



# THE TSC BULLETIN

Spring 2021 Issue

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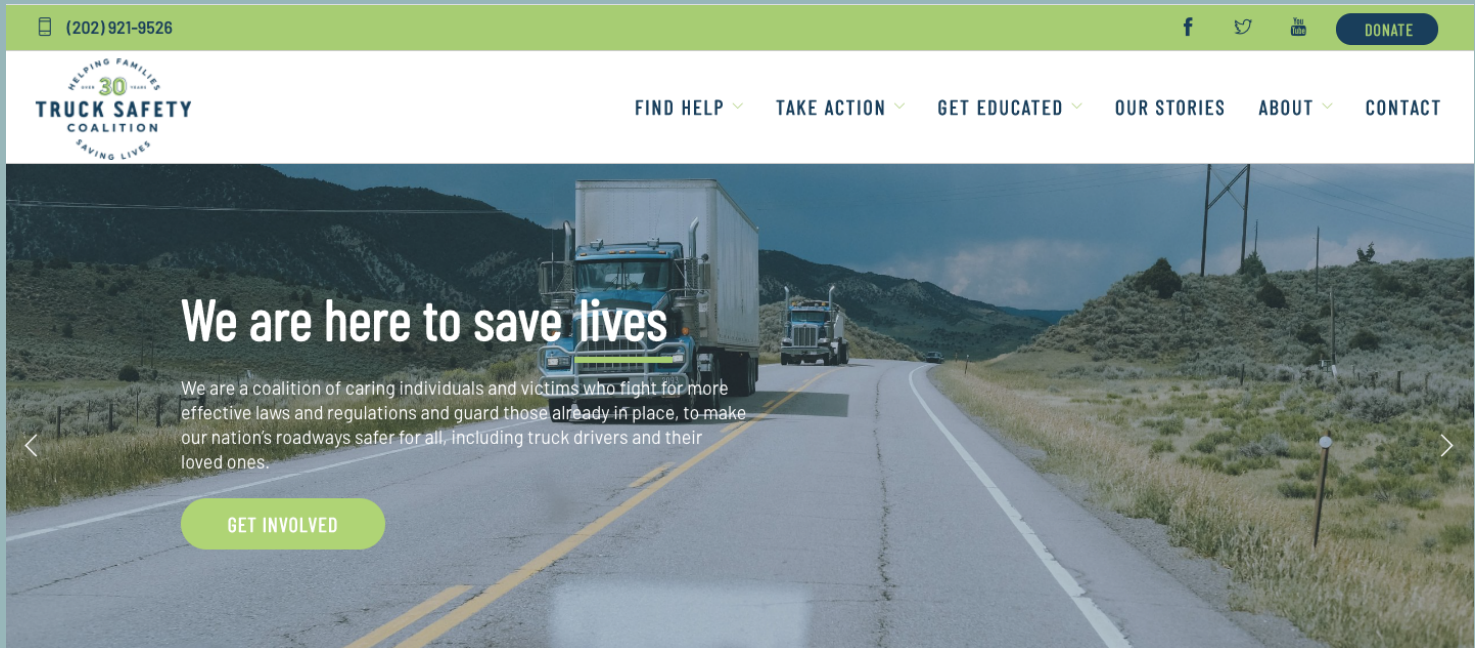
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## Turning Loss into Purpose

by Pamela Biddle

In the beginning, I wanted to know why my first born child, his father and his father's companion were killed in a preventable crash that happened on Mother's Day weekend in 2017. The why has never left me, but it has evolved over the past four years from why, to what, to how, to how can this be prevented and back again to another why? The last "why" is for why can't we stop this from happening to someone else? Sometimes opportunities come our way to talk about our loved ones. We share the "crash story", but more often we talk about their life and what they meant to us. We do things to honor their memory and start new traditions including them in some way that is meaningful to us. On other occasions we share the crash story as we fight for safety changes and advocate for common sense laws. All of these things help us to take our pain and loss and put something positive back into the world we know now. Recently a new State bill was introduced by an Indiana State Representative that would increase the number of overweight permits issued in Indiana and expand the types of commodities allowed to be overweight to anything that can be hauled. Proponents and co-sponsors of the Bill, referred to as HB 1190, as well as dozens of paid lobbyists came out to support the bill which would increase large truck weight limits from 80,000 pounds to 120,000 pounds for shipments passing thru and into Indiana. The federal limit is set at 80,000 pounds, but proponents believed that one truck is better than two congesting traffic and more axles provide more braking power and causes less damage to roadways and the failing bridges in Indiana. Plus, this would help manufacturers by reducing the cost of doing business because shipping costs would be reduced with one driver in a single semi hauling their products. Of course, they are wrong, but it sounded good. So I travelled to Indiana and spoke at the first hearing in front of the Transportation Committee. I wrote emails and was interviewed by TV reporters. (Continued, page 2)



## NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH

by Kelli McClelland, Coordinator for First Response Outreach

We have been hard at work over the past year designing a new website that will help us more clearly communicate our mission and get information to those who need it. Here are some of the notable changes:

- The website reflects our new logo in celebration of 30 years working to support families and save lives along with a new color scheme.
- The "memorials" section is now called "our stories," to represent the varied impact truck crashes have on people. If you want your story added, please let us know. You can email [kelli@trucksafety.org](mailto:kelli@trucksafety.org) or fill out the contact form on our website.
- We have expanded the First Response page to include more information about how the Truck Safety Coalition can support survivors and families of victims.
- We created space on our Advocacy page to highlight our past legislative successes.
- **Stay tuned** for a whole new section of the website that integrates our valuable Truck Crash Resources Book, including new material for survivors.

Please take some time to click around ([www.trucksafety.org](http://www.trucksafety.org)). We hope you find the new website more informative and easier to navigate. Let us know if there is something you would like to see added to the site via email or through our [contact form](#).

*(Continued from page 1)*

When the Bill reached the Senate side I continued with the emails, my official statement was added to the Senate testimonial record, more interviews and more phone calls. It was a hard fought battle, but the bill passed with amendments, although not easily. What was gained is that numerous legislators who might have supported the bill before without hesitating came out boldly to oppose it. They heard the message from safety experts and advocates, law enforcement, engineers, researchers, the public and from our family. There is now a large group in Indiana on both sides of the political aisle who are engaged in the discussion about large truck safety who weren't before. My son Aaron was 23 years young and had his whole life ahead of him. I miss him every minute. Advocacy helps. Yes, it is hard work, but isn't anything meaningful worth fighting for? Even a phone call can make a difference. We aren't alone in this journey as many have come before us and are present to help. For that, I am forever grateful. So why can't we stop this? We can! We can with more voices, more helping hands and by taking action together.



## TSC PUBLIC POLICY NEWS & VICTORIES

by Jackie Gillan, TSC Consultant

The TSC has much to report on the policy front since our December 2020 newsletter. With a new Congress, Administration, and an omnibus infrastructure bill on the horizon, 2021 is the TSC's year for advancing some of our most important safety priorities that we have been advocating for years. These safety measures are desperately needed as truck fatalities have risen by 48% since 2009. Here are the highlights of our progress:

- The [\*New Jersey Star Ledger\*](#) published a major article (1/24/21) outlining aggressive actions to advance truck safety. TSC worked closely with the reporter.
- [\*Boston Globe\*](#) article about TSC's letter to then-President-elect Biden on overdue but essential federal truck safety actions featured TSC's Daphne & Steve Izer (1/28/21).
- February – April, Indiana House & Senate debated a dangerous bill raising allowable truck weights on local roads and bridges by 50% (to 120k pounds). TSC and volunteers (see article by Pamela Biddle, TSC volunteer, p. 1) [\*became involved\*](#) in taking on special trucking and shipping interests to oppose the bill. Pam Biddle and other allies did a remarkable job of changing the focus of the debate from economic issues to safety threats of overweight trucks. Although the bill ultimately passed, opposition from TSC volunteers and local advocates changed many votes and raised key safety issues about the legislation and its impact on Indiana motorists.
- On March 4, the Stop Underrides Act (S.605) was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL). TSC, CRASH & P.A.T.T. strongly endorse the bill which directs U.S. DOT to upgrade the standard for rear underride guards and to require side and front guards. ([\*Gillibrand Press Release\*](#) and Jennifer Tierney [\*Statement\*](#)).
- TSC joined Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety (Advocates) [\*in filing comments\*](#) in response to the FMCSA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to include rear underride guards on the list of items that must be examined as part of the annual commercial motor vehicle (CMV) inspection.
- On 4/15/21, legislation increasing the minimum insurance requirements for motor carriers for the first time in 41 years (H.R.2687) was introduced by Rep. Jesus "Chuy" Garcia (D-IL) and numerous co-sponsors. The [\*TSC letter\*](#) signed by 48 victims and survivors urges passage of the bill in order to protect families from any financial hardship after a truck crash. The letter received excellent media exposure.
- TSC raised concerns about "teen truckers" when industry's "DRIVE-Safe Act" was introduced in March. [\*Teen truckers will NOT make our roads safer.\*](#)

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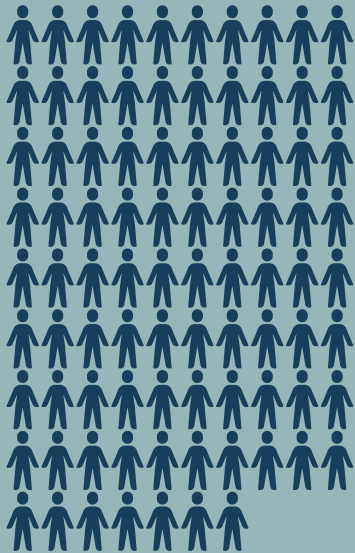


(continued from page 3)

- TSC, CRASH and P.A.T.T. signed onto a letter with 40 other groups – consumer, public health & safety, labor, bicycling and pedestrian, MADD, Public Citizen, and insurance companies, urging Secretary Buttigieg to make safety a top priority in the Biden Administration’s infrastructure proposal. The Secretary was specifically asked to significantly increase the vehicle safety budget of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to ensure that essential safety regulations, such as automatic emergency braking (AEB) and other crash avoidance technologies for cars and all trucks are issued.
- We are working with other consumer and safety groups and House and Senate Appropriations Committees to increase funding for NHTSA’s vehicle safety programs. (Based on inflation, funding has actually declined over the past 50 years, contributing to delays in issuing overdue and ignored truck safety regulations).
- TSC participated in introductory meetings with several new staff working for Secretary Buttigieg at the U.S. Department of Transportation, including the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Safety (Robin Hutcheson), Deputy Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) (Meera Joshi), and Deputy Administrator of NHTSA (Steve Cliff), to emphasize top safety priorities.
- Also, TSC filed comments with Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety opposing an exemption request from the federal requirement that an employer must conduct a full query of the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse before employing a commercial driver license (CDL) holder to perform safety-sensitive functions. It is hard to believe the exemption request came from an operator of school buses (!) but we joined because it would set a terrible precedent, if granted.
- On Wednesday, 4/28/21, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), as well as Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-IL), re-introduced legislation, Protecting Roadside First Responders Act (S.1386, H.R.2867), to require advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) including automatic emergency braking, lane departure warning, and blind spot detection on all new vehicles, including every class of trucks. TSC families signed a letter in support. The legislation directs NHTSA to issue a standard within 5 years setting minimum performance requirements and ensuring compliance by a date certain. Last year’s House-passed infrastructure bill included provisions mandating NHTSA rulemakings on these important, lifesaving technologies. House Transportation and Infrastructure Chair, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Energy & Commerce Chair Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Consumer Protection Subcommittee Chair Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) are all strong supporters, but the trucking industry is adamantly opposed. It will again be a difficult battle.
- **Congratulations** to TSC’s own president, Dawn King, upon her appointment to membership on the Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee (MCSAC). She joins Tami Trakh of Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) and Jane Mathis of Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.), both members of the Truck Safety Coalition, on this federal panel of truck safety experts.

**A final, but truly heartfelt thanks** to our TSC volunteers throughout the nation whose presence, influence and willingness to become involved in efforts to work with and reach out to lawmakers and policymakers are making a real difference. You definitely are playing a crucial role in the advancement of commonsense and cost-effective truck safety improvements by telling your stories and making sure your voices are heard. We literally could not do this without you. Keep up the pressure, this is our year!

# First Response: By The Numbers



JANUARY-MARCH 2021

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**VICTIMS, SURVIVORS, AND  
THEIR FAMILIES REACHED**

The purpose of our First Response Program is to get information and resources to people affected by truck crashes as quickly as possible after their crash, when they need it most. This work is supported through the generous donations of our volunteers and broader community. Please consider a donation to one of our two 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, P.A.T.T. or CRASH, to help us continue to do this important work as well as continue our fight to make our roads safer. To learn how to donate, visit our [website](#) or donate directly through [PayPal](#).

## WANT TO HELP? SPREAD THE WORD

*by Tami Trakh, Board Member, The CRASH Foundation*

Did you know that the Truck Safety Coalition has accounts on multiple social media platforms? The easiest way to bring awareness to the organization is through social media. Simply sharing the Truck Safety Coalition's posts on Facebook or Instagram and retweeting our tweets on Twitter helps to widen our audience. The more people hear about truck safety issues and solutions, the faster we can change things!



### STAY TUNED!

*Sorrow to Strength  
2022*

We will provide details as  
we develop our plans!

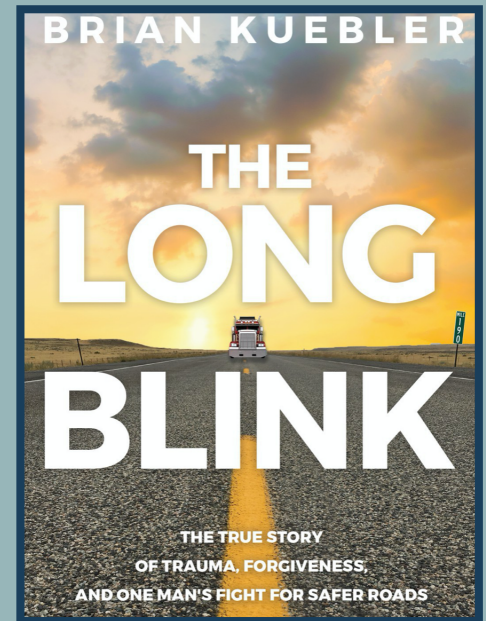
# The Long Blink

by Ed Slattery

*Ed lives in Lutherville Maryland and has been an active volunteer for the TSC since 2010 when his wife, Susan and two of his sons, Peter and Matthew were rear ended by a semi pulling three trailers. Susan was killed, Peter and Matthew were both critically injured.*

All of us would like to see something good come from tragedy. After Susan was killed and the boys were so seriously injured, Matthew permanently, I wanted to find some grace in the pain. After a year of medical recovery and mediation with Estes trucking company, in which we settled all of our claims, I wanted our story told. I wanted trucking companies to know how much it cost, and I wanted truck drivers to know that they are the ones to go to jail if they behave irresponsibly.

Brian Kuebler followed our story and won a regional Emmy and Edward R. Morrow awards for his coverage. I knew he was the one to tell it. Like so many, our story is sad and compelling. It is a story of a large trucking interest that could have prevented this senseless carnage with a few simple management policies and training. It is a story of how many of us work to change laws and regulation. It is also a story of the rejection of a forgiveness offered. The meeting between me, Brian, and Doug three years later will shock.



You can purchase "The Long Blink" [here](#).

## Support the TSC

The Truck Safety Coalition operates solely on donations received from our generous supporters. Your donation keeps our office staffed so we can do the important work of reaching new families and staying up to date on legislation related to truck safety. Your donation will also provide scholarships for people to attend our Sorrow to Strength conference. Join us today, in any of these ways:

**Make a Direct Donation**

**Fundraise in Your Community**

**Designate a Gift to the TSC in Your Will**

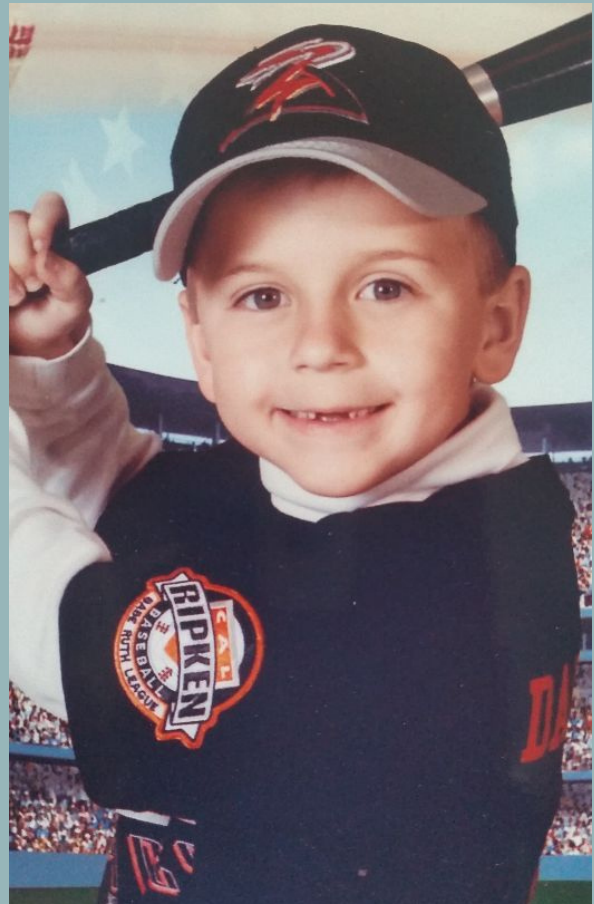
**Participate in Your Employer's Matching Gift Program**

**Make a Sustained Monthly Contribution**

**Underwrite a Program, Publication or Staff Position**

Visit our [website](#) to learn about more ways to help families and save lives with The Truck Safety Coalition.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: EILEEN KOSC



On August 12, 2013, Eileen Kosc and her two sons, Bryan (7) and Brandon (12) were driving home from the beach in Ocean City, MD to Middletown, DE after a short vacation just before the beginning of the school year. About 10 minutes from home, they were stopped in a traffic jam caused by construction & beach traffic, when a box truck hit their vehicle along with 5 other cars.

While nobody else experienced life-threatening injuries, Bryan was killed. Eileen's crash was caused by a small commercial trucking company which had inadequate coverage to compensate all of the victims.

*"The Truck Safety Coalition reached out to me immediately, but it took 6 years after the crash to finally feel empowered to go to Washington D.C for the Sorrow to Strength conference in July 2019. It was there, after years of living 'in a daze,' that I had the courage to share my heart-breaking story with all of the other survivors and families of those killed in truck crashes. The Truck Safety Coalition supported me enough to give me the determination to share my story in front of many legislators to stress the importance of changing the laws on Capitol Hill.*

*Since the crash, I vowed to Bryan that I will make a law in his name or reform the many existing flawed laws of the trucking industry. It has been my wish, in honor of Bryan, to fight in the hopes that another person will not have to feel the intense pain of losing a child to a tragedy that did not have to happen.*

*The Truck Safety Coalition has enabled me to fight this fight."*

*-Eileen Kosc*