

May 22, 2023

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chair
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

As the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee considers timely and important legislation to address our nation's continued supply chain challenges, the DRIVE Safe Coalition writes to express strong support for H.R.3408, the DRIVE Safe Integrity Act. The legislation, introduced by Representatives Rick Crawford (R-AR) and Henry Cuellar (D-TX), has the backing of this coalition, which represents over 120 organizations and businesses spanning the supply chain. We encourage the Committee to advance this supply chain workforce development measure to build on the foundations of the bipartisan DRIVE Safe Act from previous Congresses and the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot program as included in the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law.

The trucking industry, the backbone of our nation's economy and supply chain, currently faces a 78,000-driver shortage and will need to hire 1.2 million new drivers in the coming decade to keep pace with the growing demand. Although 18- to 20-year-olds are currently allowed by 49 states and the District of Columbia to obtain commercial driver's licenses without additional training requirements and drive trucks intrastate, federal regulations bar these younger drivers from operating across state lines, compounding the shortage. Modeled after the DRIVE Safe Act, and with rigorous training and safety equipment requirements, the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot program was intended to collect data to inform a pathway for qualified younger individuals to drive in interstate commerce.

Unfortunately, a program designed for 3,000 participants at any one time over a three-year pilot has enrolled fewer than a dozen drivers thus far. This is due, in part, to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) imposition of extraneous requirements that were not included in the law as passed by Congress. The DRIVE Safe Integrity Act will ensure the pilot program fulfills its purpose by urging DOT to take corrective action to improve program participation, requiring progress reports from DOT to Congress, and directing DOT to review data upon conclusion of the pilot program to inform regulations creating a permanent younger driver apprenticeship program.

Building a seamless and resilient supply chain requires a skilled, vibrant, and growing trucking workforce. This legislative proposal will bolster new career pathways into interstate trucking operations while promoting safety and training standards that far exceed the bar set by states today. By steering the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot program back to the course Congress

originally intended, the DRIVE Safe Integrity Act will ensure trucking has the talent it needs to meet the economy's freight demands in the years to come.

Thank you for the Committee's attention to these issues and thoughtful consideration of this vital legislation. We look forward to working with you to include the DRIVE Safe Integrity Act as a key component of a supply chain package considered by the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



Henry Hanscom
Co-Chair, DRIVE Safe Coalition
American Trucking Associations



Mala Parker
Co-Chair, DRIVE Safe Coalition
International Foodservice Distributors Association

CC: Members of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure