



Parents Against Tired Truckers and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

Contact: Beth Weaver
301.814.4088, /beth_weaver@verizon.net

**TRUCK CRASH VICTIMS URGE CONGRESS TO PASS LIFESAVING TRUCK SAFETY
LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS TODAY AS NEW POLL SHOWS
STRONG PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO HEAVIER TRUCKS**

RANKING OF STATES ON TRUCK FATALITIES RELEASED

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Tuesday, May 7, 2013) -- Families and survivors of truck crash fatalities and injuries joined today with the Truck Safety Coalition (www.trucksafety.org), safety and labor advocates and Senate and House sponsors to support the introduction of critical truck safety legislation to freeze truck size and weight limits.

The Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (SHIPA), sponsored by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Representative James McGovern (D-MA), will freeze current federal truck size and weight limits, close existing loopholes that allow operation of overweight trucks, and establish an enforcement program to ensure accountability. Supporting the SHIPA introduction were dozens of survivors of truck crashes from around the country.

“Every year more than 4,000 people are slaughtered on our nation’s highways while corporate trucking and shipping interests continue to push Congress for heavier trucks,” said Joan Claybrook, Chair, Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH). “Heavy trucks are deadly, dangerous and destructive. Families are paying with their lives and with their wallets.”

A new national poll conducted for the Truck Safety Coalition (TSC) by Lake Research Partners shows overwhelming support for truck weight limitations, and opposition to holding taxpayers responsible for paying for infrastructure damage caused by heavier trucks:

- 68 percent oppose heavier trucks, with 47 percent strongly opposed.
- 88 percent of Americans do not want to pay higher taxes for the damage caused by heavier trucks with 75 percent strongly opposed.

Pina Arrington, from Goose Creek, South Carolina, lost her husband Scott in a truck crash in 2012 when a truck driver turned sharply to the right, crossed two lanes of traffic, and slammed into her husband. “What happened to my husband was not an accident. The unacceptably high numbers of truck crash deaths like Scott’s are the result of bad actors in an industry choosing profit over safety, and adding more size and weight to trucks will only result in greater loss of life.”

The Truck Safety Coalition released a report ranking the states on truck crash fatalities for 2011, the most recent data available. The top fifteen worst states in order are: North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, New Mexico, Kansas, Indiana, Alabama, Kentucky, Iowa, South Carolina, West Virginia and Georgia.

Wanda Lindsay of New Braunfels, Texas, lost her husband John when a truck driver rear-ended their car while they were stopped in a construction zone back-up. The truck driver was diagnosed with severe sleep apnea just prior to the incident. “Truck drivers are allowed to work 11 hours a shift behind the wheel so it is no wonder that nearly half of truck drivers admit they have fallen asleep while driving. Last year, legislation requiring electronic logging devices in trucks passed Congress. I call on the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue the final rule for these lifesaving devices.”

“My son Graham was hit by a drunk and drugged truck driver in 2005 and 22 surgeries later he is permanently partially disabled,” said Kate Brown of Gurnee, Illinois. “In the first three years after the crash, Graham’s health care costs exceeded 1.3 million dollars and exhausted the truck company’s insurance policy. Trucks have gotten bigger and inflation has gone up, but the minimum amount of insurance coverage required for trucks has remained the same for the past 30 years. Congress must resist the corporate trucking and shipping interest’s push for bigger, heavier trucks, and they must increase the minimum insurance level for trucks.”

TSC’s Sorrow to Strength conference brings together for four days of remembrance, workshops and meetings with Members of Congress and U.S. Department of Transportation officials to advance truck safety.

Vickie Johnson of Hartwell, Georgia lost her husband and step-daughter when they were rear-ended by a truck in 2009 while stopped on a bridge. “Families like mine get torn apart by big trucks every day. Three in my family survived, but I don’t know if any of us would have if the truck that hit us was significantly heavier. It is bad enough that truck crash fatalities are on the rise; truck size and weight increases will only make matters worse.”

The Truck Safety Coalition is a partnership between Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) and Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.) dedicated to reducing the number of deaths and injuries caused by truck-related crashes, providing compassionate support to truck crash survivors and families of truck crash victims, and educating the public, policymakers and media about truck safety issues. More information is available at www.trucksafety.org.

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