally found in acrylic paint that were not detected in any U.S.-made wallboard.

The Florida Department of Health has recorded 379 complaints from homeowners as of Tuesday. Residents with the Chinese-made drywall have had health problems that include bronchitis, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, and irritated eyes. Many affected houses have a rotten-egg-like smell, metal is turning black, and ap-

pliances are failing.

Used in construction, the tainted drywall emits a sulfur gas that mixes with moisture in the air to produce sulfuric acid—a highly corrosive acid found in acid rain.

'In the end, I think all this stuff is going to have to be ripped out.'

—Senator Bill Nelson

"We now know there are three things in there that aren't in other drywall samples," Senator Nelson said. Nelson represents Florida, where an estimated 36,000 homes are believed

to contain Chinese-made drywall.

"In the end, I think all this stuff is going to have to be ripped out," Nelson said.

Senator Mary Landrieu represents Louisiana, where tons of the drywall was used in post-Hurricane Katrina construction.

"Sen. Nelson and I are continuing to work closely with federal officials to get answers for families with sick children and pets, construction workers and builders removing the product, and local health officials who are concerned with dumping the drywall in their landfills," Landrieu said.

All told, it's thought that between 60,000 and 100,000 homes nationwide may contain tainted drywall, according to the release.

The EPA said more testing is needed.

A congressional hearing begins Thursday into the drywall issue, where experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the EPA, CPSC, a Florida homeowner affected by the drywall, and a Louisiana homebuilder are all expected to testify.

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