



## Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

National Headquarters: 1 NW OOIDA Drive, Grain Valley, MO 64029  
Tel: (816) 229-5791

Washington Office: 1100 New Jersey Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003  
Tel: (202) 347-2007

### FMCSA WOMEN OF TRUCKING ADVISORY BOARD October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Task 23–4: Examining ways in which trucking companies, nonprofit organizations, training, and education providers, and trucking associations may coordinate functions to facilitate support for women pursuing careers in trucking.**

OOIDA represents approximately 150,000 small-business truckers across the United States and Canada and is the largest trade association devoted exclusively to promoting the interests of small-business motor carriers, owner-operators and professional drivers.

OOIDA has steadfastly supported creating the Women of Trucking Advisory Board (WOTAB) and we commend FMCSA for administering numerous meetings over the last year. OOIDA is proud to represent thousands of female drivers as members, but there is no question that women are underrepresented in today's trucking workforce. OOIDA recognizes that enhancing diversity in the trucking industry is not merely a matter of inclusivity, but also aligns with the advocacy goals and objectives of our organization. Fostering an inclusive trucking workforce will result in a safer, more efficient and sustainable industry. We believe WOTAB has already played a pivotal role in addressing several critical issues pertaining to the recruitment, retention, and safety of women in trucking and will continue providing recommendations that improve the well-being for everyone across the industry.

However, we also believe that only focusing on recruiting more women will not ensure more equal participation moving forward. We must alleviate longstanding workforce barriers such as inadequate compensation, lack of accessible truck parking, and personal safety risks so that women will not only be welcomed into trucking, but remain in the industry long-term. With turnover at or exceeding 100 percent in some trucking sectors, it is imperative that stakeholders embrace solving these systemic industry failures. These are a few of OOIDA's advocacy issues that could enhance and expand opportunities for women in trucking:

**Training Standards:** We support rigorous and standardized training requirements for all individuals entering the trucking profession. Ensuring that high quality training programs are accessible, fair and safe will not only contribute to highway safety but also create an environment where women feel adequately prepared to excel in their roles as professional truck drivers. The current standards that were implemented in 2022 were a necessary start, but do not go far enough. In particular, these standards should eventually be strengthened with a minimum

amount of behind-the-wheel training along with additional CMV trainer requirements and oversight.

**Restroom Access:** Adequate restroom facilities are an essential aspect of a truck driver's daily life on the road. Unbelievably, professional drivers are frequently denied restroom access at retailers, warehouses, and other businesses. We have pushed for legislation to provide for comfort, dignity and safety while on the job. OOIDA has championed H.R. 3869, the Trucker Bathroom Access Act. This is bipartisan legislation introduced by Reps. Troy Nehls (R-TX) and Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA) to ensure that truckers have access to restroom facilities when they are picking up or delivering cargo.

**Truck Parking:** The shortage of safe and accessible truck parking facilities has long been a concern for all truck drivers. Addressing this issue, particularly in the context of female drivers, is critical. All drivers should have access to secure and well-lit parking areas to minimize safety risks. OOIDA has led a broad coalition of support for the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act. The bipartisan bill would establish a grant program and dedicate over \$750 million for truck parking projects across the country. With a focus on increasing capacity, the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act would provide funding for the construction of new rest areas and truck parking facilities, while also helping public entities convert existing spaces – such as inspection sites, weigh stations and closed rest areas – into truck parking locations.

**Detention Time:** Excessive detention time remains a significant challenge in the industry and is a significant safety and financial concern for small-business truckers and professional drivers. For far too long, the industry has typically defined detention as any time spent waiting to load or unload in excess of two hours. This line of thinking completely discounts the value of a driver's time. Implementing policies and practices that mitigate detention time will enhance driver safety and work-life balance, making trucking a more attractive profession for women.

**Fair Labor Standards Act Overtime Exemption:** We have urged Congress to eliminate the exemption in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) that denies truck drivers guaranteed overtime pay. Removing this exemption will ensure that drivers are fairly compensated for their time and efforts, which is essential to improving their quality of life and job satisfaction. The outdated FLSA motor carrier exemption prohibits truckers from being compensated for all their on-duty time, despite drivers working those hours. Removing the FLSA motor carrier exemption will enable truckers to be fully compensated for all their working hours, not just when the truck is moving. More equitable pay will encourage more drivers to stay in the industry.

**Misclassification:** OOIDA has always advocated for a classification structure that offers truckers the opportunity for true independence to operate their own small businesses, while protecting them against carriers that seek to take advantage of them through misclassification. OOIDA is participating in legal challenges against AB5 in California as there has been increasing confusion resulting from various attempts to broadly define workers as employees over the past decade.

By addressing these and other issues, Congress and the Department of Transportation can make significant strides towards creating a safer and more inclusive trucking industry as well as helping the profession become more appealing to women who are considering driving or actively

pursuing careers in trucking. We firmly believe that a diverse trucking workforce brings unique perspectives, enhances safety and strengthens the industry as a whole.

OOIDA looks forward to collaborating with Congress, the agency and other stakeholders to achieve meaningful change. Together, we can create an environment where all individuals, regardless of their gender or background, can thrive and contribute to the success of the American trucking industry.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Todd Spencer  
President & CEO  
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc.