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## Truck crash victims support legislation to freeze truck size and weight limits

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Families and survivors of truck crash fatalities and injuries joined with the [Truck Safety Coalition](#) (TSC) last weekend for the group's annual Sorrow to Strength conference in Washington D.C. The event included four days of workshops and meetings with members of Congress and [U.S. Dept. of Transportation](#) officials to advance the group's truck safety agenda.

The safety advocates pushed to build support for the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act (SHIPA), sponsored by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Rep. James McGovern (D-MA). The bill would freeze current federal truck size and weight limits, close existing loopholes that allow operation of overweight trucks, and establish an enforcement program to ensure accountability.

"Every year more than 4,000 people are slaughtered on our nation's highways while corporate trucking and shipping interests continue to push Congress for heavier trucks," said Joan Claybrook, chair, Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH). "Heavy trucks are deadly, dangerous and destructive. Families are paying with their lives and with their wallets."

TSC cited its new national poll conducted for the group by Lake Research Partners that shows overwhelming support for truck weight limitations:

- 68% oppose heavier trucks, with 47% strongly opposed.
- 88% of Americans do not want to pay higher taxes for the damage caused by heavier trucks with 75% strongly opposed.

Among truck accident victims participating was Pina Arrington, from Goose Creek, SC, who lost her husband Scott in a truck crash in 2012 when a truck driver turned sharply to the right, crossed two lanes of traffic, and hit her husband.

"What happened to my husband was not an accident. The unacceptably high numbers of truck crash deaths like Scott's are the result of bad actors in an industry choosing profit over safety, and adding more size and weight to trucks will only result in greater loss of life," she said.

During the safety event, TSC released a report ranking the states on truck crash fatalities for 2011, the most recent data available. The top 15 worst states in order are: North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, New Mexico, Kansas, Indiana, Alabama, Kentucky, Iowa, South Carolina, West Virginia and Georgia.



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Another accident victim, Wanda Lindsay of New Braunfels, TX, lost her husband John when a truck driver rear-ended their car while they were stopped in a construction zone back-up. The truck driver was diagnosed with severe sleep apnea just prior to the incident.

Lindsay testified in favor of mandating electronic onboard recorders on trucks. "Truck drivers are allowed to work 11 hours a shift behind the wheel so it is no wonder that nearly half of truck drivers admit they have fallen asleep while driving," she told congressional leaders. "Last year, legislation requiring electronic logging devices in trucks passed Congress. I call on the U.S. Dept. of Transportation to issue the final rule for these lifesaving devices."

Yet another accident victim urged increases in minimum insurance levels for commercial trucks.

"My son Graham was hit by a drunk and drugged truck driver in 2005 and 22 surgeries later he is permanently partially disabled," said Kate Brown of Gurnee, IL. "In the first three years after the crash, Graham's health care costs exceeded \$1.3 million and exhausted the truck company's insurance policy. Trucks have gotten bigger and inflation has gone up, but the minimum amount of insurance coverage required for trucks has remained the same for the past 30 years. Congress must resist the corporate trucking and shipping interest's push for bigger, heavier trucks, and they must increase the minimum insurance level for trucks."

The Truck Safety Coalition is a partnership between Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) and Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.) and says it 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 media about truck safety issues."

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