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Members of Congress and Truck Safety Coalition Call for Lifesaving CMV Safety Advances Following Release of Deadliest Truck Crash States Report

Washington, DC – Today, safety leaders in Congress alongside the Truck Safety Coalition called for immediate action to advance critical truck safety reforms following the sobering release of the “Deadliest Truck Crash States” [report](#). The report ranks States on truck crash fatalities per 100,000 population for 2020, the most recent year for which data is available. The “deadliest dozen” states in order are Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Arkansas, Montana, Alabama, Idaho, Mississippi, North Dakota, Kentucky, Tennessee, and South Dakota. The report data was generated by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

The report release comes on the heels of one of the worst years for roadway safety ever recorded. NHTSA reports that large truck fatalities surged 13% over the previous year reaching 5,600 deaths. Annually, there are over 146,000 injuries. Since 2009, truck crash deaths have increased by 66%. Despite this alarming trend, policymakers are acting with little urgency to curb the carnage on our roads. Members of Congress and truck crash victim volunteers of the Truck Safety Coalition issued a powerful call to action in Washington, DC today demanding decision-makers reckon with the price of inaction and take swift and meaningful action to address this crisis.

Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-DC), Chair, U.S. House of Representatives Highways and Transit Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

“The roadway safety crisis does not receive the attention it deserves. One of the fundamental roles of government is to protect people. With that in mind, I have made safety one of my top priorities as chair of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. I will continue to work toward safer roadways for all users, including

in my run for chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in the 118th Congress. Thank you to the Truck Safety Coalition for preparing this landmark report on truck crashes."

Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-09), Chair, U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce: "In 2020, over 70% of the deaths in underride crashes were occupants of other vehicles. I have heard from families affected by these horrific crashes, and it is past time we act to keep people safe. Underride guards on large trucks save lives. The recently finalized rulemaking on rear underride guards is a good beginning, but we must go even further. I stand with the victims, survivors, and their families and urge NHTSA to make rear underride protections even stronger and require side underride guards."

Jesús "Chuy" García (D-IL-04): "I've met families whose lives have been forever changed by the devastating injury or loss of a loved one. They are burdened with insurmountable debt due to medical costs on top of the grief they are going through. We must do all we can to protect victims of catastrophic crashes with trucks. This is why I reintroduced the INSURANCE Act, to change the minimum insurance requirement for trucks, which has not changed for more than 40 years. I'm proud to partner with the Truck Safety Coalition to continue supporting truck crash victims and their families."

Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08), "It is incumbent upon us to improve truck safety on our roadways for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. This is an urgent priority that is searingly important to our community because of the loss of Sarah Langenkamp, a devoted mother, wife, daughter and friend. May Sarah's memory inspire us to move swiftly on road and truck safety reform. Transportation safety requires a comprehensive effort at the county, state and national levels, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to forward this important reform."

Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), "This report highlights the need for urgent action by Congress to stem the rising tide of truck crashes and fatalities. NHTSA's data makes it clear that without stronger precautions and safety measures, commercial motor vehicle incidents – including deadly underride accidents – will continue to plague our roads. I'm proud to stand with advocates and families of victims to demand comprehensive, lifesaving solutions."

Kirstin Gillibrand (D-NY), “I’ve fought for years to protect Americans from dangerous and deadly underride crashes. And no matter what setbacks we face, I will keep fighting to raise the bar on truck safety. I thank Congresswoman Holmes Norton, the Truck Safety Coalition, and the families of victims here today for their tireless advocacy and I’m proud to be fighting by your side. We will not give up until we stop these preventable accidents from occurring.”

Alex Padilla (D-CA), “America’s truck drivers are on the frontlines of keeping goods and our economy moving,” said Senator Padilla. “We know that better pay and working conditions create safer outcomes for our truck drivers and all roadway users. I’ve introduced the Guaranteeing Overtime for Truckers Act to improve wages and working conditions for these essential workers and build the foundation for good-paying, stable trucking jobs.”

Joan Claybrook, CRASH Board Chair & former NHTSA Administrator, “Truck crash fatalities have increased 66% since 2009, costing victims and taxpayers an estimated \$180 billion dollars. The large truck fatality crisis is an unattended and ignored public health crisis and it’s time for Secretary Buttigieg and Members of Congress to act accordingly. The solutions are not a mystery: require strong rear and side underride guards in addition to proven, low-cost technology like Automatic Emergency Braking and Advanced Driver Assistance Systems technology on all CMVs and critically terminate the lethal teen trucking pilot program immediately.”

Elise Acosta, crash victim who lost her four children, Anesa (age 15), Quintin (age 13), Brekkin (age 8), and Trentin (age 6) in a preventable truck crash: I am a mother with no children. My children died a horrific death sitting in a work zone when their vehicle was struck by an inattentive and speeding semi. Hundreds of lives are lost every year in work zone crashes. There’s no reason this should be acceptable. Congress must act and implement NTSB’s recommendation to develop performance standards for connected-vehicle technology such as variable speed limiters and require this technology to be installed on all CMVs.

Pam Biddle, crash victim who lost her son, Aaron Lee (age 23), in a preventable truck crash: Despite readily available technology, DOT still has failed to require Automatic Emergency Braking in all CMVs. Further inaction is intolerable and unacceptable, over 5,600 people needlessly died in large truck crashes last year, an increase of 13% over the previous year. Travelling on U.S. highways should not require an act of faith to survive.

Gage Evans, crash victim who lost her husband, Bill Bailey in a preventable truck crash: It is incomprehensible to me that motor carriers only have to file paperwork and show proof of insurance to put a rig on the road. For over 20 years, FMCSA has failed to require new motor carriers to prove they are knowledgeable about safety standards as required by the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act. For over 40 years, FMCSA has failed to increase the Minimum Liability Insurance required for Motor Carriers. The crash stole the opportunity for me to spend retirement with my husband happened because a brand new, minimally insured carrier that was completely ignorant regarding safety standards was allowed to operate in the first place. How many more years will it take for Congress to hold FMCSA responsible to fulfill the lowest threshold of its safety mission?

Daniel Langenkamp, crash victim who lost his wife, Sarah Langenkamp, in a preventable truck crash: My wife, a career diplomat for the U.S. State Department, fled war-torn Ukraine in July only to be killed in August by a 13-ton truck while riding her bike in a clearly marked bike lane in Bethesda. Such tragic and senseless deaths are absolutely preventable. Congress can require that NHTSA require that truck drivers actually have hours of practice behind the wheel of a rig prior to obtaining a CDL, it can require Advanced Driver Assistance Systems for all CMVs, and it can require that large trucks use side underride guards. These are not expensive or complicated solutions. My kids are asking why we are not doing more to prevent deaths like their mom's. I ask that those opposing these commonsense changes look them in the eyes and tell them.

Zach Cahalan, Executive Director, Truck Safety Coalition: Our victim volunteers are the strongest, most courageous people I know. Their witness shines a spotlight on the abysmal state of truck safety in this country. It does not have to be this way. If more DOT, industry leaders, and elected officials display a fraction of the courage our volunteers have demonstrated today, we will succeed in drastically driving down truck crash deaths and injuries.

Truck Safety Coalition victim volunteers are the strongest, most courageous people I know. They bear witness to shine a spotlight on the deplorable state of truck safety in this country. It does not have to be this way. If enough DOT, industry leaders, and elected officials display a fraction of the courage our volunteers have demonstrated today and implemented the solutions offered by our victims we will succeed in driving down truck crash deaths and injuries.

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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>