

17 January 2020

Rep. Richard Proehl  
Kansas State Capitol  
Attn: Betty Boaz  
Topeka, KS 66601

Dear Chairman, Proehl and committee members:


My name is Joshua Watkins, and I recently retired from the Air Force with 24 years of service. The reasons I write this letter is varied, partly because I am a "car guy", prior military and retired to Kansas. I have spent more time in Humvee's (HMMWV's) than any of my own vehicles. I have pulled patrols in them, 24-hour shifts, shot heavy weapons off the back of them, drove them in rough terrain/austere environments and for 6 of those years trained Security Forces personnel in Desert Warfare. My brother is retired Army as well with 23 years of service and more time on the road in them and fixing them. He drove and road in them all over Iraq and Afghanistan. This is just background, so you know a little of what forms my recommendation.

I now have the pleasure of working for a company that upgrades Humvee (HMMWV's) Hummer H1s, H2, and H3. At Global Parts Auto Group, Inc. we have seen people turn these same military humvees into high-end, plush civilian style machines. To have a Humvee (HMMWV) come in with bullet holes in it or other tail-tail signs of real use and be able to upgrade them or "save" them from government scrap is amazing. To think this same vehicle that carried my friends now has the garage kept life with some person cherishing it is amazing to me. These vehicles were picked for military use because they are tough, and they had to meet certain criteria. If you have ever ridden in a military humvee you know their top speed is 55 mph and on an extreme down-hill with the wind at your back it may hit 60mph. Which in safety standards means automatically because of the slower speed a collision is more survivable. I would rather be in a hummer going 55mph than a motorcycle or subcompact car doing 75 mph, any day, when safety is in mind. Golf carts and ATVs can be driven on the streets in small towns and rural areas. I can guarantee no military member would want to ride on a golf cart in a convoy in Afghanistan or even Wichita for that matter. We allow that because it makes sense. I believe that if this vehicle that carries military men and women up and down our highways and state roads was good enough for me in uniform, then it should be allowed for me to purchase and register the same vehicle for highway use now as a civilian, it just makes sense. We sell these very vehicles to civilians in our state, at Ft Riley, but you can't register one in this state.

Another reason I think you should change the states opinion on this matter is because of the revenue it can create for the state of Kansas, both in taxes and in profits for companies like the one I work for. Now people register them as street legal vehicles in Vermont, Oklahoma, Utah, and other states where they are free to do so. We not only lose out on that revenue coming directly to the state, but we lose on the residual income that would be made off repairs and other products that would directly support these vehicles and small businesses around the state. These vehicles are obviously going to continue to be sold because of the some 300,000 produced and the still 190,000 in use by the Army alone. That is a lot of possible revenue for the state to miss out on. Especially when some major companies in the Humvee/Hummer market are right here in Kansas, benefitting Kansans!

I want to thank you for your time. I wish I had more time to show you or explain why I think it is important to allow these vehicles to be registered as street legal vehicles. If you are interested in seeing just how these vehicles are and what can be done with them feel free to call Global Parts Auto Group, Inc. for a ride in one or to see what we can do when given the opportunity to work on one of these vehicles.

Sincerely,



Joshua C. Watkins, Ret, USAF  
Global Parts Auto Group, Inc.  
316-413-0116