

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement Opposing the “Highway Accident Fairness Act” of 2021

Washington, DC – The Truck Safety Coalition (TSC) strongly opposes H.R. 6151, the “Highway Accident Fairness Act of 2021.” This bill only victimizes truck crash victims again. We urge all members of Congress not to co-sponsor this bill. Lawmakers who want to protect and achieve equity for truck crash victims should instead support the enactment of H.R. 2687, the INSURANCE Act.

The so-called “Highway Accident Fairness Act of 2021” seeks to address the despicable act of fraudulently staging truck crashes with proposals that would create extreme legal burdens and impose unreasonable harm for innocent families whose loved ones are killed or seriously injured in truck crashes. Staged collisions are rare and already illegal as evidenced by the fact that those involved in a recent high-profile truck crash staging ring in New Orleans have been charged and have been brought to justice. The additional measures proposed in the bill will only serve to add needless legal roadblocks, delays, and additional expenses to truck crash victims attempting to receive just and fair compensation.

Truck crashes that result in death or serious injury are tragically common, occurring every 15 minutes according to estimates, whereas staged criminal collision rings are fortunately exceedingly rare. Nearly 5,000 people die and 159,000 are injured in truck crashes annually. These violent incidents cause extensive and expensive costs to people and property with an estimated annual taxpayer burden of \$143 billion dollars. The carnage to people and property regularly exceeds \$5 million in rightful claims with claimants from multiple states involved. This bill proposes a dramatic change, unique only to truck crash litigation, that would force common truck crash cases to federal court with no good reason. This would add cost, complexity, and unnecessary delay to reaching a fair and just resolution for victims. While falling short of outright tort

reform, this measure, along with the additional victim funding disclosure measure, both unfairly advantage commercial motor carriers with deep pockets over cash-strapped truck crash victims and grieving families.

Those experiencing the greatest unfairness in highway crashes are truck crash victims, not corporate trucking interests. Truck crash fatalities have increased 45% in the past 10 years. This dramatic and continued rise in truck crash deaths and injuries merits swift and decisive action. The time is now to increase the commercial motor carrier minimum insurance requirement. If adjusted for medical cost inflation, the current \$750,000 requirement that has remained unchanged for 40 years would be over \$5 million. Victims experiencing the unimaginable do not deserve to be left destitute by debilitating medical debt and need Congress to act on their behalf, not the special interests of the truck lobby.

Instead of providing unmerited and unnecessary liability protections to commercial motor carriers, Congress should pass H.R. 2687. A modest increase in the minimum insurance requirement was included in the House-passed infrastructure bill last June, H.R. 3864, Invest in America Act, but was dropped by the U.S. Senate. Increasing the minimum will improve safety through improved underwriting and will better support the needs of truck crash victims.

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The Truck Safety Coalition (TSC) is a partnership between Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH), also known as The CRASH Foundation, and Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.). The Truck Safety Coalition is dedicated to reducing the number of deaths and injuries caused by truck-related crashes, providing compassionate support to truck crash survivors and families of truck crash victims, and educating the public, policymakers, and the media about truck safety issues. Visit our website at <https://trucksafety.org>