

107TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2083

To amend titles 23 and 49, United States Code, relating to motor vehicle weight and width limitations.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 6, 2001

Mr. PAUL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## A BILL

To amend titles 23 and 49, United States Code, relating to motor vehicle weight and width limitations.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Safer Truck Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 The Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Heavy trucks carrying up to 20 metric tons  
8 of cargo on the National Highway System are not  
9 equipped with modern safety features presently  
10 found on cars. These features include disc brakes,

1 crash absorbent bumpers, sway bars, roll bars, and  
2 underride beams.

3 (2) Trucking is the deadliest industry in the  
4 United States. One in every 7 Americans killed on  
5 the job is a trucker (879 out of the 6,026 workplace  
6 deaths in 1998). In 1999, 758 truckers were killed  
7 in truck crashes alone, which was a 10-year high.  
8 4,170 motorists and 434 pedestrians were also killed  
9 in collisions with heavy trucks during 1999, a total  
10 of 5,362 preventable deaths. Of the 142,000 people  
11 injured by commercial trucks in 1999, 33,000 were  
12 truckers. Over 140,000 people, including more than  
13 23,000 truckers, have been killed in preventable  
14 large-truck crashes since the end of the Vietnam  
15 War along with 3,000,000 injured. While some  
16 modification to roads and bridges may be necessary  
17 to accommodate safer trucks, the cost is insignifi-  
18 cant compared to the savings that will accrue from  
19 reducing this high rate of death and injury.

20 (3) Truckers and other highway professionals  
21 have the right to operate safer trucks and busses on  
22 the National Highway System that are maneuverable  
23 enough to avoid collisions without unnecessary Fed-  
24 eral interference.

1 **SEC. 3. VEHICLE WEIGHT LIMITATIONS.**

2 Section 127 of title 23, United States Code, is  
3 amended by adding at the end the following:

4 “(h) EXCEPTION.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection  
6 (a), a State may allow a single unit truck or bus  
7 without a trailer to carry up to 20 metric tons or  
8 44,080 pounds of cargo, packaging, and load secure-  
9 ment materials regardless of the overall weight of  
10 the vehicle, its axle weights, or the weight of its  
11 safety and energy conservation devices if the cargo  
12 is evenly distributed in a compartment or combined  
13 compartments at least 40 feet long, the overall  
14 height of the vehicle and cargo does not exceed the  
15 width of the wheelbase, the axles are positioned at  
16 the extreme ends of the vehicle, the gross weight and  
17 certified empty weight of the vehicle (including de-  
18 tachable cargo compartments) are marked conspicu-  
19 ously on the front of the vehicle in contrasting 3-  
20 inch or taller letters and numbers.

21 “(2) CALCULATION OF GROSS WEIGHT.—For  
22 purposes of this subsection, the gross weight shall be  
23 calculated by adding 20 metric tons or 44,080  
24 pounds to the empty weight.”.

1 **SEC. 4. VEHICLE WIDTH LIMITATIONS.**

2 Section 31113(b) of title 49, United States Code, is  
3 amended to read as follows:

4 “(b) EXCLUSION OF SAFETY AND ENERGY CON-  
5 SERVATION DEVICES.—

6 “(1) ENERGY CONSERVATION DEVICES.—Width  
7 calculated under this section does not include an en-  
8 ergy conservation device the Secretary decides is  
9 necessary for safe and efficient operation of a com-  
10 mercial motor vehicle.

11 “(2) SAFETY DEVICES.—

12 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A safety device that  
13 reduces the possibility of death and injury shall  
14 not be included in the calculation of width for  
15 purposes of this section if such device fits en-  
16 tirely within the legal travel lanes of all roads  
17 upon which the vehicle operates.

18 “(B) SAFETY DEVICE DEFINED.—In this  
19 subsection, the term ‘safety device’ includes  
20 mirrors, grabhandles, steps, rearview video cam-  
21 eras, crash absorbent bumpers and body panels,  
22 batteries for regenerative braking, wheels, tires,  
23 structural members, and drivetrain components  
24 positioned to enhance vehicle stability.”.

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