

STOP THE PAYDAY LOAN DEBT TRAP



Mr. Jonathan Fitzpatrick  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Driven Brands  
440 S. Church Street  
Suite 700  
Charlotte, NC 28202

CC: Meineke, CarStar, MAACO  
440 S. Church Street  
Suite 700  
Charlotte, NC 28202

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick,

Accountable.US, Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund, Center for Responsible Lending, Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research (CLEAR), Consumer Federation of America, and National Consumer Law Center write to urge Driven Brands and its brands, Meineke, CarStar, MAACO, to stop offering loans through predatory lenders EasyPay Finance and Transportation Alliance Bank (TAB Bank), which **charge up to 189% annual interest, including in states where that rate is illegal,**<sup>1</sup> and have generated hundreds of complaints about deceptive and abusive practices.

Consumers struggling to pay for auto repairs repeatedly report being steered into predatory loans with shocking and often deceptive rates hidden in the fine print of applications, frequently not known until after the repairs are completed. These predatory loans have a lasting impact on consumers, causing harm to their credit reports and leading to debt collection harassment. Facilitating predatory loans violates principles of business ethics that your companies claim to uphold. We urge Driven Brands and its franchisees to disassociate itself from these practices that exploit vulnerable families.

Through [auto repair and tire shops across the country](#), including those operating under your brand, [EasyPay Finance](#) (which is owned by Duvera Billing Services) offers loans up 189% APR. EasyPay advertises to auto repair shops that it can "Increase Your Shop's Revenue" and prevent "Losing Your Credit Challenged Customers."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Consumer Law Center, "High-Cost Rent-a-Bank Loan Watch List," accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.nclc.org/issues/high-cost-small-loans/rent-a-bank-loan-watch-list.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Accountable.US, Auto Repair Conglomerates Profiting Off Predatory "TripleDigit" Interest Loans To Consumers In Need (May 16, 2022), <https://www.accountable.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-04-15-EasyPay-Auto-Repair-Research-FINAL.pdf>.

But many states [do not allow](#) those predatory interest rates. In those states, EasyPay launders its loans through **Transportation Alliance Bank (TAB Bank)** because banks are exempt from state rate caps. This is a scheme for EasyPay to collect exorbitant rates it cannot legally charge directly. In other states, EasyPay lends directly in its own name, often as a retail installment sale.

EasyPay loans are souring consumers on your companies and discourage their repeat business.

**Hundreds of consumers** have complained about EasyPay auto repair and tire loans. Complaints to the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#), [Better Business Bureau](#), and [Ripoff Reports](#) describe:

- **Outrageous interest rates of 100% to 189%**, sometimes charged to **servicemembers and veterans**. Consumers are shocked that payments for months and years have little impact on the balance.
- Interest rates **hidden in fine print** or not disclosed until repairs are finished. Applications taken over the telephone, or required to be completed on small smartphones, without written copies, leave consumers in the dark about the terms.
- **Deceptive promises of full interest rebates** if paid in 90 days, with numerous obstacles that prevent consumers from avoiding interest or knowing their balance to pay off the loan.
- **Electronic debits that were not authorized**, differed from the agreed payment, or continued after a payment plan was fulfilled.
- **Rude and unhelpful customer service and administrative errors**, leading to missed payments, fees, and loss of the interest-free option.
- **Harm to credit reports**, including from loans paid in full or reported for the wrong consumer. No response to consumer disputes.
- **Debt collection harassment** and refusal to honor payment plans, including for those impacted by COVID.

We are including a copy of a [new report](#) showing consumer experiences with businesses, like yours, that offer these types of loans.<sup>3</sup>

For example, one Meineke customer warned: “NEVER go to Meineke” after discovering that \$300 in payments only reduced the loan by \$42:

*“I was financed by Meineke and they put me with 2 different finance companys but did not tell me any of that information, I happen to see that there are 3 deductions from my bank account. I have already paid off the finance company that I was aware of, so called to find out Duvera has been taking 100.00 a month x 3 months now for loan that is only 500.00; I've paid 300.00 and as of today I still owe 452.00, that is BS where the hell has all the payments gone to, don't ever use this company and NEVER go to Meineke.”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Stop the Debt Trap, Predatory Auto Repair Loans By TAB Bank and EasyPay Finance (May 2022), [https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/high\\_cost\\_small\\_loans/Rpt-TAB\\_Auto\\_Repair-5.11.22.pdf](https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/high_cost_small_loans/Rpt-TAB_Auto_Repair-5.11.22.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> See *Id.* Story #19.

That story is typical of many more discussed in [our report](#).

We strongly urge you to ensure that loans obtained through repair shops that carry your brand are not steered to the predatory lender EasyPay Finance and its partner TAB Bank.

Sincerely,

Accountable.US

Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund

Center for Responsible Lending

Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research (CLEAR)

Consumer Federation of America

National Consumer Law Center