

## **STATEMENT OF JENNIFER TIERNEY**

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**Washington, DC**

My name is Jennifer Tierney and I'm the North Carolina Volunteer Coordinator for the Truck Safety Coalition, a board member of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways, a member of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee, and most importantly, the daughter of James Mooney who was killed in a senseless and preventable truck crash. My Dad's crash occurred in 1983 in North Carolina, when, neither reflective tape nor rear underride guards were required on tractor trailers. After losing my Dad, it took 10 years of consistent and vocal advocacy by my family and others to secure a federal requirement for reflective tape on tractor trailers.

For more than 30 years, I have been dedicated to preventing others from experiencing the loss and grief my family and I were forced to endure. I am astounded that despite a growing back log of overdue truck safety improvements that are desperately needed, Congress, instead, is considering an increase to federal truck size and weight limits that would further erode safety on our roadways. I think I now have a better understanding of why there is such a serious disconnect between the priorities of the public and the actions of Congress.

Supporters of truck size and weight increases use the argument that this should be a "state option" where individual states decide whether or not to have higher weights and allow long double and triple trailer trucks. However, history has proven that state options and special interest exemptions do not work.

Well-financed lobbyists will change size and weight laws in some states but it will be a major problem when other states refuse to go along. After a few years truck industry lobbyists will run back to Congress and plead for uniformity, leading to higher size and weight laws for the entire country. This divide and conquer strategy is what corporate trucking interests like to use.

It is ironic that corporate trucking interests are trying to pass legislation giving states the option to exceed federal truck weight limits but FedEx and other motor carrier companies are trying to pass legislation to override states that have opted to prohibit allowing longer trailers. Currently, 39 states and the District of Columbia only allow trucks pulling 28 ft. trailers but FedEx and others want to force states to allow trucks pulling 33 ft. trailers. I guess a "state option" is really a convenient "corporate option" to serve the economic interests of the industry but not the safety interests of the public.

This is exactly why we need a commonsense nationwide truck size and weight policy. I have been involved in many battles against special trucking interests in North Carolina. They have the money, the power and the political ear of many elected officials and the public loses. On behalf of other truck crash victims and survivors, I urge Congress to pass the bi-partisan Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act or SHIPA, H.R. 1906. SHIPA will allow states to keep their current truck size and weight limits and it will prevent the endless and deadly push

by special interests seeking to allow bigger, heavier and longer trucks at the expense of public safety.

Enactment of legislation like SHIPA is exactly what the American public supports. Countless public opinion polls show again and again that families do not want to share the road with bigger trucks. They are dangerous, deadly and destructive.

I urge Members of Congress to listen to their constituents and reject dangerous truck size and weight increases. Instead, act now to implement truck safety improvements such as improved rear, side and front underride guards, a final requirement for electronic logging devices, a rule for speed limiters and other proven safety technologies. Congress should focus on solving current safety problems and not creating new ones.

Lastly, I urge Transportation Secretary Foxx, who is from my home state of North Carolina, to immediately stop the truck size and weight study until the problems are corrected. The results of the U.S. DOT study will influence transportation policy for decades to come, and we cannot afford to get it wrong. Too many lives will be affected because of hasty decisions on poor methodology and unreliable results.

Thank you.