

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

JAMES P. HOFFA
General President

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KEN HALL
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June 3, 2015

United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the 1.4 million members of the Teamsters Union, especially those that use our nation's highways as their workplace, to express our strong opposition to the anti-safety provision in H.R. 2577, the FY 2016 THUD Appropriations bill.

There is no place in a bill that actually funds safety programs for provisions that roll back highway safety and put the lives of Teamster members, their families and your constituents in harm's way. This is a mockery of our highway safety programs, and I call your attention to the attached recent *New York Times* editorial which correctly characterizes these provisions as "A Foolish Attempt to Weaken Truck Safety".

There is no justification for increasing 28 foot double trailers to 33 feet, unless you take seriously a report written by the trucking industry itself that is forcefully trying to ram this change down the throats of states that want nothing to do with 33 foot trailers. In fact, including this provision would preempt state laws and compel 39 states (AL, AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, GA, HI, IL, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VT, VA, WA, WV, WI) that currently do not allow them to run these twin 33-foot trailers. And what is the rationale for changing truck size while DOT is conducting a Congressionally-mandated Truck Size and Weight Study? We can only assume that Congress is bowing to special interests who may be concerned about the final results of the study.

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Our highways, especially our merge lanes and on-and-off ramps are not designed for these eighty-four feet configurations. Longer trucks mean greater stopping distances, and our over-congested highways leave little room for driver reaction times when it comes to changing lanes and reducing speed.

In addition to the increase in trailer size, placing provisions in this bill that would effectively continue the suspension of the limited use of the 34-hour restart provision and the two 1a.m. to 5a.m. rest periods will only compound driver fatigue, as some employers can push their drivers to work over 80 hours per week – twice the normal work week for most people! In this case as well, DOT is in the midst of conducting a Driver Restart Study to address this very issue. Preventing DOT from initiating a rulemaking on minimum insurance for motor carriers which hasn't been increased in 34 years counters a mandate that was placed upon the agency by Congress itself.

The Teamsters Union views these anti-safety provisions as a reckless attempt to placate a small element of the trucking industry at the expense of the safety of millions of Americans that travel our roads every day. For that reason, we ask that you vote no on final passage of this misguided legislation. We intend to score this vote and let your constituents know where you stood on this important highway safety issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Hoffa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

James P. Hoffa
General President