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STATEMENT OF JOHN LANNEN
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Senate Votes in Favor of Wicker Motion to Instruct Conferees
To Study Safety Effects of Double 33 Foot Trailers by Margin of 56-31

ARLINGTON, VA (November 10, 2015) – Today, reason prevailed and the U.S. Senate voted in favor of Senator Roger Wicker’s (R-MS) Motion to Instruct Conferees to require a safety study of Double 33s before mandating these longer trucks on our roads. This nearly 2-1 vote was a major win for survivors and victims of large truck crashes, law enforcement, truck drivers, trucking companies, truckload carriers, public health and safety groups, and the American public. We are pleased that the Senate employed a data-driven approach that allows for further study on the safety effects of Double 33s as well as an opportunity for public input.

In voting for this measure, Senators listened to the Department of Transportation recommendation that there should be no increase to truck size or weight because of insufficient data to support such a change. This was the right move, especially given the steadily worsening trends of truck crash fatalities and injuries. Congress should understand the impact of the length increase on pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, as well as the additional wear on our nation’s roads and bridges before mandating them. It is only logical to study this truck configuration further, which we already know takes 22-feet longer to stop and have a six-foot wider turning radius than Double 28s.

As the House and Senate head to conference to resolve the differences between their competing versions of the multi-year surface transportation reauthorization bill, the DRIVE Act (H.R. 22), there is still work to be done to improve the safety title of the final legislation. We ask negotiators to remove provisions that allow teenagers to drive trucks across state lines as well as those that hinder rulemaking to increase the minimum insurance required by large trucks. Rejecting measures to increase truck size and weight are a step in the right direction; however, allowing the aforementioned safety rollbacks to remain in the final bill would be a step backwards for safety.

The Truck Safety Coalition is especially thankful for all of the congressional support for truck crash survivors, the families of truck crash victims, and for our mission to promote safety. We want to specifically thank Senators Wicker and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) for their outstanding leadership on this issue.