



September 30, 2021

Via DOTExecSec@dot.gov & US Mail

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Letter from the widow of a murdered trucker

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On June 26, 2014, my husband Mike Boeglin, an over-the-road interstate truck driver, was murdered. He was shot 5 times and then burned in his freightliner semi, in Detroit, Michigan while waiting at the delivery gate to deliver his load. He was refused safe haven by the receiver of his shipment and was unable to find a safe place to park in the area. He would have picked up another load to go to Princeton, Indiana, and then return home to me. But he never returned. At the time, I was a newlywed, just over 4 months pregnant with our child whom we would lovingly call "Baby Boeglin", a child he would never get to see. Mike was just 29 years old when his life was ended.

We had just purchased a modest working-class home in Mike's home town of Ferdinand, Indiana to be close to family, friends and the church community that Mike loved so much and grew up in. We were off to a great start as a newly married couple, living the American dream, having just paid for our home. We were in the process of remodeling it in preparation for our child to be born in November 2014. Mike was going to take a month off from his dangerous occupation of truck driving and finish all of the re-modeling and construction of the baby's room, the kitchen and living/dining rooms. On October 27th, 2014 we would have celebrated our second wedding anniversary (seven years later, I still celebrate this special day even though Mike is not here physically with me). I understand last month you became a father. I cannot even begin to tell you what these last seven years have been like for me and my daughter who is growing up without a father.

Since July 2014, I have come to know James Lamb, who runs the Small Business in Transportation Coalition ("SBTC"). James has been working with Congressional staff these past seven years trying to create politically viable legislation that would help prevent further truckers' homicides. There have been many drafts during this time... first focused on enabling drivers to have the ability to carry firearms in every state to protect themselves against the evil and dangers of the road, dangers that I have come to know all too well and that will forever haunt me.

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The current iteration of the bill is simply geared toward preventing violence against truckers. As painful as you might imagine that it has been for me, I have listened to James' updates all these years reliving that dreadful night over and over again as we have worked together to try and prevent what happened to my husband to other truck drivers and their families. I have told my story countless times to reporters in the hopes Mike's death will not have been in vain and something good could come from my loss.

Sadly, I have learned during this process that hundreds of other American families have had to endure the same loss, pain and suffering that my family and I have. Like my now nearly seven year old daughter, Mackenzie, countless numbers of children have lost their parents to acts of violence against truckers. We therefore call upon Congress and the Biden Administration to please embrace and pass the TRUCK DRIVER PROTECTION ACT OF 2021 aka "Boeglin's Law."

This Act would revise Federal Law to:

- (1) encourage shippers and receivers to provide upon request safe harbor to operators of commercial motor vehicles operating in interstate commerce;
- (2) require the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to promote and protect the personal safety of operators of commercial motor vehicles in interstate commerce;
- (3) specifically outlaw violence or threats of violence against operators of commercial motor vehicles;
- (4) enable and require the Secretary of Transportation to preempt state laws whenever the Secretary of Transportation determines that state law conflicts with Federal law that protects and promotes the safety of operators of commercial motor vehicles engaged in interstate commerce; and
- (5) direct the Secretary of Transportation to study and report to Congress on the appropriateness of existing Federal law and regulations insofar as they impact the safety of operators of commercial motor vehicles operating in interstate commerce.

We are also calling for more funding for safe truck parking initiatives, which sadly seems to not be on Congress' radar this year.

This important legislation would tweek the existing Hobbs Act and put would-be criminals and rioters on notice that they could face 20 years in prison if they commit or threaten violence against a trucker engaged in interstate commerce or worse, cut the life of a trucker, like my late husband Mike, short. For millions of Americans that drive to supply

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this country, the truck is their home; at least their home-away-from home. Truckers deserve the same right to "equal protection of the laws" as any other American who returns home to a residential building each night and they need this law. We as a nation must do something to address this safety problem because the truckers who have gotten us through COVID-19 these past eighteen months or so deserve some sort of legal protection. This is the way to truly #ThankATrucker.

James and the SBTC created the TRUCK LIVES MATTER movement in 2017 to bring attention to the plight of drivers and the problem of trucker murders described in the bill's text. Together, James and I operate the "Women for Boeglin's Law" group on Facebook to campaign for these much-needed changes. In addition to male truck drivers, hundreds of other women in the industry, including SBTC Board Members Lana Danko, a trucker herself, and small freight broker Kathy Harris support the proposed TRUCK DRIVER PROTECTION ACT OF 2021. We ask you to please bring this important attached bill to the White House and bring this up to the President in your next Cabinet meeting. Perhaps you will even read this heart felt message to him.

It is with a heavy heart that I write to ask you to please help me keep Mike's dream, spirit and memory alive by joining us and publicly expressing your support to members of Congress for them to introduce "Boeglin's Law" into the United States Senate & House of Representatives this session. I ask you, Mr. Secretary, to be please my Executive Branch champion and the champion of all the other truckers and their families who desperately need this ability for truckers to be protected as they do their jobs on the road.

Indeed, #TruckerLivesMatter

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ashley M. Boeglin

Sincerely,

/s/ JAMES LAMB

SBTC Executive Director