



CDL DRIVER SHORTAGE

BACKGROUND

The trucking industry has struggled with a shortage of drivers for nearly a decade and the problem is becoming more severe. The biggest factors contributing to the driver shortage are the aging workforce, more job alternatives, regulations, young drivers exiting the market because of life style changes and industry growth which requires more drivers. According to surveys by ATA, the average driver age in the for-hire over-the-road truckload industry is 49. Over the next decade, the trucking industry will need to hire roughly 898,000 new drivers, or an average of nearly 90,000 per year. Replacing retiring truck drivers will be by far the largest factor, accounting for nearly half of new driver hires (49%). The second largest factor will be industry growth, accounting for 28% of new driver hires. Additionally, federal law currently restricts interstate trucking to CDL holders 21 years and older.

LEGISLATION

DRIVE-safe Act

The “Developing Responsible Individuals for a Vibrant Economy Act,” H.R.5358, known as “The DRIVE-safe Act,” introduced by Reps. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and Trey Hollingsworth (R-IN), would allow drivers 18 and older to operate across state lines, if they meet rigorous training requirements — at least 400 hours of on-duty time with 240 hours of driving time, with an experienced driver training them. Training would also be restricted to trucks equipped with active braking systems, video monitoring systems and speed limiters set to 65 mph or slower.

H.R.5358 has received significant support from the United Parcel Service (UPS), the American Trucking Associations (ATA), the International Foodservice Distributors Association (IFDA) and the National Council of Chain Restaurants, a division of the National Retail Federation.

Additional Bills

The FAST Act, passed by Congress with bipartisan support in 2015, included a pilot program to study the safety implications of allowing veterans between the ages of 18-21 to operate trucks across state lines. Under current federal law, veterans in this age group are prohibited from doing so even though they can otherwise obtain a commercial driver’s license (CDL) in each of the 48 contiguous states. The provision (Section 5404) that established the pilot program prohibits hazmat transporters from participating in the pilot program (Section 5404) (c)(1)(B)). The WHEEL Act (H.R. 3889), introduced by Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (R-NY), would broaden the criteria for participation in the pilot program by allowing CDL holders age 18-21 who have a clean driving record and have received a certification of completion from a qualified training program to participate in the study. However, it does not repeal Section 5404 (c)(1)(B) which prohibits hazmat transportation from participating in the pilot program.

“THE ASK” *Committees: House Transportation and Infrastructure; Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation*

PMAA fully supports H.R. 5358, the “Drive-safe Act,” and H.R. 3889, the “WHEEL Act.”

PMAA STAFF CONTACT: Sherri Stone, sstone@pmaa.org
Bradley Norman, bnorman@pmaa.org