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TSC Statement Opposing H.R. 471: SHIP IT Act an Industry Wishlist Sacrificing Citizen Safety for Private Profit

Washington, DC – The Truck Safety Coalition (TSC) vehemently opposes H.R. 471, the "[Safer Highways and Increased Performance for Interstate Trucking Act](#) (SHIP IT)." This bill has precious little to do with safety. Instead, it brazenly authorizes a stunning smorgasbord of trucking industry exemptions that further threaten roadway safety in the midst of our nation's truck fatality crisis. TSC Board President Tami Friedrich, who lost her sister, brother-in-law, niece, and nephew in a preventable truck crash, was appalled, saying, "It should be renamed the Reckless Industry Partiality (RIP) Act because untold numbers of truck crash deaths and injuries will occur if this becomes law. I am deeply disturbed to see one of the first bills in the 118th Congress flippantly disregard safety imperatives."

The SHIP IT (a.k.a. RIP) Act proposes several anti-safety measures to open the floodgates, allowing dangerous and long-prohibited heavier trucks on our roads:

- Allow individual States to unilaterally issue interstate weight exemptions for CMVs—for virtually ANY reason, including if "commerce is functioning sub optimally."
- Allow CDL holders supervising commercial provisional license holders to literally lay down on the job and not fulfill the requirement to sit next to the driver and responsibly observe their behavior.

- Allow Electric Vehicles to have a blanket weight exemption that does not count the substantial weight of batteries against a CMV's Gross Combined Vehicle Weight (GCVW). For context, the battery packs required for heavy-duty trucks can exceed the weight of a Ford Expedition at over 6,500 lbs.
- Allow heavier, 6-axle CMVs exceeding 80,000 lbs. on the interstate.
- Vastly expands the definition of "agricultural commodity" which would allow multitudes of drivers to be exempt from crucial Hours of Service (HOS) and Electronic Logging Device (ELD) rules that help ensure drivers do not drive while fatigued and put all roadway users at risk.

America is experiencing a truck crash fatality crisis that shows no signs of slowing. NHTSA projects deaths to rise another 10% in 2022, resulting in over 6,100 lives lost. This represents an 83% fatality increase since 2009.¹ In addition, over 147,000 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 \$180 billion dollars.² Sadly, the RIP Act offers no meaningful safety solutions to address this crisis, instead offering a plethora of unnecessary industry weight exemptions that would further exacerbate the problem.

Longer and heavier trucks have long been proven to be involved in a greater frequency and severity of crashes. For example, the U.S. Department of Transportation reported higher crash rates, **between 47%-400%**, for trucks weighing over 80,000 pounds.³ In addition, research indicates heavier trucks cause disproportionate damage to public roads at taxpayer expense. The RIP Act is decidedly not in the public's best interest.

H.R. 471 does include a provision to invest in truck parking and tax breaks for truck drivers. The Truck Safety Coalition has long been on record supporting responsible investments in [truck parking](#) and improving truck driver pay and

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/nhtsa-estimates-traffic-deaths-2022-third-quarter>

² Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats; Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate by Sub-Categories in 2021, NHTSA, May 2022, DOT HS 813 298.

³ Highway Safety and Truck Crash Comparative Analysis Technical Report, USDOT, June 2015

https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/sw/map21tswstudy/technical_rpts/hstcanalysis/safety_comp_analys.pdf

benefits, both of which affect safety. However, the RIP Act, as proposed, does FAR more harm than good and should be considered outright dangerous.

Congress must act in response to the truck fatality crisis and prioritize implementing proven truck safety measures. Automatic Emergency Braking and Advanced Driver Assistance Systems on all CMVs, requiring enhanced rear underride guard and side underride guard requirements on all CMVs, and Eliminating the FLSA Overtime Exemption for Motor Carriers would demonstrate a sincere commitment to reversing deadly truck crash trends. Learn more about the need for these safety improvements and more at <https://trucksafety.org/>.

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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.