



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

**Statement of Jackie Gillan, President
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
May 2, 2017**

Good Morning. I am Jackie Gillan, President of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. I am also a founder and board member of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways also known as CRASH. Thank you for joining us this morning.

More than a decade ago, CRASH and Parents Against Tired Truckers, or P.A.T.T. joined together to form the Truck Safety Coalition. Both groups share a strong commitment to offering support for survivors and victims of truck crashes. Additionally, truck crash survivors and victims provide a much needed voice and a very different viewpoint in the federal and state debates over truck safety policies. Our mission is to prevent deaths and injuries on our highways by advocating for sensible solutions to truck safety problems.

This past weekend more than 65 courageous volunteers travelled at their own expense to Washington, D.C. from 18 states across the country to attend the biennial Sorrow to Strength conference. These are individuals who personally have been injured or had a family member killed or seriously injured in a truck crash. They are united, they are undeterred and they are unafraid in delivering their message to Congress. And, their message is simple. It is no longer acceptable to be a silent bystander or a special interest enabler when truck crash deaths and injuries are soaring unabated and proven and available solutions are ignored, delayed or defeated.

There is a critical urgency to our efforts because truck crashes, deaths and injuries are dramatically increasing. From 2009 to 2015 there has been a 45% increase in truck crashes, a 57% increase in truck crash injuries, and a 20% increase in truck crash deaths. On average, 4,000 people die in truck crashes and 100,000 are injured every year.

In addition to the emotional toll caused by these crashes, there is also a significant economic toll that burdens taxpayers. The annual cost to society from crashes involving commercial motor vehicles is estimated to be over \$110 billion dollars.

These citizen activists from across the country are attending nearly 100 meetings with Members of Congress and their staff and government officials at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to promote adoption of essential safety priorities.

There is an expectation that Congress will take up an infrastructure funding bill in the coming months. As Congress considers investing in much-needed improvements to our roads and bridges, they should also consider and adopt much-needed improvements to truck safety policies. The legislation should be a vehicle for advancing public safety and not the agenda of special trucking interests.

Our speakers today will discuss the impact of truck crashes as a public health and safety threat in every state, the need to mandate lifesaving technologies for U.S. trucks as standard equipment, as well as our opposition to any proposal that trades public safety for private profit.

The Truck Safety Coalition is fortunate to have many Members of Congress who have opposed special interest attacks and led efforts to improve truck safety. In recognition of their efforts the Truck Safety Coalition is giving awards to 35 Members of Congress who have been safety champions. Ten Senators and 7 Representatives will receive the Truck Safety Coalition's Legacy Award for their continuing leadership in truck safety battles. They will also award the Truck Safety Coalition Leadership Award to 6 Senators and 12 Representatives who have been reliable and staunch allies on truck safety issues. Additionally, awards were given to other federal, state and local officials as well as public health and law enforcement leaders for their contributions to safety. A full list of the awardees is included in the press packet. We congratulate all of the recipients and express our thanks and enormous gratitude for their efforts on behalf of truck safety for families and drivers.

Before today is over 10 people will die and more than 300 people will be injured in truck crashes. Federal lawmakers and government officials have the power to save these lives. We do not accept the current state of truck safety in this country and we do not accept indifference and inaction. Thank you.