

DRIVE Safe Act Myth v. Fact

MYTH: This bill will make the roads less safe because there is not adequate training for 18-year-old drivers.

FACT:

- All 48 contiguous states already allow 18-year-olds to drive trucks intrastate.
- The 400 hours of training required in this bill is [actually more than what Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation have deemed safe for 18-year-old military truck drivers](#), who are allowed to drive trucks interstate as civilians under a pilot program mandated in 2015.
- The 400 hours is also [more than what is federally required of all entry level truck drivers](#) under a new rule going into effect in 2020.
- The bill also requires the satisfaction of 10 performance benchmarks before apprentices are allowed to graduate (the 400 hours is only a minimum).

MYTH: “Younger drivers both lack overall experience and are less safe behind the wheel than their older counterparts.”

FACT:

- In light of modern-day safety technologies, properly-trained younger drivers can achieve a level of behind-the-wheel safety that is equal to, if not greater than, their older counterparts.
- In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in the last 5 years for which we have data (2012-2016),¹ [16-20 year old male drivers were actually less likely to be involved in fatal crashes than their 21-24 year old counterparts](#), and male drivers make up [94% of the industry](#) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
 - **Note:** this data covered passenger vehicle drivers as well as Commercial Motor Vehicle drivers.
- The bill would require training to take place on trucks equipped with industry-leading safety technologies [endorsed by the National Transportation Safety Board \(NTSB\)](#)—technologies like active braking collision mitigation systems which [significantly reduce the frequency and severity of crashes](#).

MYTH: “No small-business truckers are going to be able to take advantage of this bill simply because small carriers will not be able to get younger drivers insured.”

FACT:

- All carriers would benefit from the loosening of the labor market through the infusion of more qualified drivers.
- According to the American Trucking Associations (ATA), insurers are open to this bill and could work with carriers to get their younger drivers insured if this bill were to become law, so long as carriers comply with the requirements of this bill and demonstrate meaningful investments in safety (for example, in terms of who carriers hire and select to serve as the experienced driver for their apprentices).

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Traffic Safety Facts Annual Report Tables: Table 62 Driver Involvement Rates per 100,000 Licensed Drivers by Age, Sex, and Crash Severity*, <https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/tsftables/tsfar.htm>.

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Myth v. Fact**

MYTH: The truck-driver shortage is not the problem, it is a retention issue.

FACT:

- According to [the Federal Reserve's July 2018 report](#) of economic conditions across the country, half of the 12 Federal Reserve Districts specifically reported trucking capacity and truck driver shortage issues, with many reporting rising freight and manufacturing costs due to the shortage.
- According to USA today, [truck driver is one of the most in demand jobs in 2018 with the biggest pay hikes](#) (median base pay of \$53,878 representing a 4.5% annual increase).
- According to [the American Trucking Associations \(ATA\)](#), private fleet drivers saw their pay rise to more than \$86,000 from \$73,000 or a gain of nearly 18%. This is in addition to the thousands of dollars in signing bonuses, health insurance, and retirement benefits that most carriers offer to recruit and retain drivers.
- Yet, [the industry was still short 50,000 drivers by the end of 2017](#), and—due to its aging workforce (average age of 49, which is 7 years older than the average American worker)—[needs to hire 890,000 new workers over the next decade](#) to keep up with demand.
- With unemployment at 4% and 6.7 million job openings in our economy, trucking companies face an additional regulatory hurdle in hiring workers, because unlike other industries, motor carriers can't go into high schools to recruit entry level drivers since federal rules require interstate drivers to be 21 and most trucking companies operate in the long-haul sector.

MYTH: This bill will only benefit large companies who want to pay their workers less and make more money.

FACT:

- All carriers would benefit from the loosening of the labor market through the infusion of more qualified drivers.
- All carriers desiring to train apprentices under the bill must first make financial investments in safety by equipping their trucks with the four safety technologies required by the bill.
- According to USA today, [truck driver is one of the most in demand jobs in 2018 with the biggest pay hikes](#) (median base pay of \$53,878 representing a 4.5% annual increase).
- According to [the American Trucking Associations \(ATA\)](#), private fleet drivers saw their pay rise to more than \$86,000 from \$73,000 or a gain of nearly 18%. This is in addition to the thousands of dollars in signing bonuses, health insurance, and retirement benefits that most carriers offer to recruit and retain drivers.