



Parents Against Tired Truckers and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

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TRUCK SAFETY GROUPS COMMEND FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION PANEL MEMBERS
PANEL DECLINES TO RECOMMEND TRUCK SIZE AND WEIGHT LIMIT INCREASES
Protecting Families, Promoting Highway Safety, and Preventing More Costs to Taxpayers

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 29, 2013) — The U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Panel on 21st Century Freight Transportation (Panel) issued recommendations today for improving freight transportation in the United States. Truck safety groups applaud the Panel’s decision to omit dangerous and costly truck weight limit increases from their bipartisan recommendations.

“Today, the Panel put the safety of the American public before the profits of special industry and trucking interests. I am heartened that the Panel chose not to include controversial increases to truck size and weight limits and urge Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leaders to uphold the Panel’s recommendations as they begin deliberations on the transportation reauthorization bill. Bigger and heavier trucks are more dangerous and guarantee that additional families will join our families in paying the ultimate price of losing loved ones and suffering debilitating injuries in truck crashes. Additionally, we pay with our wallets because taxpayers are forced to cover the unfunded costs of heavy truck damages to our infrastructure. I’m sure that most folks would be surprised to learn that taxpayers contribute nearly \$2 billion dollars a year in subsidies of heavy truck operations,” said Daphne Izer, Founder of Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.) after her son Jeff was killed in a truck crash twenty years ago this month.

Every year on average, about 4,000 people are killed and 100,000 are injured in large truck crashes. The annual cost to society from crashes involving commercial motor vehicles is estimated to be over \$83 billion. Big rigs carrying loads close to the current Federal Limit (65,000 to 80,000lbs.) are already twice as likely to be involved in a fatal crash as trucks carrying less than 50,000 lbs.

Jennifer Tierney, Board Member for Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) and a Member of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC) after her father James was killed in a truck crash added, “I am grateful for the Panel’s thoughtful consideration that the dangers and high costs of bigger, heavier trucks are not a viable solution for our national freight policy. Our infrastructure is in terrible condition, especially our bridges. Adding an extra axle will not mitigate the increased, repetitive strain of heavier trucks on our bridge infrastructure. The highway trust fund is set to go broke in late 2014/ early 2015 at the current rate of wear and damage and we certainly can’t afford the increased damages produced by heavier trucks.”

One out of every nine bridges in the United States, approximately 66,503, is structurally deficient, requiring significant maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that repairing our deficient bridges would cost a staggering \$76 billion. The projected additional cost of repairing bridge damage caused by raising truck weight limits to 97,000 lbs. could top \$53 billion alone. This figure does not include resultant wear and tear to roads.

John Lannen, Executive Director, Truck Safety Coalition concluded, “In polls for nearly 30 years, the American public has consistently affirmed their overwhelming support for maintaining current truck weight limits, and opposition to holding taxpayers responsible for paying for infrastructure damage caused by heavier trucks. We thank the Panel for taking into account the safety and financial concerns that are held by the overwhelming majority of Americans, and for choosing to protect their interests and federal truck size and weight limits.”

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