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**SAFETY ADVOCATES PRAISE INTRODUCTION OF TRUCK AND BUS SAFETY BILL**  
*Jump in Truck Crash Fatalities in 2010 Signals Urgent Need for Strong Safety Actions*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) Democratic leaders of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation have introduced legislation to advance commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety and authorize programs and activities of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the federal agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for reducing CMV-related fatalities and injuries.

The legislation could not come at a better time. This morning, the Department of Transportation revealed that while overall traffic fatalities declined in 2010, truck crash fatalities increased by nearly nine percent to 3,675. Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) commended the leadership of Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Chair of the Surface Transportation Subcommittee, Senator John Rockefeller (D-WV), Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, and Senator Mark Pryor (D-AR), Chair of the Consumer Protection Subcommittee, for introducing S.1950, the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Enhancement Act of 2011. This legislation, if enacted, will dramatically improve truck and bus safety on our nation's roads and highways.

“This distressing news that there are more truck crash fatalities in 2010 is a clear and compelling call for stronger regulations, tougher oversight, and sustained enforcement of motor carriers across the country. The legislation introduced will ensure that long overdue and frequently ignored federal actions will move forward and our roads and highways will be safer,” said Jacqueline Gillan, President of Advocates. “The safety of the public depends on this bill being passed immediately.”

The CMV bill's comprehensive approach to safety includes provisions to improve driver safety, training and medical qualifications, and require knowledge and proficiency testing for new motor carriers. It would also impose increased financial penalties for companies that create an imminent hazard to public health and for reincarnated carriers – companies that operate illegally after being shut down for safety problems. The bill addresses the need for electronic on-board recorders (EOBRs) to reduce truck driver fatigue, establishes a clearinghouse for controlled substance and alcohol testing records of CMV operators, calls for improved occupant protection in motorcoaches and a study of the safety and infrastructure effects of increasing truck size and weight limits. Major provisions of the bipartisan Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act are included in the legislation to address the lack of basic safety requirements to protect motorcoach occupants and keep unsafe drivers and unsafe carriers off the nation's highways.

Daphne Izer, Founder of Parents Against Tired Truckers (P.A.T.T.), lauded the bill's sponsors for including language requiring trucks and buses to be equipped with EOBRs. “Truck driver fatigue is a major public health and safety problem that endangers everyone sharing the road with large trucks. EOBRs will halt the rampant falsification of paper logbooks, or ‘comic books,’ and ensure that drivers adhere to Hours of Service requirements.”

Joan Claybrook, Consumer Co-Chair of Advocates and a former National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator, said, “Unfortunately, trucking interests have used the economic downturn resulting in the temporary decline in fatalities to push their anti-safety agenda. The Senate sponsors have drafted a strong and sensible bill that will save lives, prevent injuries and reduce health care costs.”

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety ([www.saferoads.org](http://www.saferoads.org)) is a coalition of consumer, public health, medical, safety and insurance organizations working together to improve highway and auto safety policies in Congress, states and Executive branch agencies.

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