

Safer Trucking Newsletter

APRIL 2022

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Our Mission

Educate the public about research-based solutions to reduce the frequency and severity of truck crashes in the U.S., and

Collaborate with all stakeholders to make trucking safer,

Provide resources to survivors and families of victims after a truck crash.



Regulatory Update

FMCSA Launches Two Congressional Mandated Advisory Boards to Help Improve Trucking Supply Chain

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) recently launched two congressional mandated advisory boards as part of a larger agenda of addressing the country's supply chain issues. The FMCSA will coordinate with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Labor (DOL) on the establishment and management of these advisory boards.

Women in Trucking Advisory Board (WOTAB)

DOT and DOL will launch a task force dedicated to reviewing and reporting on policies that provide education, training, mentorship, or outreach to women in the trucking industry and recruit, retain, or advance women in the trucking industry. This task force will help diversify the trucking workforce and identify opportunities for women to work in this industry. The application process for the WOTAB closed on April 15, 2022.

Truck Leasing Task Force (TLTF)

DOT and DOL will launch the task force to investigate predatory truck leasing arrangements that dissuade drivers from entering or staying in the industry. The application process for the TLTF closes on May 6, 2022.

Legislative Update

U.S. Reps. Andy Levin (D-MI) and Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ) Introduce Bill to Repeal Overtime Exemption for Truckers

On April 14, 2022, U.S. Representatives Andy Levin and Jeff Van Drew introduced the GOT Truckers Act of 2022. This legislation would remove section 213(b) of the Fair Labor Standard Act, thereby repealing the overtime exemption that currently exists for many of our nation's truck drivers. The legislation is supported by the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Institute for Safer Trucking and several other organizations. To find a list of co-sponsors, please see [here](#).

By removing the overtime exemption for trucking, IST hopes this will improve retention. Retaining experienced truck drivers will help improve safety as these drivers are less likely to be involved in a crash. To learn more about the legislation and truck driver pay issues, please visit our website.

2020 Fatal Truck Crash Data

The Institute for Safer Trucking analyzed data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). For April, which is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, IST looked at the number of distracted truck drivers involved in fatal crashes from 2011 to 2020. Images below are available on our website, [here](#).

IN 2020

248

**DISTRACTED
TRUCK DRIVERS
INVOLVED IN
FATAL CRASHES**

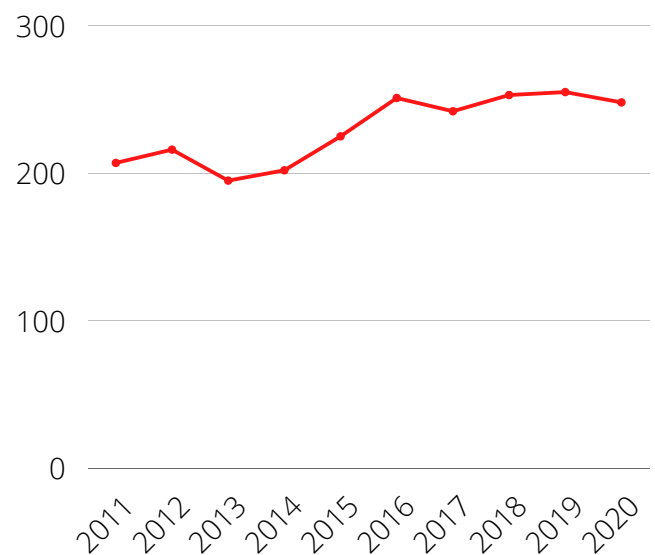
RESULTING IN

277

DEATHS

20%

**INCREASE IN DISTRACTED
TRUCK DRIVERS IN
FATAL CRASHES
(2011-2020)**



Questions

If you have questions about the 2020 FARS data, please reach out to the Institute for Safer Trucking. Is there a truck safety solution that you would like to learn more about? If so, let us know!

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IST Resources

Memorials and Survivor Stories

The Institute for Safer Trucking recently published an online space for memorials and survivors' stories. Please let us know if you are interested in creating a page. Each page comes with a unique link and can include pictures, videos, and links to other websites.

Contact Jen Walsh (jwalsh@safertrucking.org) to schedule a time to set up a page. The memorials can be found at safertrucking.org/remember.

Monthly Meetups

The Monthly Meetups can provide you with a space to share your story and connect with others who have survived and/or lost a loved one in a large truck crash.

These Monthly Meetups have included past guest speakers such as:

- Former Acting Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the federal agency responsible for overseeing truck safety in the U.S.,
- A bereavement specialist who focused on coping with grief during the holidays,
- Survivor and family advocates who have committed time and effort to enact changes that make our roads safer.

Contact Jen Walsh at jwalsh@safertrucking.org for more information

AZ Central Op-Ed: Every parent who loses a child deserves to have paid time off to grieve

By **Barry Kluger**

Federal law offers unpaid time off for having a child or caring for a sick family member. It's time to offer paid leave for losing a child.

With the world in utter turmoil, human life has never been more precious. And when that life ends, especially that of a child, mourning is all we can do to preserve the memories and live with the pain.

Over the years, I have fought tirelessly for parents who have lost a child, to receive more than the customary 3 to 5 days off work.

Since 2011, the Sarah Grace-Farley-Kluger Act has been introduced in both chambers of Congress, with bipartisan support. Its goal is to provide bereavement leave.

Bill would offer 2 weeks paid leave for all workers

Since 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) has provided up to 12 weeks unpaid time off for having a child, adopting a child, caring for a sick family member or service member or one's own illness.

But parents lose out when they suffer the worst tragedy of all: death of a child. We can amend the FMLA to do right by them.

This past fall, Rep. Brad Schneider, D-Ill., who is the main sponsor of House Resolution 5031, came up with a brilliant workaround to the issue by getting two weeks paid bereavement leave included in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for federal workers. It was a major step and there is now precedence.

The bills proposed in the House and the Senate would extend the benefit to all workers.

I am fond of saying the best assets of a company get on the elevator or go out to the parking lot every day at 5 p.m. (though that's somewhat nuanced by COVID-19).

Election years are tough years. No one, in either party, except for those sponsors who have stepped up, wants to take risks. But this is less about the supporters than the ones who have driven this bill away through silence.

Why haven't Sinema, Kelly signed on?

Sen. Kyrsten Sinema was a sponsor of the bills during the years she sat in the House and through 2019-2020 when she first served in the Senate. Former Sen. Martha McSally was the lead Republican on the bill but was not reelected; she was succeeded by Mark Kelly.

That support has since languished.

Neither Sen. Sinema nor Sen. Kelly has stepped up to sign on as sponsors for the most recent resolution, S2935. Their voice is sorely needed.

I have reached out to Sen. Kelly's office a few times to no avail. Here is a fine senator who experienced one of the most tragic acts of violence in our history. He was witness to parents who lost a child. One would think and hope he would come aboard.

I don't know what changed in Sen. Sinema's sphere for her to not renew her sponsorship of bereavement leave, but her signature is also absent on this legislation, whose beginning was here in Scottsdale, when I lost my daughter and began a national movement with fellow grieving dad Kelly Farley.

This is not controversial. This does not challenge their base. In fact, they can extend their compassion to all families and parents of Arizona, regardless of their politics and say, "You are the workers who keep our state and country going. We will be there for you when you need us in your darkest, painful moments."

They can borrow my pen.

Link to Original Article: <https://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2022/04/04/sinema-kelly-sponsor-parental-leave-death-child-bereavement/7210627001/>

If there are other articles on this topic that you found helpful, please share them with us so we can post them in our Facebook group. Please send articles to Jen Walsh at jwalsh@safertrucking.org.

Memorial: Culclager Family

About The Culclager Family

Navy Petty Officer Dexter Culclager and Yakel Culclager met about a year into Dexter's service in the United States Navy. Yakel had three kids already, and Dexter fell in love with all of four of them. When they married, they became one big happy family. Tre'Quis, Tra'Desia, and Tra'Veion were best friends, inseparable, and each other's biggest fans. This was a Family that genuinely loved and enjoyed spending time together. They had only recently been relocated by the U.S. Navy to Jacksonville when Dexter started working at the Naval Hospital there. The Family fell in love with Jacksonville right from the start and were enjoying all their new opportunities.

Crash Description

On March 2, 2015, Dexter had just finished his lunch break when he received a call from Yakel. She and the children were on their way to an appointment when their SUV broke down on the Buckman Bridge due to a mechanical failure. While they waited for assistance, another vehicle stopped behind them and traffic began to slow. As Dexter tried to make sense of what was happening and how he could help them, a tractor trailer, which failed to stop in the slowing traffic, collided with the second vehicle and pushed it out of the way. Tra'Desia had seen the truck coming and she let out a scream as it barreled toward them at highway speed. The truck then pushed their car over 100 yards before their SUV was slammed into the concrete barrier and burst into flames, trapping Yakel, Tre'Quis, Tra'Desia, and Tra'Veion.

Dexter had been on the phone with them the entire time, until the phone cut out, but he heard his family's agonizing last moments. Despite the valiant efforts of many Good Samaritans, they were unable to pull them from the vehicle. All four perished. Only a short distance away, Dexter made his way to the crash scene as quickly as he could and had to be physically restrained when he got to the bridge and saw the burning wreckage.

Life After the Crash

Since the crash, Dexter has vowed to do what he can to prevent other families from experiencing the unimaginable grief that he has had to endure from this preventable truck crash. He hopes that by sharing his story and raising awareness about safer trucking solutions, like collision avoidance systems with Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB), which could have saved Dexter's family if it had been installed and in use in the tractor-trailer.

Years after the crash, Dexter met an amazing woman and they married. The couple has two young children, and he cherishes every moment with them. He left the Navy in 2019 and is now working toward a degree in Biology. He hopes to continue his service to his country with a career in government civil service. Dexter is grateful for this second chance and is determined to keep the memory of the family that he lost alive and to do what he can to make a difference in trucking and highway safety that will save the lives of other families.



Yakel Culclager, Tre'Quis Woods-Sims, Tra'Desia Woods-Sims, and Tra'Veion Woods-Franklin

Link to Memorial Page: <https://www.safertrucking.org/remember/culclager-family>

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