

DRIVE-Safe Act

Problem: As we work to strengthen America’s roads, bridges and highways, it’s important that our workforce keeps pace with our infrastructure improvements. In the White House’s February legislative outline of their infrastructure proposal¹, a section is devoted to strengthening programs that allow Americans to learn the skills necessary to fill the jobs required to help rebuild America’s infrastructure.

In the same vein, while most states allow commercial driver’s licenses (CDL) to be issued to drivers at the age of 18, federal regulation restricts CDL-holding drivers from operating across state lines until they are 21. The current transition to being able to drive in interstate commerce happens without any additional training and hampers the hiring of prospective truck drivers.

One report from 2015² estimates that trucking companies will need to hire an additional 890,000 drivers to keep up with the rate of retiring drivers among other factors. A fully-manned trucking force will be a vital cog in any infrastructure proposal. **Right now, we don’t have that nor do we have any plans to develop one.**

Solution: The “Developing Responsible Individuals for a Vibrant Economy Act”, or the “DRIVE-Safe Act” would allow employers to provide CDL holders below the age of 21 with an extensive apprenticeship program that will prepare them to be able to drive in interstate commerce.

The program consists of two, sequential probationary periods where the apprentice is accompanied by an experienced driver, in which an apprentice must, in total, complete at least 400 hours of on-duty time with at least 240 hours driving. Additionally, both periods can only be completed after certain performance benchmarks are adequately achieved by apprentices to the satisfaction of the employer.

The DRIVE-Safe Act will help refill the ranks of our nation’s truck drivers, get Americans jobs, and aid any viable infrastructure initiative.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/INFRASTRUCTURE-211.pdf>

² <http://www.trucking.org/ATA%20Docs/News%20and%20Information/Reports%20Trends%20and%20Statistics/10%206%2015%20ATAs%20Driver%20Shortage%20Report%202015.pdf>