

Remarks of Pina Arrington
Goose Creek, SC
Press Conference on the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Protection Act (SHIPA)
May 7, 2013
Washington, DC

Hello, my name is Pina Arrington. Today I am going to share with you the top fifteen worst states for truck crash fatalities. But first, I'd like to tell you my story.

On April 9, 2012, I lost my husband, Scott Arrington, in a truck crash. Scott was heading to work in North Charleston, South Carolina, when a truck driver, who had been sitting in the center median, got tired of waiting on traffic. Maybe he was under pressure to get his load delivered. He turned sharply to the right, crossed two lanes of traffic and slammed into my husband. Scott died at the scene from blunt force trauma.

That day, my family joined the thousands of other families who lose loved ones each and every year in preventable truck crashes. More can and must be done to stop these tragedies that not only kill and severely injure people but also devastate parents, children, siblings, family, friends, and communities.

Today we urge elected officials in these fifteen worst states for truck crash fatalities to take immediate action to better protect their motorists:

1. North Dakota
2. Wyoming
3. Montana
4. Arkansas
5. Oklahoma
6. Mississippi
7. New Mexico
8. Kansas
9. Indiana
10. Alabama
11. Kentucky
12. Iowa

13. My home state of South Carolina
14. Idaho
15. Nevada

In my state of South Carolina, which has the shameful slot of 13th most dangerous, truck crash deaths increased an astonishing 36% from 2010 to 2011. Compared to the 9% national increase in truck crash fatalities during that same time, this is completely unacceptable. This 36% fatality increase should sound the alarm to all who live or vacation in South Carolina -- immediate improvements to protect our motorists from preventable truck crashes are needed.

What happened to my husband Scott is not an accident. The unacceptably high numbers of truck crash deaths and injuries are the result of bad actors in an industry choosing profit ahead of safety. Our families value safety. I can't imagine that there's a single person in this room who wouldn't pay 10 cents more for a head of lettuce if it meant their loved one didn't die because a truck driver was overworked and tired, or was driving an overweight truck, or was in an improperly maintained rig rife with safety deficiencies.

The Laws of Physics dictate that if we add more weight to trucks, they will produce more force when they crash, and result in greater damages. We must stop the industry's push to add 25% more weight to already dangerously heavy trucks. That extra weight may mean the difference between life and death. I am grateful to Congressman McGovern and Senator Lautenberg for sponsoring SHIPA. I urge all Members of Congress to put families first and support this critical legislation.

Thank you.