

## **Statement of Peter and Monica Malarczyk**

Good morning everyone, my name is Peter Malarczyk, and I am from Hastings-on-Hudson, NY. I am here with my sister, Monica.

On December 29, 2015, we left Killington ski resort around 2 pm, expecting to get home and get ready for work the next day. We were just 10 minutes into the drive when we came around a bend, and witnessed a truck opposing traffic. Our mom screamed “watch out,” and our dad, who was driving, screamed something out of shock.

Seconds later, we came to a stop after spinning across the road. I heard no noise until my sisters regained consciousness; we held hands hoping help was on the way. Minutes later paramedics arrived, and we were rushed to Rutland Regional Medical Center. That’s when the doctor approached me, and told me my parents unfortunately hadn’t made it, and that my sister was going into surgery immediately.

For months, we kept trying to figure out how that semi ended up in our lane. Eventually, a witness came forward and testified that she heard the truck driver tell her family that she was scared of slipping down the hill, so she chose to drive against traffic with her hazards on, thinking oncoming drivers would see her.

How was this the logical thing to do?

It is a question that we’ve been asking ourselves, and one that many people who hear our story also find themselves asking. The answer: inadequate entry-level driver training. The truck driver involved in our crash had only been on the road for 3 months, and it was clear that she lacked the adequate skills and knowledge to operate a big rig. Unfortunately, the entry-level driver-training rule was congressionally mandated in 1991 – before either of us were even born. And, what’s worse is the latest iteration will not even require a minimum a number of hours of behind the wheel training for new truck drivers.

As we started to learn more about truck safety, we also found out that the minimum level of insurance required by trucks per incident has not been increased since 1980. In fact, the number hasn’t even been adjusted for inflation. The consequences of this inaction are two-fold: for one, the inadequate coverage causes too many families to deal with a financial burden in addition to the physical ones they incurred from the crash. Secondly, a large portion of the costs associated with commercial motor vehicle crashes are thus passed on to the public.

Both of my sisters were so severely injured that they will have medical complications for the rest of their lives, constantly being reminded of the physical, emotional, and financial costs of our

crash. Today we urge U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao to take immediate action to change the minimum insurance requirement and to index it to inflation. This way, the amount will be increased periodically and apolitically.

We need our nation's leaders to listen to what is happening on our roads. Our family was just driving home from a ski trip when our parents were killed. Every family here today has a similarly tragic ending. We have the solutions to end this needless suffering. It is time they are implemented.

Thank you.