



Parents Against Tired Truckers and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

Contact: Beth Weaver, 301-814-4088, beth_weaver@verizon.net

TRUCK SAFETY COALITION RESPONDS TO NTSB INVESTIGATION FINDINGS
Urge FMCSA to Immediately Release ELD Rule and to Preserve CSA Data
To Quickly Identify and Act on Poor Performing Motor Carriers

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 7, 2013) — The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) completed its investigation today into four deadly commercial motor vehicle crashes, two involving trucks, calling for an audit of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) oversight process. Truck safety groups contend NTSB's crash findings, which include multiple violations to hours of service (HOS) rules, as well as a lack of oversight by the FMCSA, support their request for FMCSA to release the overdue electronic logging device (ELD) rule as quickly as possible, and to prevent any changes to the Compliance, Safety, Accountability Program (CSA) which would alter crash data and further weaken FMCSA's oversight program.

“Shortly after my son Chuck and his girlfriend Theresa Seaver were killed in a truck crash in Hendersonville, NC, on October 24, 2010, we found out that the truck driver was not medically cleared to drive a commercial truck, that he had a record of safety violations, including going over the maximum allowable hours of driving per day as well as falsifying his HOS logs. A safety audit conducted after the crash found that he had violated HOS rules the day of the crash as well. The driver did not slow down or brake and there were no skid marks on the road,” said Jackie Novak, a volunteer for the Truck Safety Coalition (TSC). “In January 2010 FMCSA inspected this company and they were written up for having no file on the driver. The truck driver should not have been behind the wheel on the day that he killed five people and injured another 10. To prevent another family from having to go through this same experience, I filed a lawsuit against the FMCSA in 2011 for failing to enforce its own rules. It is validation to my family, and many of my fellow volunteers, that NTSB supports improving FMCSA's oversight.”

Ed Slattery became a Member of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC), CSA Subcommittee, and a TSC volunteer after his wife Susan was killed and his sons Peter and Matthew were critically injured in a truck crash on the Ohio Turnpike on August 16, 2010. Slattery states, “When the truck driver that plowed over my family's car was interviewed by the police, he admitted to falling asleep behind the wheel. We were fortunate that he took responsibility for his actions because fatigue can be difficult to detect. Although it is an industry-wide health and safety issue, it continues to be underreported. In our modern world, it's absurd that we still allow hand written log books, which the NTSB report clearly shows are easily falsified. We will all benefit when the rule for ELDs is released – both the American public and truck drivers who are pushed to work beyond the limits of human endurance, regularly working over 70 hours a week. My heart goes out to the families in Kentucky and Tennessee whose lives were also changed in an instant because of someone else's negligence and an industry that tolerates nearly 4,000 annual fatalities and an additional 100,000 injuries.”

Slattery adds, “The NTSB's findings also emphasize the critical nature of whole data to the FMCSA's oversight CSA program. It is essential that a process to remove or alter data is not permitted, and that the FMCSA receives adequate funding to support their oversight efforts and allow for full investigations rather than settling for less expensive reviews.”

Truck driver fatigue has been recognized as a major safety concern and a contributing factor to fatal truck crashes for over 70 years. Studies sponsored by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) reveal that 65% of truck drivers report that they often or sometimes feel drowsy while driving and nearly half of truck drivers admit that they had actually fallen asleep while driving in the previous year.

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