

Dear Sir or Madam,

I understand that there is proposed rule making regarding Electronic On=Board Recorders (EOBR) with the FMCSA. I have several comments about that issue.

First, the trucking industry is already highly regulated. Some items are good and some are bad, just like everything else. However, we don't need more regulation that in essence is nothing more than "feel good" requirements that people outside the industry think are going to solve a problem.

For example, a driver can tell the EOBR that he is in the sleeper getting his ten hours of required rest when in fact he might be elsewhere engaged in some other activity where he/she is not getting any rest. These might include eating dinner, talking with his buddies, staring at the moon, whatever. Just saying "I'm in the sleeper" by telling the EOBR that we are does nothing to improve safety. Short of wearing an ankle bracelet that says that I am in the sleeper, we really don't know this to be the case and I draw the line at that. We are not criminals yet for driving a truck.

Any system, electronic or otherwise, can and will be overcome. Werner Enterprises has been using EOBR for years and their drivers are some of the most aggressive drivers that I have seen on the road so how did EOBRs help there?

As I recall, road safety is the issue here, is it not? If that is the case, how about the following ideas?

1) Greater enforcement of existing laws. This may mean putting more officers on patrol and out from behind a desk somewhere, but isn't that their job to begin with? And what about these 100,000 new police officers President Clinton promised us? Where are they?

I try my best to observe all traffic laws religiously. In five years of professional driving I have not had a ticket or an accident but I see a lot of other infractions that go unpunished. These include speeding, unsafe lane changes, excessive speed in poor weather conditions, etc. When I call the police on occasion to report someone, I usually get a big yawn from them.

2) As a CDL holder, I underwent three weeks of training, a month of additional training, an extensive background check, a physical, a drug test/alcohol test, ten years of employment verification, and lots of scrutiny from my employers before I got to enter a truck cab. That is all good. But let's now contrast that with what the private citizen has to do.

Well, he takes a test, stares at a vision chart at the DMV, and away they go. This is the same individual who will spend twenty hours driving straight through to Grandma's house for Christmas dinner and then another twenty hours back with no rest, thinks trucks are targets and believes there is no downside to cutting one off, forgets his exit and cuts across three lanes of freeway traffic to exit, practices road rage at least once a day, complains that trucks are going too fast and then complains they won't get out of his way in the slow lane, etc. The list is endless.

The NTSB tracks accident causes. If I remember correctly, about 23% of accidents are caused by CDL holders. Conversely, 77% of accidents are caused by what I refer to as "casual drivers." Those are the ones on their way to and from work, going to the store, picking up the kids from soccer practice, etc. Before the

77% of the accident causing people tell the 23% how to live their lives, maybe they need to take stock of what they are doing first.

The former head of DOT was formerly the head of the Washington State Highway patrol in Seattle. She implemented an aggressive driver program where a police officer rode with a truck driver, noted aggressive driving and then radioed ahead to his buddies to stop the nut and ticket them. Everybody thought they would be stopping a lot of trucks. They didn't. They stopped a lot of CARS. About 77% of those ticketed were driving CARS, not TRUCKS.

One of the most dangerous drivers on the road is a 5'1" soccer mom in an SUV on her way to pick up the kids from soccer practice, school, or the babysitters. Am I sexist here? No, decidedly not. What I am is a person who lives across the street from one of those babysitters and I have learned to give them a wide berth. In the last year, at my residence, they have;

- 1) Parked on my lawn.
- 2) Blocked my driveway.
- 3) Refused to move their SUV from in front of my driveway while I was trying to leave my residence.
- 4) Blocked the street in both directions so that nobody gets through.
- 5) Blared their horns at other soccer moms who had the audacity to walk across the street to get to their SUV in front of an anxious soccer mom with a full tank of gas and a roaring engine (I recommend no one ever do that. Wait to cross the street until after she leaves).
- 6) Hit a tree on my lawn.
- 7) Hit a tree on my neighbor's lawn.
- 8) Hit a street light.
- 9) Hit each other's cars.
- 10) Hit my car while it was parked IN MY DRIVEWAY.
- 11) Yell foul curses at people that got in their way that as a truck driver I would not use. One time, it was directed at someone that was walking ON THE SIDEWALK.
- 12) Parked half on the street, half on the sidewalk.
- 13) Curse at a cop who was giving another soccer mom a ticket for blocking my neighbor's driveway and refused to more.

And more. Lots more. And these are the people that are complaining about the truck driver's safety?

If I did any of these things, I would be fired, my license revoked, baned from the industry for years, would be uninsurable and more. With this group, is a daily ritual.

I am just as much an advocate of driver safety as the Moms Against Tired Truck Drivers, or whatever else they are calling themselves these days. I'll report an unsafe truck driver in a second. But before we engage in another "feel good" regulation that is going to cost the industry millions while producing zero benefit, I think we need to give it a rest.

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