

STATEMENT OF JANE MATHIS
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Good morning. I am Jane Mathis from St. Augustine, Florida. I am the Vice President of the Truck Safety Coalition, a board member of Parents for Tired Truckers., and I also serve on the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee.

On March 25, 2004, my 23-year old son David and his wife Mary Kathryn, were killed in a truck crash in Titusville, Florida. They were on their way home from their honeymoon when they came upon backed-up traffic from a crash on I-95. While they were stopped, a truck driver, who had fallen asleep, smashed into the back of their car. The impact spun their car around, it then crashed under the side of the truck, setting it on fire. They had only been married for five days.

What happened to my son and daughter-in-law was not an "accident". Fatigue is not an accident – it is the cause of crashes like the one that killed my son and his wife. It is the unconscionable result of an industry choosing profit over safety. Companies pushing drivers to make it to their next stop, despite the risks to the drivers themselves and the other road users who will cross paths with the tired trucker.

At a time when policies are being pushed through Congress to attack truck safety, there is a simultaneous push to hide critical information on the safety history of trucking companies from being accessed by the public. The federal government collects information on the safety record of commercial motor carrier companies and makes the data available for consumers and other government entities such as the Department of Defense. Trucking companies themselves are also incentivized to promote safety in an effort to achieve and maintain good safety scores. Congress should not be pursuing policies that shield bad actors from public accountability.

Unfortunately, hiding and removing vital safety scores is not the only measure being considered that protects unsafe trucking companies. Language in both the Senate and House multi-year transportation bills create hurdles to raising the minimum level of insurance required by large trucks. The amount of \$750,000 was set in 1980 and it remains the same today. Anyone standing in this room who can remember back 35 years ago knows that costs have gone up. It makes no sense that elected officials do not recognize it is just commonsense that the insurance requirement for large trucks should go up as well.

This amount is woefully insufficient. The low levels essentially create another level of devastation for survivors and families; as they struggle to stay afloat amidst the waves of grief, too many people are drowned in debt that comes along with the costs of the crash. Additionally, minimum insurance levels were originally intended to act as a barrier to entry against unsafe companies. We have seen all too often what happens when unsafe trucking companies with few assets and the minimum level of insurance get into crash. Families are left with massive financial burdens and

trucking companies without means to fulfill their financial obligations simply shut their doors and open up under a new name continuing to operate.

Many of us, including myself, never thought we would become involved with trucking policy. Yet, the more I have, the more I've learned how much more remains to be done to improve safety in trucking. In spite of the compelling facts and the clear evidence that Congress can and must do more to protect truck drivers and other motorists, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians, they instead continue to move the needle backwards – chipping away at the existing safety rules that do exist to by creating exemptions, rolling back important regulations, and pushing laws that will just make things worse.

We must continue to sound the alarm on the dangerous and deadly assault on truck safety and the real-world and real-life implications for people across the United States. In an effort to shed light on the scope and depth of the problem, today the Truck Safety Coalition released a report ranking all fifty states on truck crash fatality rates from 2013, the latest data available. The top ten worst states in order are North Dakota, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, West Virginia, Kansas, Alabama, Idaho and South Dakota.

I urge Congress to consider their own states, their own constituents, and their own families when considering the transportation legislation and urge Congress to reject any attempt to hide or remove critical safety data, and to address the low levels of insurance.

Thank you.