

**Statement of Ed Slattery**  
**Cockeysville, MD**  
**April 9, 2014**

My name is Ed Slattery. I am a board member for Parents Against Tired Truckers and a volunteer for the Truck Safety Coalition.

On August 16, 2010, a truck driver fell asleep behind the wheel of a triple trailer truck and crashed into the back of our car. My wife, Susan, was killed in the crash and our two sons, Peter and Matthew, were seriously injured and needed to be rushed into emergency surgery.

Peter was conscious when he overheard the paramedics pronounce his mother dead. Matthew was in a coma from massive head trauma. He continues to make progress every day but is now permanently disabled and requires continuous care. After the truck collided into our car, it hit two other semis and four more passenger vehicles before stopping in the divider and bursting into flames.

In that violent and life-altering instant, my sons and I lost so very much.

I share this story with you today because I want to remind our Members of Congress that the decisions they make have real-world consequences. As Congress considers the Reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Bill, I urge them to resist the push to increase truck size and weight limits. Our families should not have to bear the burden of reduced safety in order to satisfy the demands of the trucking and shipping industries.

Expanding the size and the use of double trailer trucks, and allowing truck weights to increase from the current federal limit of 80,000 pounds to 97,000 pounds on all of our Interstates would be detrimental to motorist safety. The truck that hit my family weighted less than 80,000 pounds, and, yet, it wrought a tremendous amount of destruction and heartache when it crashed. If the truck had weighed the current weight limit of 80,000 pounds, or the more dangerous proposed weight limit of 97,000 pounds, my sons may not have survived the crash.

Approximately 4,000 people die in truck crashes every year, and 100,000 more are injured. For the third year in a row, DOT revealed there was an increase in large truck fatalities in 2012, totaling a 16 percent increase in truck crash deaths since 2009. Even more staggering, the number of people injured in crashes has increased by 40 percent since 2009.

While the trucking industry talks about efficiency and productivity to be derived from bigger and longer trucks, please consider that 4,000 families a year suffer the true cost of economies gained from current truck safety deficiencies, and our costs are not paid solely in grief and loss. The annual cost to society from crashes involving commercial motor vehicles is estimated to be over \$83 billion.

If airplane crash deaths increased by 16 percent in three years, Congress would not weaken safety rules to permit less safe aircrafts, imperiling the public's safety. The same dedication to safety should be followed with trucks on our roadways.

This morning I remember my wife, Susan Slattery and I honor the daily courage of my sons.

I implore each and every Member of Congress to pay attention to my family's story and to do everything you can to ensure that other families do not have to experience the loss and pain that my family lives with every day.