

Lowering the Driver Age

ISSUE TYPE	Regulatory (Federal)	KEY DATES	Dec. 4, 2015 – President signs FAST Act, bill includes call for Military pilot program
AGENCY	Congress/FMCSA		Aug. 22, 2016 – FMCSA proposes Military pilot program
STATUS	Active/Tracking		July 6, 2018 – FMCSA releases details of Military pilot program
DIVISION IMPACT	MC		Feb. 26, 2019 – DRIVE-Safe Act is introduced
INTERESTED PARTIES	ATA	MOST RECENT ACTION	May 15, 2019 – FMCSA requests comments on non-Military pilot program

Statement of the Issue

In 2017, the American Trucking Associations' (ATA) "Truck Driver Shortage Analysis" found the trucking industry needs to hire over 900,000 additional drivers to meet growing freight demand. In its report, ATA identified one of the largest factors contributing to the shortage to be the aging workforce – the average for-hire over-the-road truckload driver is 49 years old. ATA notes that age restrictions in law serve as a deterrent to young drivers considering joining the commercial motor vehicle (CMV) workforce. The restricted age group, 18- to 21-year-olds, experiences the highest rate of unemployment but is unable to drive trucks in interstate commerce. By age 21, the legal interstate driving age, these individuals have found another career. Therefore, the industry has proposed lowering the interstate CMV operator age to 18 years old.

Policy Position

IANA should continue to monitor driver age initiatives and, in conjunction and coordination with the ATA, support any legislation or regulations that would allow for drivers between the ages of 18 and 21 to enter into the interstate workforce, while maintaining safety.

Summary

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act called for, among other things, a pilot program to allow individuals between the ages of 18 and 21 to operate CMVs in interstate commerce if they have military experience. On Aug. 22, 2016, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) proposed such a pilot allowing military personnel to operate a CMV in interstate commerce if they received specified heavy-vehicle driver training during their service. The pilot will

last three years and the data collected from the 18- to 20-year-olds will be compared to that of a control group of drivers aged 21 and older. FMCSA will use the comparison to determine if age is a significant factor for safety. In Nov. 2018, FMCSA sought comments on the pilot. It began accepting applications from carriers and drivers to participate in the pilot in June 2019.

On May 15, 2019, FMCSA published a notice requesting comments on an additional pilot program that would allow non-military CMV drivers under 21 years old to operate in interstate commerce. FMCSA requested public comment on various parameters of the potential program, including: training, qualifications, driving limitations, and vehicle safety systems. ATA spoke out in support of this first step toward a pilot program for younger drivers, while the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters oppose such a program.

Other bills introduced have aimed to lower the driver age for all commercial driver's license (CDL) holders. On Feb. 26, 2019, Senator Young (R-IN) and Congressman Hollingsworth (R-IN) introduced the Developing Responsible Individuals for a Vibrant Economy (DRIVE-Safe) Act in their respective Chambers of Congress. The bill would allow qualified drivers between 18 and 21 to operate in interstate commerce by creating an apprenticeship program. The program is comprised of two sequential probationary periods during which the driver must complete a total of 400 hours of on-duty time, 240 hours of that time with a qualified CMV operator. ATA expressed support for the version of this bill introduced in the 115th Congress and issued a one-pager, included as an attachment to this document.



Policy Position Paper

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published an article in March 2019 stating that the labor market for truck drivers did not show any evidence of a shortage. Although the authors acknowledged there have been some labor concerns, especially in the long-haul trucking segment, they claimed the labor supply would eventually rise to meet demand as wages increase. ATA criticized this article for relying on outdated data and for failing to differentiate between the various sectors of the trucking industry, among other oversights.