

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

Full Committee
Nominations Hearing
Wednesday, July 16, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.

REPUBLICAN QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Mr. Derek Barrs

COVER PAGE

SENATOR JERRY MORAN (R-KS)

1. The previous Surface Transportation Reauthorization included the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot Program (SDAP), established by FMCSA to assist 18-, 19-, and 20-year-old individuals to pursue interstate trucking careers.

The Biden administration added onerous and costly requirements that deterred motor carriers from participating in the program, which took Congressional action to remove. Providing additional uncertainty, the program is set to expire later this year.

If confirmed, will you commit to supporting the continuation of the SDAP program as Congress further considers this issue as part of the next surface transportation bill?

Answer: As a former law enforcement officer and a member of the Florida Trucking Association, with decades of experience in public safety, my priority has been and will continue to be the safety of both drivers and the traveling public. The SDAP program is set to expire in November. The data needs to be examined and a report will be sent to Congress. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary, as well as Congress to explore the next steps necessary to set the future generation of truck drivers up for success.

2. I have heard from drivers that they are not being allowed access to restrooms at various facilities, including shippers, receivers, and warehouses. I know certain states, including Washington, have taken steps to ensure access to these facilities.

If confirmed as FMCSA Administrator, will you support legislative or regulatory efforts to restore basic human dignity to the men and women who keep our supply chain moving and ensure our nation's truck drivers have access to these facilities?

Answer: I believe in dignified working conditions for all drivers on the road. Part of the effort to improve motor carrier safety must include improving working conditions, which in turn helps to retain safe and experienced drivers. If confirmed, I am willing to further discuss this important issue to restore human dignity to our nation's truck drivers and explore potential solutions.

3. Integral to the mission of the agency you are nominated to lead is coordination with other federal departments and agencies and with states, localities, and industry stakeholders to deliver safe and efficient transportation networks.

How will you leverage relationships with state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, and other partners to navigate diverse transportation safety needs while upholding a uniform standard of safety throughout the country?

Answer: As you mentioned safety is integral to the mission, and coordination with other entities to ensure our nation's roadways are safe and efficient is paramount. FMCSA relies on the work our state inspectors conduct every day to ensure the motoring public is safe. Secretary Duffy recently announced the launch of a nationwide audit of state practices for

issuing non-domiciled Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs). Ensuring that our state partners are issuing CDLs at the level the Agency deems necessary is critical to a safe and efficient supply chain.

SENATOR TED BUDD (R-NC)

1. The Entry Level Driver Training Rule created minimum standards for truck driver training, but many CDL mills and bad actors continue to disregard the rule. This is a safety issue, but FMCSA has made little progress on removing unfit training organizations from the Training Provider Registry. Will you commit to increasing enforcement of the Training Provider Registry and removing bad actors within 90 days of a complaint?

***Answer:** Ensuring bad actors are not training the commercial motor vehicle drivers of tomorrow is critical in maintaining national safety on our roadways. The FMCSA is authorized to audit and investigate providers in order to identify and address those who are not compliant with the regulations or who are engaging in fraudulent or criminal activities. If confirmed, I will commit to auditing and removing bad actors within a timely manner.*

2. I understand some autonomous trucking companies have previously sent a petition to FMCSA seeking to be allowed to use new warning devices on their vehicles, but were denied by the last administration. If confirmed, would you be willing to take another look at that petition? How should FMCSA adapt regulations to new technologies, including autonomous trucking?

***Answer:** The core mission of FMCSA is, and always will be, safety. FMCSA's unwavering commitment is to save lives and prevent injuries and crashes involving large trucks and buses. Every decision FMCSA makes and every regulation it considers must be viewed through the lens of this fundamental responsibility. FMCSA should support innovation while ensuring the highest level of safety on our nation's roadways. This means FMCSA must guarantee the safe integration of Automated Driving Systems (ADS)-equipped commercial motor vehicles. A critical component of this is ensuring that these vehicles meet a level of safety that is equivalent to or greater than the safety standards we currently have in place for all commercial motor vehicles. Any petition that comes before the agency should be given a fresh and comprehensive review based on the latest available safety data and technological analysis. Additionally, if confirmed, I will review the ADS rulemaking for alignment with the Department's and Administration's priorities and will be updating the status and next steps in the Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions.*

SENATOR TIM SHEEHY (R-MT)

1. Chief Barrs, a speed-limiter rule would disrupt the economy in rural states like Montana and jeopardize safety. Will you continue to engage small-business truckers in preventing any speed-limiter mandate, and commit to engaging with them on other important safety issues?

Answer: On June 27, 2025, Secretary Duffy unveiled the Department's "Supporting American Truck Driver" initiative that is in line with the President's "Enforcing Commonsense Rules of the Road For America's Truck Drivers" Executive Order. As part of the Pro-Trucker initiative, FMCSA and NHTSA jointly announced and subsequently have taken actions to withdraw a proposal to require speed-limiting devices on heavy vehicles. This decision respects the professionalism of drivers and acknowledges the proposed rulemaking lacked a sufficiently clear and compelling safety justification.

2. Montana is home to cutting-edge photonics technology being deployed in autonomous systems. Do you see opportunities at FMCSA to embrace innovation, including autonomous systems, to make meaningful improvements to roadway safety?

Answer: During my time in law enforcement, I utilized many different tools in the proverbial toolbelt in order to ensure safety is maintained. If confirmed, I am happy to work with Congress to explore opportunities for alignment with the Department's and Administration's priorities to utilize automation to make meaningful improvements to roadway safety.