



August 15, 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).¹ 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 daily as a law enforcement officer.²

With this deeply disturbing trend as context, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee must categorically reject H.R..4738, the Trucking Workforce Improvement Act (TWIA), recently introduced by Representative Bob Good (R-VA-5) and referred to the Committee. The bill aims to completely eliminate Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) requirements for commercial truck drivers. Truck drivers are dying on the job at unprecedented rates. The fact that any lawmaker would choose this moment in time to eliminate essential training designed to keep drivers and the public safe from the well-documented dangers of large trucks defies any rational logic. It is indifferent to the incalculable suffering and loss of life truck crash violence is causing on our roads. H.R. 4738 is exceedingly dangerous and demonstrates a callous indifference to the value of human life.

Entry Level Driver Training is meant to ensure all Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Applicants receive standardized training to improve safety. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), "Driving a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) requires **a higher level of knowledge, experience, skills, and physical abilities than that required to drive a non-commercial vehicle...** Additionally, CDL holders are held to a higher standard when operating any type of motor vehicle on public roads... **Driving a commercial motor vehicle is a big responsibility** (emphasis added)."³

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

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

³ FMCSA. (2022, June 30). Commercial Driver's License Program: An Overview. Commercial Driver's License Program. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <<https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license>>

FMCSA convened a thirty-member committee comprised of stakeholder experts, the Entry Level Driver Training Advisory Committee (ELDTAC), that worked rigorously to establish the minimum requirements outlined in the ELDT Final Rule. The committee included the American Trucking Associations, the National Association of Small Trucking Companies, the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, as well as the Truckload Carriers Association.⁴ According to FMCSA, the ensuing proposed ELDT rule “reflected the recommendations of the ELDTAC.”⁵ This bill undermines and disregards the expertise provided by this committee.

It is remarkable to think that for over 40 years, no federal standard for CDL training existed. It is widely accepted that minimum training standards are needed and adhered to without question in nearly every other industry, such as aircraft pilots, passenger vehicle driver’s licenses, building contractors, hairdressers, and cosmetologists among others. The notion that the federal government should be complicit in recklessly unleashing inadequately trained individuals to drive large trucks on our roads is absurd. The TWIA will negatively impact public safety and exacerbate the ongoing truck crash fatality crisis. TSC asks House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee members to categorically reject this bill.

Sincerely,



Zach Cahalan
Executive Director, Truck Safety Coalition (TSC)

Tami Friedrich
President

Truck Safety Coalition & Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways Board Member

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.

Russell Swift
Vice-President

Parents Against Tired Truckers & Co-Chair, Parents Against Tired Truckers

Russ’ son, Jasen, was killed instantly, as was a fellow Marine, while they drove in the dark to work in 1993, by a seventeen-year-old truck driver on an invalid learner’s permit whose truck was stuck across two lanes after trying a U-turn, causing the car to drive into and under the side of the trailer, causing a fatal underride crash.

⁴ 81 FR 88732 (Dec. 8, 2016); Minimum Training Requirements for Entry-Level Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators, FMCSA/DOT <<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/12/08/2016-28012/minimum-training-requirements-for-entry-level-commercial-motor-vehicle-operators#footnote-10-p88750> >

⁵ Id.

Daphne & Steve Izer

Co-Chair

Parents Against Tired Truckers

Daphne and Steve's son, Jeff, and three of his friends were killed in 1993 when a semi-truck driver fell asleep at the wheel and ran over their parked car.

Dawn King

Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways Board Member

Dawn's father, Bill Badger, was killed in 2004 while slowed in traffic when he was hit from behind by a truck driver who had fallen asleep at the wheel.

Linda Wilburn

Board Member

Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)

Linda and Gary Wilburn's son, Orbie, was killed in 2002 when a tired truck driver slammed into his car.

Jennifer M. Tierney

Board Member

Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways & Truck Safety Coalition

Jennifer's father, James Mooney, was killed on a dark, rural road in 1983 when he crashed into a truck with no visible lights blocking the roadway

Pam Biddle

Board Member

Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways

On May 13, 2017, Pam's 23-year-old son, Aaron Lee, was in the car with his father, Brian, and Brian's partner, Stephanie Swaim. They were stopped in traffic due to a car carrier that had a brake fire and was still partially in their lane of traffic. A semi-driver failed to slow down and rear-ended the Lee's car which was pushed into and under another semi in front of them resulting in a rear underride crash. The vehicles then burst into flames killing Aaron, Brian, and Stephanie.

Jena Frost

Board Member

Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)

Jena's son, Wyatt, was 5 years old when he was killed by a box truck that was not equipped with AEB.

Lee Jackson

Board Member

Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH)

Truck crash survivor and honorably retired CMV enforcement unit officer with Ft. Worth Police Department

Jeffrey Burns

Board Member

Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH)

J.J. Burns
Board Member
Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)

Kevin Donovan
Board Member
Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)

Joseph Hanslip
Board Member
Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.)