

**Remarks of Cindy Whitaker**  
**Press Conference on the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Protection Act (SHIPA)**  
**May 3, 2011**  
**Washington, D.C.**

Hello. My name is Cindy Whitaker, and I am from Ringgold, Georgia.

September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 started out as a normal day for me. I was home working on remodeling my kitchen when I noticed a helicopter flying over my house. Little did I know that my husband, James, was in that helicopter fighting for his life, and that my brother-in-law, Anthony, and my niece, Amber, had just been killed in a truck crash.

They were on their way home from an Atlanta Braves game when a large bucket truck blew a tire, hit one car and then hit my brother-in-law's Dodge Ram pickup. Amber and Anthony were killed instantly and my husband died four hours later.

The loss of my family may sound like an accident, but I can assure you it was not. Investigators determined the bucket truck's front tires were at least 15 years old and had been bought at a junk yard. The investigation concluded that the crash was a result of the truck driver speeding, failure to maintain lanes and defective equipment.

I am here today on behalf of three beautiful people to ask Congress and the Department of Transportation to have tougher oversight of the trucking industry and to shut down companies that don't obey the rules and put families at risk.

We need improved rules and more enforcement regarding used, worn tires and tires that come off trucks. We need an improved regulation for underride guards to make sure they are energy-absorbing and mounted lower to the ground, and one that includes a requirement for side guards. We need speed governors to be standard equipment in each and every truck so that speeding is stopped. These measures seem to make common sense to me but they are not required for commercial motor vehicles.

Since the loss of my family - my wonderful, loving husband, my beautiful, spunky 10 year-old niece and her brilliant, hard-working father, my life has been forever altered. I don't know if I will ever have true joy again and I do not want anyone else to suffer as we have.

Thank you.