

Brothers and Sisters,

HB4387, introduced this year by Rep. John D'Amico at our request, requires that school boards in the state must buy or lease only "Made in U.S.A." vehicles for purposes of driver education courses, effective immediately upon passage and signing of the bill. "Made in U.S.A." is defined as having a Vehicle Identification Number beginning with "1", "4", or "5". (We were not able to specify only Union-made, but Made in U.S.A. is a step in the right direction.) This bill went to Committee hearing on March 5, 2008, was opposed by the School Districts, but was passed by unanimous roll call vote out of the House Drivers Education and Safety Committee. Additional co-sponsors at this time are Rep. Joe Lyons and Rep. Mike Boland.

During Committee hearings, the teachers union (IFT) had no position on the bill. However, it now appears that the IFT is going to oppose the bill, in my opinion for very flimsy reasons. While we do not desire a fight with the teachers, we believe this bill is important, and we are not convinced that the teachers would be harmed by the bill. What I'm asking is that you mobilize your members to contact their State Representatives (first, because the bill was introduced as a House bill and must pass there first), and State Senators (second) to express strong support, and ASK YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE TO SIGN ON AS CO-SPONSOR OF HB4387. This bill is about helping to maintain the manufacturing base in this country, with all the positives that brings with it: good-paying jobs for the working class, and a strong industrial base to help keep this nation strong.

Please take this action alert seriously, and please let me know what actions have been taken by you, and members of your Local and/or Area CAP Council.

Thanks,
Mark Haasis
Illinois State CAP Coordinator.

Brothers and Sister,

Attached is a fact sheet on HB4387, a bill introduced in the Illinois House at our initiative that would require that Illinois School Districts buy or lease only American-made vehicles for their Drivers Ed programs. HB4387 has been recommended favorably out of the House Drivers Education and Safety Committee, by an 11-0 roll call vote. The Illinois Federation of Teachers, which took no position on the bill during Committee hearings, may now oppose the bill. After due consideration, we do not feel this legislation would harm the teachers, so we are once again asking for your support. Specifically, it would make a powerful statement if the State Representatives from districts with auto assembly and stamping plants would all co-sponsor this bill, so please contact your representatives and ask them to sign on as co-sponsors. As soon as we get a probable date for a vote on the bill, I will let you know.

In Solidarity,
Mark.

HB 4387
Rep. John D'Amico
UAW Position: Support

Proposal: This legislation provides that school boards shall require that all vehicles used for the practice driving part of a driver education course offered by the school district purchased or leased on or after the effective date of the amendatory Act have a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) that begins with the number one, the number four or the number five, i.e., that the vehicles be assembled in the United States.

Background: Motor vehicle manufacturing is a key component of the manufacturing base of the United States. It is vitally important to maintain manufacturing in the U.S., for security, technological and economic reasons.

- ✓ The automotive industry has proven flexible in the past to conversion to military-related products, when needed for national defense.
- ✓ New partnerships are being implemented between labor, environmental organizations and the auto industry in order to produce fuel-efficient engines and vehicles. The engineering and design expertise employed in the automotive industry has had and will continue to have wider applications of benefit to other sectors of the economy.
- ✓ The automotive industry provides hundreds of thousands of good-paying direct jobs in assembly and component plants, as well as millions of spin-off jobs. (In Illinois alone, there are about 10,000 automotive assembly jobs, and over 100,000 jobs in auto-related businesses.)
- ✓ With the continued expansion of plants in the United States by foreign-based automotive companies, there are now a wide variety of makes and models available that meet the criteria of this legislation. Currently, twelve different companies assemble passenger vehicles and light trucks in the U.S.: BMW, Chrysler, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Toyota, and Subaru. Kia and Volkswagen are actively exploring locations to begin production in the U.S.

Rationale: As recipients of public funds, and given the wide variety of vehicle choices that fulfill this legislation's criteria, it is reasonable to expect school districts to help support the U.S. manufacturing base when purchasing or leasing vehicles for drivers' education programs.

Please support House Bill 4387.

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