



May 05, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chair  
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

America is in the midst of a truck crash crisis. Since 2009, truck crash deaths have increased by 71% with 5,700 lives lost and nearly 155,000 injured in 2021 (the most recent year for which data is available).<sup>1</sup> Fatalities to large truck occupants (largely truck drivers) surged past 1,000 for the first time in nearly 30 years. Driving a large truck has become nearly twice as deadly as wielding a firearm and protecting the public every day as a law enforcement officer.<sup>2</sup> Failing to act is unacceptable and invites carnage, casualties, and incalculable suffering to continue unabated on our roads and highways.

Evidence-based solutions are available to address this crisis, chief among them: Speed Limiters. U.S. Department of Transportation research has concluded that **trucks using speed limiters were in half as many high-speed collisions as those not using speed limiters.**<sup>3</sup> The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) regularly includes requiring the use of speed limiters in its annual “Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements,” including most recently in 2021-2022 unequivocally stating, “These safety items will save lives.” Rulemaking requiring the use of speed limiters in CMVs has been delayed over twenty times in the past ten years and by DOT’s estimates, **thousands of lives have been lost as a result.**<sup>4</sup> High-speed crashes are more likely to be fatal because the impact of a crash is even more forceful, and the braking distance required to safely avoid or mitigate a crash is increased. Unfortunately, the DRIVE Act, introduced by Representative Brecheen (R-OK-02), ignores these well-established facts and callously disregards the life safety of roadway users by prohibiting the required use of speed limiters in interstate commerce.

In its published Notice of Intent, FMCSA provides additional justification for the need to compel the use of speed limiters: “FMCSA is moving forward with this rulemaking because of concerns about the number of CMV crashes and fatalities traveling at high speeds. In 2019, there were 860

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<sup>1</sup> Overview of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes in 2021, NHTSA, Apr. 2023, DOT HS 813 435.

<sup>2</sup> <https://nleomf.org/memorial/facts-figures/officer-fatalities-by-state/latest-fatality-reports/>

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey S. Hickman, Feng Guo, Richard J. Hanowski, Richard Bishop, Gene Bergoffen & Dan Murray (2012) Safety Benefits of Speed Limiters in Commercial Motor Vehicles Using Carrier-Collected Crash Data, *Journal of Intelligent Transportation Systems*, 16:4, 177-183, DOI: 10.1080/15472450.2012.704340

<sup>4</sup> Peterman, David. R. (2017). *Commercial Truck Safety: Overview* (CRS Report No. R44792). Retrieved from Congressional Research Service website: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44792>

fatal crashes in areas with posted speed limits of 70 to 75 miles per hour. Twenty-four fatal crashes in areas with posted speed limits between 80 to 85 miles per hour. Approximately 20 percent of fatal crashes occur in areas with posted speed limits in these ranges. The rule will help reduce crashes and save lives on our nation's roadways." If finalized in an expeditious matter, this rule will have a demonstrable effect on reducing the amount and severity of large truck crashes.<sup>5</sup>

Speed limiters have the potential to save hundreds of lives a year. Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) Board Member, Pamela Biddle, who lost her ex-husband and son to a speeding semi, commended the effort saying, "Speed kills. It is past time for the implementation of a speed limiter rule, and I urge all Members of Congress to accept the recommendation of the NTSB and safety groups to address large truck fatalities. Each day we delay, lives are lost." On behalf of truck crash victims past, present, and future, the Truck Safety Coalition requests the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to steadfastly oppose the DRIVE Act and commit to taking meaningful steps to reduce truck crash deaths and injuries on our nation's roads and highways.

Sincerely,



Tami Friedrich Trakh  
President  
Truck Safety Coalition

*Tami's sister, Kris, brother-in-law, Alan, and two of their children, Brandie and Anthony, were killed in 1989 when a tanker truck overturned in front of them and exploded.*



Zach Cahalan  
Executive Director, Truck Safety Coalition (TSC)

cc: House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Members

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<sup>5</sup> Speed Limiter Notice of Intent, FMCSA, April 2022. Visited on 5/5/2023.

< <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/speed-limiters> >

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