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Committee on Environment
and Public Works

Subcommittee on Transportation and
Infrastructure

Washington, D.C.

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UNDERSTANDING ROADWAY SAFETY: EXAMINING THE CAUSES OF ROADWAY SAFETY CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

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Subcommittee on Transportation and
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The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable Mark Kelly [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Senators Kelly, Cramer, Carper, Cardin, Markey, Fetterman, Ricketts.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARK KELLY, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Senator Kelly. The committee will come to order.

I want to thank everyone for joining us today in the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee for this hearing on roadway safety.

I want to thank my colleague, Senator Cramer, and his staff for their partnership leading up to this hearing and his continuing partnership in leading this subcommittee. I also want to thank Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and their staffs for the work that they have put in leading up to this hearing, as well. Thank you to all of our witnesses for joining today and taking part in this hearing about the many roadway safety challenges and the challenges that we are facing today.

This is an important discussion. For decades, the trends and terms of highway fatalities and injuries was always going down, but that is no longer the case. Over the past decade, we have seen roadway fatalities again increase. There were significant jumps in fatalities over the past three years. In 2021, the last year that we have complete data, nearly 43,000 Americans died in traffic accidents, and an estimated 2.5 million people were injured.

Now, in some States, we have started to see the data look a little bit better, so that is a good thing. But that is not

true across the board. In Arizona, for example, the preliminary estimates from the National Safety Council indicate that roadway fatalities are up 69 percent this year compared to last year. These numbers alone deserve attention from this committee.

But it is important to dive deeper and understand how recent trends have contributed to different safety challenges across different transportation modes. For example, as our supply chain changed in the three years after the pandemic, there has been more demand on goods moving by truck.

Yet, this increased demand has presented a number of challenges to the industry, including workforce problems, supply chain bottlenecks at seaports, and a lack of available parking for long haul truck drivers. These trends have contributed to increased rates of accidents involving heavy trucks, which is a trend that we must address.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which this committee played a large role in crafting, took several steps to help address these trends, but I think we should go further. That is why I worked with Senator Lummis to introduce the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act, which would provide dedicated funding to increase truck parking capacity and expand existing infrastructure.

I look forward to discussing our bill more with Brenda Neville from the Iowa Motor Truck Association, as I believe it

addresses a range of safety challenges facing the heavy truck industry. For example, it ensures that truck drivers park in safe, designated spaces, not on the side of roads, which is, obviously, dangerous to both the trucker and other drivers.

It also makes our supply chains more efficient by ensuring truck drivers don't need to conclude their days early to find a safe place to park or risk violating their hours of service. It also helps to address broader safety and workforce recruitment trends. By ensuring a safe place to park for every truck driver, we help the industry attract a broader and more diverse driver cohort.

Trucking isn't the only class of roadway users facing new safety challenges. Folks on bicycles and pedestrians have faced serious roadway safety threats in recent years. In 2021 alone, nearly 7,400 pedestrians were killed, which is the highest number since 1981. I know that several of my colleagues on this committee, including Senator Fetterman and Senator Cardin, have been working on solutions to the threats to these vulnerable roadway users.

I am glad that we are joined by Karina Ricks, who has decades of experience working to build safer streets for all roadway users from her time working with the City of Pittsburgh and also the Washington, D.C. Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration.

I also hope to spend time at this hearing understanding the different roadway safety challenges faced in rural and tribal communities across the Country. Most roadway fatalities happen to occur in rural areas, and in tribal communities, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death. The safety challenges these communities face are very different from other communities. Oftentimes, poor road conditions or a lack of funding for safety improvements put rural and tribal communities at a disadvantage. Solutions for these communities will look different than the solutions needed in urban areas.

I am glad that Karin Mongeon is joining us today as well to discuss how to address the unique challenges faced in these rural and tribal communities. Thank you for being here.

So, I look forward to getting into all of these topics and more with our three witnesses today, but for now, let me turn it to my colleague, Senator Cramer, for his opening remarks.

[The prepared statement of Senator Kelly follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KEVIN CRAMER, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Senator Cramer. Thank you, Chairman Kelly, and to your staff as well for their outstanding work. To all of our witnesses today, thank you for being here.

Boy, I would be hard pressed to improve on that, actually. Mark, thank you very much for that and for this hearing. Today, we are focused on the safety of our roadways. We have the opportunity to discuss how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has helped shareholders and stakeholders respond to roadway safety challenges.

Among the things we did in the IIJA was make more resources available to improve highway safety. Specifically, the law increased funding levels for the critical Highway Safety Improvement Program, made programmatic changes to ensure more dollars are available for tribal road safety projects, and created new discretionary grant programs to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.

Notably, 90 percent of the Federal Highway Program funds are distributed to the States by formula. This is something that I fought hard to maintain during the bill's negotiation. This proven approach has been the backbone of the Federal Aid Highway Program for rural States like North Dakota for decades.

I am going to state the obvious. Karin, thank you for

being here. Karin from North Dakota is better suited to decide what projects or actions should be taken to keep our roads safe in North Dakota compared to a State like Arizona, for example, which has a totally different topography, some might say has a topography with different safety challenges and solutions.

Hearings like this indicate to me that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work, whether it is to address roadway safety or other issues. Flexibility matters, and enabling those who best understand their particular challenges to make decisions is the best recipe for success. This is precisely why Federal Highway assistance is distributed to States by formula.

We should be looking at more ways to let States deal with their specific safety issues in a way that works for them. For instance, what good do bike lanes do in North Dakota when they are covered in snow for, yes, six months of the year? Those dollars could be spent on guardrails or rumble strips. States ought to have the ability to make these types of investment decisions for themselves.

There is one other thing I would like to note. Before the passage of the IIJA, I heard from many North Dakotans concerned about the safety of students walking or biking to school. Through this feedback, I was made aware that high schools were not eligible under existing law to receive funding under the Safe Routes to Schools Program. I introduced legislation to

address this, and I am glad it was incorporated into the IIJA, ensuring high schools can now access those funds.

Thank you to all of our witnesses for being here and taking part in this important discussion.

[The prepared statement of Senator Cramer follows:]

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Senator Cramer.

I am now going to introduce our three witnesses before recognizing them for five minutes each. I will introduce the first two, and then turn to Senator Cramer to introduce the final witness. Then, we will recognize each of you for an opening statement.

Brenda Neville is the President and CEO of the Iowa Motor Truck Association, which is the statewide association representing Iowa's trucking industry since 1942. Ms. Neville has been with the Association for over 30 years and has served as the President since 2008. She is also active in local and national professional boards focused on trucking and freight management issues. Ms. Neville graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with degrees in business and psychology.

Next, Karina Ricks is a partner at Cityfi, where she works with governments, communities, and the private sector to integrate transportation and mobility solutions into infrastructure projects, land use planning, urban design, and economic development. Ms. Ricks previously served as the Associate Administrator for Innovation, Research, and Demonstration for the Federal Transit Administration, and also the Director of the City of Pittsburgh's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure and the Director of Transportation Planning for Washington, D.C.

Ms. Ricks is a Fulbright Scholar with a master's degree in city and regional planning from Cornell University. When I read this last night, I thought I was reading about my wife, Gabby Giffords, who is also a Fulbright Scholar with a master's degree in city and regional planning from Cornell University. Exactly the same. She received her undergraduate degree from Michigan State University.

Senator Cramer?

Senator Cramer. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is my privilege to introduce Karin Mongeon, who serves as the Highway Safety Division Director at the North Dakota Department of Transportation. Karin joined the North Dakota Department of Transportation in 2007 as the Highway Safety Division Manager and was promoted to Director in 2014.

In this role, she manages critical safety programs and initiatives in North Dakota, including the State's Vision Zero plan, something we are all very familiar with, Karin, the marketing has been great, which strives to eliminate all motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries. Karin and her team are the boots on the ground, working day in and day out to keep our roads safe for all North Dakotans.

Karin also serves as the governor's representative for the Governor's Highway Safety Association, a national organization focused on preventing highway fatalities. Karin holds a

bachelor of science in nursing from the University of Mary and worked as an oncology nurse before transitioning to State government, where she has worked for over 20 years.

I am pleased she is here today so the committee can receive her valuable input on this topic. Thank you all for being here.

Senator Kelly. Thank you again to all of our witnesses for joining today.

I want to start by recognizing our first witness, Brenda Neville, for five minutes for opening remarks.

STATEMENT OF BRENDA NEVILLE, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, IOWA MOTOR TRUCK ASSOCIATION

Ms. Neville. Chairman Kelly, Ranking Member Cramer, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the American Trucking Associations.

ATA is a 90-year-old trucking federation that represents an essential industry. It employs 4.8 million men and women in every State and Congressional district, accounting for one in every 17 jobs. This Federation has 50 State affiliates, which includes the Iowa Motor Truck Association, of which I am the President and the CEO. I am most appreciative to be here today to talk to you about an issue that threads a needle of common purpose, and that is safety.

Safety is at the forefront of everything we do in the trucking industry, and it guides every decision that we make. ATA and member companies invest $10 billion annually in safety technology and training, but our efforts alone are not enough. We can only be as safe and as efficient as the roads and the bridges that we drive over. Your investments in our Nation's infrastructure are paramount to ensuring not only the safety of our professional truck drivers, but every motorist.

We have major problems with a shortage of truck parking in the United States, and simple math will sum this up. There are 3.5 million truck drivers, but only 313,000 trucking parking

spaces available nationwide. This past July, a tragedy in Illinois drew national headlines and underscored why our industry has been urging policymakers to prioritize truck parking. Three people were killed when a passenger bus crashed into tractor trailers that were forced to park on the shoulder of an off ramp at a rest area.

In addition to being a public safety issue, this is a very personal safety issue, as well. As a member of ATA's Women in Motion Advisory Council, one of my priorities, which has been my priority my entire career, is to increase the number of women in the trucking industry. Nearly every female truck driver that I have talked to over my career cites that safe parking is a major barrier for them. Survey data of truck drivers backs this up as well, consistently ranking parking as one of their top three challenges.

ATA and the Iowa Motor Truck Association strongly support the Truck Parking Improvement Act to establish a competitive, discretionary grant program dedicating $755 million over three years to truck parking projects nationwide. Mr. Chairman, we thank you. Ranking Member Cramer, we thank you. Subcommittee members Lummis and Boozman, we also thank you for your leadership on this bill. We would ask everyone else on this committee to cosponsor this legislation as well.

The trucking industry is also going to continue to call on

Congress to help accelerate the adoption of today's newer and safer trucks. One way we believe we can get newer and safer trucks on the roads is repealing the Federal excise tax on heavy duty trucks and trailers. This tax was established during World War I and adds 12 percent to the cost of a new truck.

This is a disincentive for fleet owners across the Nation to upgrade their aging equipment. Today's trucks are equipped with lifesaving features, including automatic emergency braking, collision mitigation, blind spot warning, and much more.

Finally, improving highway conditions is yet another way we can affect highway safety. Road and bridge deterioration contributes to worsening traffic congestion across the national highway system. As congestion increases, so does crash risk. In 2021, truck drivers wasted nearly 1.3 billion hours sitting in traffic, and that is the equivalent of over 460,000 commercial truck drivers sitting idle for an entire year.

Thanks to the analysis from the American Transportation Research Institute and GPS data directly from our trucks, we can pinpoint exactly where these bottlenecks exist. When dispersing IIJA funds, we urge Congress and the USDOT to prioritize the Nation's top 100 freight bottlenecks. Investing in highways and bridges on these key freight corridors is the most investment that we can make in our continued quest to ensure that our highways are safe as possible for everyone.

Highway safety is a three-legged stool: drivers, vehicles, and infrastructure. We all have the responsibility and an important opportunity to have an impact on highway safety by focusing on these three important components. Trucking is one of the rare industries that touches every American, and given the nature of trucking, we are uniquely positioned to weigh in on highway safety on all levels.

We are the biggest consumers of the highways. We are on the roads more than anyone else, and the trucking industry is proud to be a part of this important discussion to make our highways as safe as they possibly can be.

We look forward to working with this subcommittee and Congressional leaders to advance legislation to support these important objectives. Thank you for your continued commitment to highway safety.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Neville follows:]

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Ms. Neville.

Ms. Ricks?

STATEMENT OF KARINA RICKS, PARTNER, CITYFI

Ms. Ricks. Thank you, Honorable Chair, Ranking Member Cramer, and members of the subcommittee. I am deeply honored and humbled to speak before you today and will speak truthfully and candidly.

As you heard, I am a former city and Federal transportation official, a resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and a Michigan native. I am also a mother, daughter, walker, biker, and driver.

For over 50 years, my parents have lived on a rural subdivision off of a county highway in Michigan, just over a mile from town, past the post office, library, and donut shop. At 70, they would love to walk or bike to town, but they can't. The county road has two lanes, no shoulder, and fast traffic. While a parallel State route has been widened twice in the 50 years they have been there, their county road remains without a side path or shoulder, and people have died.

I would wager that every single one of us in this room knows someone who has been killed in a traffic-related crash. Not taking more urgent action on this is, frankly, inexcusable, and saying that safety is our highest priority is, quite simply, dishonest. Roadway deaths have skyrocketed, increasing 13 percent in California and a walloping 26 percent in Arkansas. We lag embarrassingly behind other nations. The traffic related

death rate in the U.S. is 12.4 per 100,000 residents. This puts us in the same class with Indonesia, Turkey, and Mexico.

Even if we don't think that we are comparable to Norway or Sweden, we cannot claim to be all that different from other auto-oriented nations like Canada or Australia, and yet our roadways are more than twice as deadly. It isn't because Canadians don't text, and it certainly isn't because Australians don't drink. To my knowledge, neither has superior cars nor smarter teenagers or better engineers. Their roadway death rate is lower because their national leaders have adopted sensible, proactive roadway designs that recognize that people can make poor decisions and that time-tested, sensible street design can stop poor decisions from becoming fatal mistakes.

Our roads are designed to encourage high speed driving. We pretend that 24 by 30 inch speed signs will slow a driver when every other environmental cue of the road is telling them to drive faster. It is nothing short of entrapment.

Adopting highway standards that self-regulate speed through design is safer for users and less punitive to drivers. We need to prioritize resources for safer streets and make it easier to actually build them. But today, easy, cheap, and effective measures are made hard by Federal and State DOTs and policy.

While I was Director of Transportation in Pittsburgh, we secured $1 million in CMAQ funding to fix more than 80 critical

sidewalk gaps in the city. We chose the high priority locations near senior buildings, schools, and bus stops. Most of the gaps were only 20 to 30 feet in length, and restoring them would have benefitted more than 35,000 residents. But in order to use those Federal funds, we would have had to produce full scale engineering drawings for each and every one of the 80 locations. It would cost us ten months and $300,000 of local money. No self-respecting professional contractor needs engineering drawings to pour a six-foot-wide, six-inch-deep slab of concrete, so we didn't do the project.

In another example, the city funded a protected bike lane on a State route and then had to go round and round with State and Federal reviewers. By the time the proven safety countermeasure was approved over a year later, it was 30 percent more expensive to build.

On another State route, serious injuries have actually increased after the State had "improved the street" by removing a travel lane and widening the rest. After a horrific crash left a young woman hospitalized for eight months, city and State engineers crafted a package of low-cost but effective safety improvements. However, the State wouldn't or couldn't come up with the funding to implement them, and the street remains dangerous today.

This is ludicrous, wasteful, and irresponsible. If

Congress and the Administration wants to save taxpayer money and deliver projects faster, these practices have to change. As a citizen and professional, I am, frankly, dumbfounded that a nation as smart and wealthy as the United States with billions of Federal dollars flowing to States every year cannot fund and build a $5,000 crosswalk or any number of other low-cost, proven safety countermeasures.

You can change this. The Building Safer Streets Act will meaningfully reduce cost and speed delivery of no-nonsense, no debate safety measures. With this, you can eliminate outdated and restrictive provisions in the MUTCD that limit local flexibility and hinder the exercise of best engineering judgement.

You can incentivize States to facilitate and fund low-cost, quick-build safety improvements, and as we start to think about the next infrastructure authorization, you can craft transportation programs and policies that actually reflect safety as the highest priority, rather than just saying it.

I deeply appreciate the work of this subcommittee and the commitment of all members to it. I thank you for all that you do for the communities that I have been pleased to live in and serve and advise, and I look forward to the discussion.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ricks follows:]

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Ms. Ricks.

Ms. Mongeon?

STATEMENT OF KARIN MONGEON, HIGHWAY SAFETY DIVISION DIRECTOR, NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Mongeon. Chairman Kelly, Ranking Member Cramer, and members of the subcommittee, good afternoon. I am Karin Mongeon, Highway Safety Division Director with the North Dakota Department of Transportation.

I am here today on behalf of North Dakota DOT Director Ron Henke, who wishes to express his appreciation to Senator Cramer for his work on transportation issues leading to policy that has benefitted the State of North Dakota. We are pleased to appear before this committee to discuss North Dakota's statewide Vision Zero initiative with the goal to reduce motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries to zero. I will offer some comments on the challenges to highway safety in a rural State and how we address them.

In January 2018, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum and the North Dakota DOT launched the North Dakota Vision Zero initiative and have championed Vision Zero since that time. After the height of oil activity, North Dakota began to experience a decrease in crash fatalities due to lower traffic volumes. The conception and implementation of Vision Zero was an opportunity for North Dakota to reinvigorate highway safety to bring new appeal and public awareness to solving highway safety problems and to continue to reduce fatalities.

At the time, the North Dakota DOT was in the midst of an update to its strategic highway safety plan, which became our first Vision Zero plan. Due to a strong plan and vigorous implementation by stakeholders, North Dakota reported 98 crash deaths at the end of calendar year 2022. This is the lowest number of crash deaths in North Dakota in about 20 years. We attribute this 20-year low in fatalities to assuring that safety is a primary consideration in everything we do at the North Dakota DOT.

To achieve our mission and ensure our work meets the needs of citizens, we provide many opportunities for meaningful public participation and engagement as we work to develop, implement, and evaluate our transportation safety programs. This includes engagement with the tribes, counties, cities, vulnerable road users, teen drivers, motorcyclists, commercial vehicle groups, agricultural associations, safety professionals, and others.

Crash deaths in North Dakota are largely attributed to unbelted vehicle occupants, lane departure crashes, crashes on local roadways, speed and aggressive driving, and impaired driving. The North Dakota DOT uses multiple types of safety funds for strategy implementation and spends them well, which means in compliance with regulation, with consideration to evidence, and in amounts and locations driven by data. Examples of efficient and effective spending to advance highway safety

are provided in my written statement. I will highlight a few.

Proven infrastructure safety strategies are delivered through the North Dakota Highway Safety Improvement Program. Strategies include roundabouts, high tension median guardrail at interstate locations, reconfiguration of roadway geometrics, and low cost solutions, such as lighting, pavement marking, curve signing, and others. The North Dakota DOT is one of few States that has developed a local road safety program that developed safety plans for 53 counties, 23 major cities, and 4 Tribes in the State.

The safety plans include specific project submittals and have resulted in the completion of many low-cost, systemic safety measures throughout counties, cities, and reservations. New roadway safety countermeasures coming to North Dakota include reduced conflict intersections, wrong way detection systems at select interstate locations, and widened edge and center line pavement marking on the State system.

Behavioral safety strategies include widespread public education and outreach, law changes to ensure State laws represent best practices and traffic safety, and high visibility enforcement of existing laws.

Before closing, two very quick points. One of the greatest achievements of Vision Zero occurred very recently when a group of Vision Zero stakeholders were successful in working with the

North Dakota legislature to pass a primary seatbelt law that went into effect August 1 of this year. This outcome took years of education, persistence, and collaboration from many partners. This will increase North Dakota's seatbelt use over time and save lives.

The future of our Vision Zero efforts will focus on implementation of a recently updated Vision Zero plan and continued recognition that there is no single solution to the problem of crash fatalities. It takes a comprehensive approach.

This concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the committee for the opportunity to be here today. I would be pleased to respond to questions at the appropriate time.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Mongeon follows:]

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Ms. Mongeon.

I am going to start with five minutes of questions, and we will start with Ms. Neville. Thank you again for joining us.

I want to discuss the safety challenges facing the trucking industry, specifically truck parking. We have seen record amounts of goods shipped by truck in recent years. That means more trucks on the road, and to some extent, some changing routes from where they were just a few years ago.

Often, that means that our existing truck parking infrastructure gets overloaded, and then drivers have to make a difficult decision of parking on the side of the road, or maybe still driving, looking for parking, I have heard this from many truck drivers, when they should be resting. That is a challenge.

One option is, obviously, to park on the side or find some kind of makeshift parking spot. Can you explain a little bit about why that is unsafe for drivers and why it is also unsafe for the general public?

Ms. Neville. Thank you. Before I get started with that answer, I would like to just give a little illustration of just how committed our industry is to safety. I have been doing this job for over 30 years, and one of the things I ask every CEO is what keeps them up at night. If I were to line up ten CEOs here today, whether they had 10,000 trucks or 10 trucks, every single

one of them say that the thing that keeps them up at night that they worry about is getting their drivers home safely.

Truck parking goes right into that safety equation, and it is so important as the priority we have right now, as I said in my opening statement, we have 313,000 parking spaces and 3.5 million drivers. So the shortage is real in every single State.

The option that truck drivers have now is if they can't find a space, they are parking on the side of the road, they are parking on an off ramp, and tragically, we hear about things like what happened in Illinois.

Here is another question I think is important as we have this discussion that you all think about, everybody in the room, how many of us would tolerate a job where access to a restroom or a safe place to park and sleep at night is no guarantee? That is what is going on right now with truck parking. We need more truck parking across the Nation.

As Senator Kelly alluded to in his question, they are forced to change their routes if they can't find parking. Oftentimes, they are spending time, they have a certain amount of hours they can drive, and when they know that those hours are about to run out, what they will do before they run out is they will start looking for a place, if there is no place for them to park.

That affects productivity. That impacts the supply chain

over the long run.

So, there are many safety factors, but the one that is the most noticeable to all of us is when you are driving down the road, and you see these trucks parked on the shoulders and the off ramps.

I think it is also noteworthy to highlight with the truck parking issue, this is something that impacts all of us. Law enforcement, for example, is equally committed to finding more truck parking and equally committed to the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act, because think of the circumstances that they deal with. They have a truck that is on the off ramp. They can wake that driver up and move him because it is illegal, or they can let them sleep there, and run the risk of an accident. They are in a no-win situation.

Senator Kelly. Ms. Neville, could I ask you to, sorry to interrupt, so when somebody winds up being parked on the side of the road, it is because they couldn't find a place, they ran out of time on the clock?

Ms. Neville. Right.

Senator Kelly. So do truck drivers tend not to go over the amount of time, because that is against Federal law?

Ms. Neville. It is illegal, yes. They are regulated, yes.

Senator Kelly. So they just throw their hands up, I couldn't find any place, I am going to have to park right here?

Ms. Neville. Right, and trucks also now are equipped with electronic logging devices, so there isn't wiggle room, and that is exactly what they are doing. They will just park wherever they can find a place.

Senator Kelly. That becomes a hazard. So then, I have heard that there are some drivers that are now, because it is easier to find parking during the day, so they are going to drive through the night and sleep during the day. Can you talk a little bit about that and what challenges and risks that are caused by doing that?

Ms. Neville. Drivers are forced to adjust their sleeping schedule in an effort to maximize their productivity, their personal safety, their comfort, and to remain compliant with Federal regulations. So that is what they have to do, sometimes sleep during the day.

Forcing these drivers to make those compromises and adjustments really creates a disincentive for potential drivers, particularly female and minority drivers. That can underpin a dynamic next generation of truckers when we don't have these kind of parking spaces and that quality of life for them when they are trying to park.

I want to touch a little bit on female drivers. Only 7 percent of our driving force is female, and we want to attract more females to our industry. They are great drivers. This is

a great career, and every female driver I have talked to, the number one thing that they cite is their fear of going to a parking place that is not well-lit, where there is not security around the perimeter, where they don't feel safe. Truck parking is definitely a barrier for us to attract women and possibly other minorities into the industry.

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Ms. Neville.

Senator Cramer?

Senator Cramer. I never cease to be amazed at how prevalent common sense is when we have witnesses from Realville come to Washington. I have already witnessed a lot this morning, thank you.

To Ms. Mongeon first, in your written testimony, you described a situation very familiar to me where traffic, specifically, a mix of vehicles and trucks travelling on a two-lane highway can result in drivers engaging in very risky, obviously, behavior, and reckless behavior in some cases, particularly when it comes to maneuvering around slower moving vehicles.

You mentioned U.S. Highway 85, and for those who don't know, U.S. Highway 85 is a two-lane highway being four-laned a little bit at a time, right through the heart of the Bakken Oil Patch. Imagine what used to be cars and occasionally agriculture equipment now having a whole bunch of very large

trucks on it. We need them all.

It seems apparent, to me at least, that adding capacity could help reduce congestion and improve the safety of the highways. Can you just speak a little bit specifically to how a roadway modernization project, which includes adding capacity, might provide some safety benefits, outside of simply improving the movement of the goods, which is not unimportant either? Efficiency doesn't have to be unsafe, so if would just elaborate a little bit on that.

Ms. Mongeon. Yes, Senator Cramer. As you know, I am not a transportation engineer, but I work with transportation engineers daily, and I talk to them regularly. What they would say about roadway projects that increase capacity is that it is often an opportunity to add safety features to the roadways, such as turn lanes, passing lanes, access consolidation, geometric improvements such as improved line of sight or safer angles and approaching turns, or on access off ramps. I know that within the DOT and talking to my engineering partners that they look at every project through the lens of safety.

Senator Cramer. Thanks. I have a feeling this next question, you and Ms. Neville for sure might have something to say about, but as we are focused on safety of our Nation's roadways, I want to take a moment and address the idea of mandating speed limiters, especially on heavy duty trucks, which

the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration is, of course, actively pursuing.

It gives me serious concern, to say the least, and I believe it could cause unsafe road conditions in States like North Dakota, maybe even more so in Montana, depending on the speed limit in a particular State. In North Dakota in the interstate highway system, the speed limit it 75, and this mandate could create a situation where trucks are travelling up to 10 miles per hour slower than the speed limit.

Are you concerned, or do you have concerns, about the potential for speed limiters on trucks to disrupt traffic flows? I remember, and I will just give this little example, I remember when I was on the Public Service Commission, and we were siting some major infrastructure, some major oil infrastructure, and there was a four-lane, actually, a Federal highway that crossed a railroad track at grade. The railroad tracks led right up to a big rail facility that loaded oil and moved it.

The thing that always bothered me as I looked at that, every solution seemed to be a bad one to me, because it disrupts the expectation of the driver, and maybe that is somewhat what a limiter would do.

If I may start with you, Ms. Mongeon, and then ask Ms. Neville if you have some thoughts on whether mandated speed limiters could be a potential problem or an unintended problem.

Ms. Mongeon. The North Dakota DOT has concerns. Of course, North Dakota's economy is reliant upon efficient transport of industry products. Our concerns include potential adverse safety impacts from creating speed differentials between heavy trucks and cars. So we are aware that the USDOT has stated its intent to issue as soon as December a proposed rule that would require speed limiters on trucks class seven and higher. We will review that proposed rule and issue comments, but we do have concerns.

Senator Cramer. Ms. Neville, your thoughts?

Ms. Neville. The American Trucking Association would have that same position. We are waiting to see what the rule says, and then we will come out and comment on it.

Senator Cramer. No comments prior to the rule?

Ms. Neville. No.

Senator Cramer. All right. I will look forward to another round, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Senator Kelly. Senator Cardin?

Senator Cardin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for arranging this hearing on safety.

In 2021, we had almost 43,000 fatalities on our roads, making it a very dangerous place to transport by car, by bike, or by pedestrian. We all want to figure out ways we can do it safer.

One of the major initiatives that was included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill but was initiated many years before that, legislation I authored originally with Senator Cochran and later with Senator Wicker, Transportation Alternatives Programs, which are funds available for local governments to be able to do transportation programs that enhance the community, including safety.

I know we have two people here to deal with these programs, so either Ms. Ricks or Ms. Mongeon, if you could just talk a little bit about whether you are using the Transportation Alternatives Program as a way to access improvements in safety on our roads.

Ms. Ricks. Thank you for the opportunity. The Transportation Alternatives Program is definitely one of the critical programs to local governments and to local municipalities. It is one that allows us to do some of the enhancements that might often be left behind with major construction projects.

It is, I would say, it leans toward some of the larger projects to be done. Some of the things that we have been talking about are the ability to do some of these low-cost, quick build safety countermeasures. With the Transportation Alternatives, we have been able to do larger scale trails, enhancements, beautification projects, things that are real

place-making opportunities in the city. So it is a program that we would very much like to see expanded and opening up more opportunities for cities, municipalities, and even smaller communities to be able to access those programs.

Ms. Mongeon. Senator Cardin, we too, at the North Dakota Department of Transportation, fully utilize our Transportation Alternatives Program funding. I don't administer those dollars, so I don't have anything to add beyond what Ms. Ricks has discussed.

Senator Cardin. I have introduced legislation, or am in the process of introducing legislation named after Sarah Langenkamp, who was a State Department worker who died in a bike accident. We want to make it easier to use the funds that are currently available. One is, for example, to connect bike trails so that they can be done in a safe manner, whereas today, people who are transversing by bike have gaps in the safety areas.

Can you just talk a little bit about the need to have a more coordinated way that people who are biking or pedestrians to connect to safe places?

Ms. Ricks. Once again, I appreciate that opportunity. I think that the Building Safer Streets Act that Senator Fetterman has introduced would really help aid that goal. Instructing States and project sponsors to think about connectivity, think

about the multimodal aspects of the projects that they are doing, really incorporate safety from the initial elements of that program.

One of the other improvements that that Act will do is to help remove some of the administrative reviews that are necessary for low-cost proven safety countermeasures, like continuous bike lanes, protected bike lanes, pavement markings, and other ways to connect those systems.

Whatever we can do to reduce those barriers to implementation, to facilitate and aid in speed of the delivery of those projects, to reduce unnecessary costs and round and round reviews and other elements, I think, really helps to make the most of the resources that we have to focus them on project delivery and to build more of those really critical connected safety improvements that are necessary so that we don't have to again talk about tragic crashes like what happened to Ms. Langenkamp ever again.

Senator Cardin. Let me raise one other issue, and that is with the Infrastructure Bill, there is going to be a lot more road maintenance done in our Nation. Many, many more workers are going to be on highways, where vehicles are traveling at a very fast speed. We had a tragic accident on the Baltimore Beltway where workers were killed when just a slight miscalculation put a car into their harm's way.

Are there things that we can do to make it easier to make the type of improvements for the workers that are on our highways, so that they are protected better than they are today?

Ms. Mongeon. Senator Cardin, I would say that from a North Dakota DOT perspective, employee safety is very highly regarded. We do a lot in terms of safety for our employees. We have an employee safety program with outreach personnel that extends to our district offices that talk about employee safety issues, and we do have a good record of safety at the North Dakota DOT.

Senator Cardin. I would point out this was not a worker error, this was the fact that the worker was not protected and was on the road. So it was more of the infrastructure around the construction site that allowed this tragedy to occur.

I guess my point is, are there ways that we can make it easier for those types of improvements to be made, recognizing that we are going to have a lot more workers on the road.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Kelly. Senator Fetterman?

Senator Fetterman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I believe that there is a street safety crisis in America. Is that fair? In America, but also in Pennsylvania. In fact, one street in Harrisburg is known as the deadliest road in America. Another in Philly is known as the Boulevard of Death.

Now, I agree that there is a safety crisis in our streets.

My staff, actually, they deserve the credit on that. They have made me better, and they have made me more informed on this as well, too. I like to pretend I know everything, but I don't.

This is really important, and it is crazy, especially right here in my Commonwealth as well, too, and that is why I am grateful I have the platform and all of the experts here to address that, so thank you for operating this as well, too.

That is why we have been talking to experts and engineers about this trend, and we know that the street design is really a factor. I think we all deserve safer roads in communities that are ready to do it, but the Federal Government is making it unnecessarily hard. Too much red tape.

Ms. Ricks, in your opening, you spoke about the Building Safer Streets Act. Can you speak about the value of that?

Ms. Ricks. I can. I think that the fundamental value of that is not about economic numbers; it is about human lives and what that would save. This Congress has put tremendous oversight responsibility on the Department of Transportation, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are protected as we invest the generational amounts of resources that we have to finally rebuild American infrastructure.

But the question that we have to ask is if we are actually protecting taxpayers themselves. There are extraordinarily common sense measures that are tremendously overdue, as you

mentioned. We know that Americans who walk, ride their bikes, or ride the bus are legal users of almost every street. However, they rarely have the facilities that they need to take those modes safely.

We need to really ask ourselves; how can a pedestrian safely walk on a street without sidewalks? Can a person on a bicycle really share the road with cars travelling at 50 miles per hour? Can a person who gets off a bus on one side of the street safely cross to the other side of the street? Mandating that these questions are at least asked seems like the least that we can do to promote safety and save lives.

The Building Safer Streets Act that you have introduced will compel USDOT to give localities and their States clear and consistent guidance, and that will help a lot to speed project delivery and avoid time-consuming reviews and wasteful time. It is really sensible if the goal is to reduce overall fatalities and to prohibit performance targets that would actually allow increases in the number of deaths on our road.

Senator Fetterman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to submit a number of statements for the record from experts from Pennsylvania that cities and towns need more kinds of street safety reform.

Senator Kelly. Without objection.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Fetterman. Thank you, and I cede this time back to the Chair.

Senator Kelly. Thank you.

I will recognize myself for another five minutes. We have a couple other members that are on their way and will be here shortly. Ms. Ricks, one of the new programs created in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program. This provides dedicated funding for regional, local, and tribal initiatives to prevent roadway deaths.

One thing that is different about this program is it directly supports regional, local, and tribal transportation agencies as opposed to having the funding go first to the State agency. What benefits does an approach like this provide, where local funding goes to the local agency first?

Ms. Ricks. I think, first of all, that this program really provides the opportunity to lead by example. It can demonstrate that local communities have the know-how, have the intelligence to create and craft locally appropriate safety interventions, and it provides benefits and holistic planning that starts from the perspective of the vulnerable street user.

It also provides vital funding to municipalities that otherwise generally have to fight for scraps that are left over after the State feeds itself from formula funding.

As great as the Safe Streets Program is, even better would be if we didn't need programs like this in order to go around State DOTs. Even better would be if the States partnered with, enabled, and supported human centered designed safety improvements with their local municipalities. Even better would be ensuring that the 90 percent of funds that flows from the States annually also focused on roadway safety in the same way that this $1 billion focuses on.

Senator Kelly. So, you would prefer that the State do it, but do it differently than they do now, and partner with local agencies instead of, in this case, what we have today, as you say, the local agencies fighting for the scraps?

Ms. Ricks. Yes, definitely. I think that we really need to begin. We use a lot of rhetoric around safety, yet, some of the places where we invest our dollars is not really from the perspective of safety first. It is a range of other priorities, and this is one of many. If it is our first priority, it really needs to be the first priority.

Senator Kelly. One of the other features I would say of the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program is that it also provides funding for both planning and implementation. You alluded to this issue in your opening remarks, how the planning of something and the engineering, I think the example you gave was maybe a sidewalk, it was just unaffordable for the local

agency.

Why is access to planning funding, why is that meaningful?

Ms. Ricks. Well, I think, especially for some of the smaller communities, planning is often seen as an unaffordable luxury. When you have so many urgent needs coming down, when there are so many things, streetlights that need to be fixed, there are streets that need to be resurfaced, there is a range of urgent and important needs that need to be attended to, planning is one of those that is important but not urgent and often set aside. There are very few programs in which planning is really the focus of that.

This allows that time and space to do the kind of important planning that can uncover some of the systemic interventions that can alleviate the need to do street by street, incident by incident interventions, so we can take a much more holistic approach. We can look at this more from the system that roadways are and do more targeted and effective safety improvements.

Part of the planning process is also building partnerships. So those planning resources and that process that is associated with it brings in new partners to the discussion: departments of health, departments of police, departments of environment, again, so that we can look at how we can apply these safety improvements in ways that solve not just one, but two or three

or four problems concurrently.

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Ms. Ricks.

Senator Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts. Thank you very much, Chairman Kelly and Ranking Member Cramer, for holding this important hearing. I really appreciate it. Thank you to our witnesses for coming and talking about this.

Roadway safety is an incredibly important topic, and the efficient movement of people and cargo is what drives our economy. We need to make sure that flows smoothly throughout our Country.

Today, the trucking industry faces a variety of challenges, and they continue to innovate to be able to address those challenges. One of the things that you all have been talking about, for example, is the lack of parking. Not having truck parking cuts into driving time, it decreases safety for drivers, and of course, makes it difficult to recruit new drivers into the industry. There is a number of associations, community colleges, private industry, all looking to be able to, how to address different creative options.

Ms. Neville, can you elaborate on some of the specific impacts the truck parking shortage has had on workforce recruitment and development?

Ms. Neville. Absolutely. Truck parking is a part of a

truck driver's life. That truck is their home, so at the end of the day or whenever their shift is up, they have to have a place to park.

As I said in my opening statement, we are very short on truck parking spaces. There are 3.5 million drivers and only 313,000 truck parking spaces. It definitely is a barrier to retaining drivers, number one. I think it is also a barrier for recruiting drivers.

Quality of life is important to every truck driver and every trucking company as they work at trying to keep their truck drivers happy. When you talk to a truck driver, they will tell you about truck parking. Every female truck driver I have talked to that is either in the industry or potentially considering the industry will cite the lack of safe, well-lit, maintained secure truck parking. It is one of their number one concerns. I think that definitely speaks volumes.

Senator Ricketts. Can you elaborate a little on that, especially with regards to the female truck drivers, and maybe other people who don't feel safe around truck driving? What are some of the issues there?

Ms. Neville. For truck parking?

Senator Ricketts. For truck parking, yes.

Ms. Neville. The female truck drivers, just their fear of going to a place that is not lit, unsecured. The other thing

that we have to remember is if they can't find a place to park, then they are forced to park on an off ramp or a shoulder, which poses a safety risk not only to that truck driver, but to the motoring public. I think that is definitely problematic, and we are seeing more and more of that, as well.

Senator Ricketts. One of the things I have mentioned in the past is that the Administration's drive for electric trucking is really detached from reality. It doesn't acknowledge that we have a variety of different issues out there. Not only do we lack the infrastructure to accomplish it, but it would also be counterproductive to the Administration's priorities with regards to worker safety and, frankly, lowering emissions, as well.

I have hosted an numbers of experts in my home State of Nebraska where we have talked about it. What is very clear is that trying to focus solely on electric trucks will have a devastating consequence for consumers, your average American drivers, our economy, and the trucking industry and truck drivers, and especially when you are talking about their safety, talking about roads and bridges, all those things, going onto the off ramps where they are parking.

Starting the talk just about the infrastructure, Ms. Neville, can you talk a little bit about the type of capacity the current charging infrastructure requires? What would it

take up for someone to have to go charge a heavy truck?

Ms. Neville. Currently, to charge a truck is between four and six hours. That time alone, especially if we started putting these at rest areas for truck parking, that would eliminate places for all these other trucks that aren't electric, so that is definitely an issue.

Senator Ricketts. What is an average break for a truck driver, before they come back on again? How long does a truck driver have to take a break between driving again? Isn't it about ten hours?

Ms. Neville. Yes.

Senator Ricketts. So if it takes you six hours to charge a truck, but you have to take a ten-hour break, that is four hours when they can't legally move that truck, is that right?

Ms. Neville. That is right. So productivity is definitely impacted, which, in turn, the supply chain is disrupted, so we are all impacted by it.

Senator Ricketts. Doesn't that mean that, really, we can't push this very fast, because if we have 3.5 million drivers and 300,000 parking spaces, and now you are going to start taking them up in a less efficient way, you are going to cut into that? Is that a fair assessment of what would happen to truck parking?

Ms. Neville. That is a fair assessment, absolutely.

Senator Ricketts. If we also create this, oh, I see I am

just about out of time. I am going to turn it back over to Chairman Fetterman now. Can I go for one more question?

Senator Fetterman. [Presiding.] As much time as you want.

[Laughter.]

Senator Ricketts. As much as I want, that is a dangerous thing to do, just so you know, but we are a couple of freshman, so apparently they left a freshman in charge here. That is pretty dangerous.

Also, say we are cutting into our productivity with regard to truck driving, because we have six hours to charge and you have to take a ten hour break. Would that require more drivers?

Ms. Neville. Absolutely.

Senator Ricketts. What we have already talked about, that we have a shortage of drivers already?

Ms. Neville. Seventy-eight thousand.

Senator Ricketts. Talk a little bit about what this would mean, then, with regard to how it is going to impact the workforce. Wouldn't this strain the workforce even more so, already?

Ms. Neville. With electric vehicles, electric trucks?

Senator Ricketts. Yes.

Ms. Neville. Yes, absolutely. I think, the thing that, electric trucks, our industry has been talking about this for a long time, technology. I think with electric trucks, what I

have told other legislators when I have talked to them in the State of Iowa, with electric trucks, we have sort of put the cart before the horse. There is technology that I think is workable and doable, but we need to have timelines and targets and fact-based science and universal, national standards for this. We need to just slow down, because it does impact us in a really negative way.

Senator Ricketts. With the sufferance of the Chairman, I will continue, since he did say I could have as much time as I wanted. No chairman has ever said that.

Senator Fetterman. They are great questions, honestly, yes.

Senator Ricketts. No chairman has ever said that to me before. In fact, Chairman Carper is usually trying to gavel me out.

[Laughter.]

Senator Ricketts. One of the other characteristics of electric trucks is also, you have to have two 8,000 pound batteries on them.

Ms. Neville. The weight is definitely a detriment.

Senator Ricketts. Right, so isn't that also going to further stretch the workforce?

Ms. Neville. Absolutely, yes.

Senator Ricketts. Because you cut your carrying capacity

roughly in half?

Ms. Neville. Yes. They are limited in range; electric trucks are limited in range. There is limited infrastructure, as you have mentioned, to support their deployment.

The other thing I think we have to talk about is the cost. The cost of electric trucks is two to three times the expense of the new, clean diesel trucks. All of that, all of those factors will definitely have a detrimental effect.

Senator Ricketts. Ms. Mongeon, let us talk a little bit, just a little, because we are talking about trucks being heavier. What would that do to roads?

Ms. Mongeon. Senator Ricketts, large trucks in particular do more damage to our highways. More weight can reduce the life of an improvement on our highways, which may increase the need to invest dollars earlier in the highway life cycle. Yes, damage to the roadways.

Senator Ricketts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your willingness to allow me to go on.

Senator Fetterman. Pleasure, thank you.

Now, we are moving to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts.

Senator Markey. With a challenge to have my questions be as interesting as Senator Ricketts.

Senator Fetterman. And as much time, too, of course.

[Laughter.]

Senator Markey. That is the test, though. Are they interesting or not interesting?

Senator Fetterman. These are both great, yes.

Senator Markey. I am kind of challenged by Senator Ricketts here to make sure that they are interesting.

Ms. Ricks, I want to talk about a topic near and dear to both of our hearts, Complete Streets. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe mobility for all road users. This means instead of designing our streets with only dangerous, high speed, gas guzzling cars in mind, we design streets to prioritize pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation, where everyone is considered.

Unfortunately, for too long, our street have been incomplete. A century of prioritizing drivers over road users has made our roads unsafe for everyone. We have to pump the brakes on this approach.

Ms. Ricks, your organization, Cityfi, regularly helps cities with their mobility planning. In your experience, do you agree that Complete Streets are an effective way to improve safety and equity for everyone?

Ms. Ricks. One hundred percent and beyond that. They are also great ways to expand your economic development outcomes, to improve livability, to attract population, to build your local

tax base, it goes on and on, the benefits that Complete Streets brings to communities, both in dense urban areas as well as in small villages and hamlets.

We have seen data over and over again that demonstrates the tremendous value and appeal. It makes our elders more active; it allows them to age in place. It allows our schoolchildren to have healthier minds and bodies away from screens, speaking as a mother of two teens. It allows the deference of the teenage driver's license, which I am fearful of right now.

Senator Markey. Thank you, yes. So, it does everything?

Ms. Ricks. It is sort of a wonder.

Senator Markey. It is a wonder, yes. It is a wonder how many good things it does without any bad things being incurred. So I am pleased that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law required a small amount of funds to Complete Streets, but we have to go even further than that.

That it is why I am working with Congressman Steve Cohen to reintroduce our Complete Streets Act, which will require States to set aside 5 percent of their Federal highway funds towards developing Complete Streets Programs. I am looking forward to introducing that legislation.

While we are on the topic of traffic safety, I want to talk about another major way that traffic contributes to our health and safety: air pollution. Air pollution from highways creates

serious health and safety risks for those living nearby, including increasing the likelihood of heart disease, stroke, and asthma. Because many highways were deliberately built directly through minority communities, Black communities, they bear a disproportionate risk of health consequences.

This purposely discriminatory routing of highways is textbook environmental racism. That is in addition to the fact that the transportation sector is the number one emitter of greenhouse gases in our Nation.

Ms. Ricks, do you agree that air pollution from highways represents a health and safety threat to our communities and to our planet?

Ms. Ricks. Absolutely. Again, I think the data is clear on that, that we do see that low income communities, our elders, our children, other vulnerable populations, persons with disabilities, are adversely affected by air pollution. The more that we can do not only to decarbonize transportation and to reduce tailpipe emissions, but actually move people toward walking, bicycling, and transit can only serve to pay health dividends and save States money in the long haul as they need to expend less in healthcare costs.

Senator Markey. Again, I totally agree with you. That is why I will soon be reintroducing my Green Streets Act, which directs States to reduce pollution on our highways and provides

funding for States to build transportation systems that are safer and healthier for people and the planet.

Finally, in addition to making our infrastructure safer, we have to take aggressive action to make cars safer, as well. The year 2021 was the deadliest year on the road in 16 years. We had gone down to only 33,000 deaths on American streets. Since 2011, it has gone up, by last year, to 43,000, 10,000 more deaths in just 12 years. That is just unacceptably high.

Fortunately, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included several critical safety provisions on issues like back seat safety, automatic emergency braking, distracted driving, and child safety. I am pleased that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has implemented some of these rules, but more work remains to be done.

That is why, earlier today, several of my Senate colleagues and I sent a letter to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration urging the agency to swiftly implement these traffic safety provisions as we hit the two-year anniversary of the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law next week. Now is not the time to turn on cruise control. The only acceptable number of traffic deaths is zero.

We urge the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to continue to implement these provisions as fast as is possible while understanding that distracted driving, marijuana, the size

of vehicles could be playing a big role in the increase in the number of deaths on the highways, but we have to look at it in its totality. I thank you, Ms. Ricks. And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for all of your great work on this issue.

Senator Kelly. [Presiding.] Thank you, Senator Markey.

I will turn it over to the Chairman of the full committee, Senator Carper.

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. A warm welcome to each of you. Thank you for joining us today. I missed where you are from. Where are you all from? Where are you from, Ms. Ricks?

Ms. Ricks. I am from Cityfi, a resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Senator Carper. Ms. Neville? Hello?

Ms. Neville. Des Moines, Iowa.

Senator Carper. Good, thank you. Yes ma'am?

Ms. Mongeon. I am from Bismark, North Dakota.

Senator Carper. Okay, good. Wherever you are from, we welcome you. Thank you for joining us today.

States and localities across the United States continue to face unacceptably high rates of traffic fatalities. I wish we weren't facing this in Delaware, but we face this in every State. We know that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to these challenges.

While there is a lot of attention paid to behavioral solutions like speed limits, like drunk driving laws, like seatbelt requirements, we don't talk enough about how important roadway design is to helping to prevent fatal crashes.

A question, if I could, for Ms. Ricks. What are some of the proven safety design measures that transportation agencies should be incorporating into their roadways and the roadway designs in order to improve safety for all roadway users?

Ms. Ricks. There are a number of well-documented proven safety countermeasures. The Federal Highway Administration has promoted these and made them available and encouraged wide use of these measures. Beyond those typical and very no-nonsense and little-debated measures, we do need to consider the overall design of our streets as a whole.

I mentioned earlier in my testimony how the United States is middling at best, as far as our traffic safety performance among global peers. Nations like Australia and Canada, who are equally auto-oriented and sprawling as the United States, have less than half the roadway deaths that we have.

Part of that is attributable to roadway design. They practice environmental design of the roadways, where you are trying to send indicators to the driver of the safe and appropriate speed to travel through the environmental design of the street. Narrower lanes, lots of street trees, a lot of

pedestrian activity and land use activity along the edges actually slow traffic down much more than speed limit signs do.

Really thinking about our street design standards that we have adopted in this Country, generally instruct cities and States to remove all barriers from the roadway, to strip them of any kind of character or encumberment of what might happen should a vehicle leave the roadway. What in turn happens is that vehicles then travel at higher rates of speed. When they do leave the roadway and come into contact with a person, a bicycle, or a pedestrian, or a front porch, or a tree, we obviously have much more catastrophic consequences.

Senator Carper. Thank you.

Brenda Neville, the condition of our highways has a significant impact not just on folks who are driving cars, trucks, and vans, but also large trucks, who experience daily the effects of inadequate highway and bridge maintenance. Road and bridge conditions can have a major impact, as you know, on the movement of freight, but also on the safety of vehicles on the road.

In your view, how would additional funding to improve the conditions of existing highways regularly used by truckers have a substantial impact on safety?

Ms. Neville. Thank you for your leadership on this committee and the continued commitment for bipartisanship in

solving these transportation issues.

Rough roads and deteriorating bridges, roads with outdated designs are certainly producing higher crash rates, so obviously added investment in those areas is something that we definitely are supportive of.

Structurally deficient bridges have a two-fold impact, as well. Not only are there collapsed and disasters, but closed and load-restricted bridges really force traffic off those roads to roads that are not as safe, the secondary roads.

In Iowa, in particular, we have a lot of bridges because of our farm to market system. We have roads every square mile. The bridge problem continues to escalate in Iowa, so I know that we are constantly looking for additional investment.

I think another thing that is important to think about, the American Transport Research Institute does a study every year, and they identify the most congested areas. When there is more congestion, there are more crashes. I think allocating those dollars to those areas, the 100 top freight bottleneck areas on the freight corridors, is certainly something we would advocate for.

Senator Carper. Thank you. My next question is really for the entire panel. I would like to start off with Ms. Mongeon.

Ms. Mongeon, a question for you, and then for your compatriots to your right, if you would. It has been almost two

years since President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. That is a bill that really first took shape right here in this room, which enjoyed enormous bipartisan support and became a part of maybe the most substantial, meaningful infrastructure package in the history of our Country. We are very proud of our role in helping to create it and get it started.

The highway title of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which we authored here, included significant funding increases for highway safety programs. The law also included provisions to enhance safety for bicyclists, for pedestrians, and for other vulnerable road users.

My question for all of you, we will start with you, Ms. Mongeon, if you were giving advice to the Secretary of Transportation, who used to be known as Mayor Pete, and I was with him yesterday just in Delaware at the Amtrak shops in Bear, Delaware, and had the President there and a whole bunch of folks, focused on intercity passenger rail.

But if you are giving advice to him, if you had been with us yesterday and given him some advice, what would you tell him is going well with the implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's safety provisions? What is going well with respect to the safety provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, and what would you tell him could be

further improved?

I like to say, everything I do, I know I can do better, but how can we improve going forward? Thank you. Then we will call on your fellow panelists.

Ms. Mongeon. Senator Carper, the North Dakota Department of Transportation appreciates many things about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: the additional funding, of course, to benefit safety, some flexibility measures. I think our success in North Dakota can be attributed to the fact that we utilize the funds that we receive well, and we operate within the rules and regulations that are applied, and we take a comprehensive approach. We are addressing behavioral safety as well as infrastructure safety solutions simultaneously.

We have applied or considered the Safe System Approach as we have updated our most recent strategic highway safety plan, and again, that speaks to the need for comprehensive safety. Safer drivers, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds, post-crash care.

As far as what I would say we can do better, I believe we are just focused on doing what we need to under the existing provisions. We talk honestly about moving forward because our fatalities are reducing in North Dakota; it gets more challenging to reduce them further. We talk mostly about continuing to use the funds well and doing more of the

effective, evidence-based strategies that BIL allows us to.

Senator Carper. I am going to ask our other witnesses to react and respond on the record. I think Senator Fetterman has a question or two as well, and I want to get out of his way. Thank you all for being here and for your responses.

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can, after Senator Fetterman goes, we can come back to you for another five minutes, if you would like. Senator Fetterman?

Senator Fetterman. Ms. Ricks, the Safe Streets for All Program has helped municipalities address poor street design. It is immensely popular in Pennsylvania. Cities and towns across the Commonwealth have won grants, including Erie, Shamokin, and Lancaster.

Can you speak to the benefits of this program? What kinds of communities are applying, and how are they using the grants?

Ms. Ricks. The program is tremendously successful, and it is one that I think we would like to see not only be broadened as a discretionary program, but really to be fundamental in the formula funding, as well.

We have seen, and my firm now has aided a number of communities in pursuing Safe Streets for All resources. We are seeing communities of all sizes try and pursue these funds, from communities as large as Philadelphia to as small as Burley, Idaho, with a population of just 11,000. We are seeing that

planning and implementation are both critically important; however, a lot of these grants do tend to go to larger communities.

What a lot of communities really crave is the ability to do quick build, tactical improvements that they can see almost immediately and start to yield some of those improvements. We have seen communities that have been waiting for decades for something as simple as a crosswalk for lack of local funds.

I think that what we can do better with this program is to really promote or enable and clarify that some of these tactical, low-cost improvements actually can be included in that planning and demonstration phase so that we can get those low-cost improvements out in the ground and into deployment sooner rather than later.

I think we can work with NPOs and States to help bundle improvements for smaller communities, who often lack the staffing resources to even pursue a grant application and really help those communities pursue, and then act as a local agent to implement the programs that that local community has asked for, rather than dictating to them what is best for them.

Senator Fetterman. Okay, so how could we extend the program's impact in smaller communities?

Ms. Ricks. Again, I think that it is giving them more resources to pursue those, helping them by facilitating grant

applications, bringing the support of MPOs and RPOs, metropolitan planning organizations and rural planning organizations, to help those communities to secure those funds.

Senator Fetterman. In other words, they don't have the in-house kind of technology. I was in a small town community, and we certainly wouldn't have this kind of a thing. So allowing these kind of smaller communities, in many cases, that actually needs it more than a community that is lucky to have the kind of in-house one.

That is really a hurdle for a lot of these smaller ones. Is that accurate?

Ms. Ricks. For sure. When you have a small community who has 2.5 FTEs running their entire transportation program, the last thing they can do is set aside their attention from those urgent needs in their communities to try and write a multi-page storytelling grant to try and secure these kinds of funds. They need that help getting the money, and then they need support to deploy the solutions that are right for their community.

Senator Fetterman. The Chairman referenced this amazing, transformative Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Do you see this as a once-in-a-generation to remake our streets and make them much safer? Do you agree with that?

Ms. Ricks. I think that this is a generational improvement, a generational investment that has been made. I

certainly hope it is not a once-in-a-generation. I have two kids that are coming up. I hope that they also will add to an additional generation. This is an investment that we need to make over and over again.

By the way, a lot of these improvements are going to need maintenance five years, ten years from now. So we really need to think ahead of how we are going to make sure that these low-cost safety countermeasures are maintained over time. Again, we need to think about how we are allocating these resources, that we are allowing flexibility for communities to use them, both for operating as well as capital investments.

Senator Fetterman. Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Kelly. Thank you, Senator Fetterman.

Ms. Neville and Ms. Mongeon, I want to talk a little bit here about some of the challenges that State and local communities face in getting new truck parking facilities built. I know that the trucking industry has been working with State departments of transportation and local governments and private industry on this to try to increase the supply of truck parking.

Can you talk a little bit about how would the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act address some of these challenges? First, what are the challenges, and then how would they be addressed? Ms. Mongeon, I want to hear from the State perspective, as well.

Ms. Neville?

Ms. Neville. Thank you. Typically, State transportation budgets tend to be dedicated primarily to the traditional road and bridge projects. Parking, while it is always discussed and is a part of that, it ends up being, typically, an afterthought. Obviously, the bridges and the roads are important to the movement of goods and people, so I think States are always going to be focusing on that.

I know in Iowa, we sit down regularly with our DOT partners, and they are acutely aware of the truck parking issue. But at the end of the day, when we see their budget, it is still going to roads and bridges, and truck parking is sort of an afterthought.

Senator Kelly. Are there any truck parking projects being developed in Iowa at this point?

Ms. Neville. No, there are not. In fact, they have closed truck rest areas. But we have had discussions, and I think that is really important, too, that we are collaborating with our DOT partners. There will be projects. It is certainly on their radar.

They also understand we have to think outside the box. We have to be innovative. I think that is what is so important and valuable about the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act. It is very specific to truck parking. It is just to truck parking,

and every State can benefit from that.

I think if we sit down with our DOT leaders and figure out where the best places for these truck parking spots are, I think that will go a long way in addressing all the issues that are related to truck parking: safety, productivity, workforce.

Senator Kelly. Ms. Mongeon, can you speak to the challenges from the State level? By the way, I think you said you are from Bismark.

Ms. Mongeon. Correct.

Senator Kelly. My wife, well, me too, is a fan of that Atomic Cafe in Bismark, North Dakota. Have you been there?

Ms. Mongeon. Chairman Kelly, no, I have not.

Senator Kelly. You should check it out.

Ms. Mongeon. Okay. The North Dakota DOT supports Senate Bill 1034 as written, which would authorize appropriations for truck parking investments. We do recognize the importance of truck parking in North Dakota and nationally. We continually evaluate our truck parking needs on a regular basis as we review investments in our rest areas along the interstates, and we are currently working toward expansion of truck parking at one of our rest areas in the near future.

Senator Kelly. So at one rest area, you are exploring it. Are there any in North Dakota right now, are there any other truck parking projects that you are aware of?

Ms. Mongeon. Chairman Kelly, not to my knowledge. Just the one that I mentioned.

Senator Kelly. Not to your knowledge. I would imagine we have a lot of goods moving through both of your States.

Ms. Mongeon, I want to stick with you for a second and talk a little bit about some of the rural and Tribal communities and issues here. Like North Dakota, Arizona has significant road infrastructure in very rural parts of our State. This infrastructure is the responsibility of the State Department of Transportation to maintain.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided a 30 percent increase in annual funding for the Highway Safety Improvement Program, which is the main formula program that States use for highway safety. How has North Dakota put this funding to use?

Ms. Mongeon. Chairman Kelly, we have a robust highway safety improvement program in the State of North Dakota. In my testimony, I had discussed the program, the Local Road Safety Program, which provides low-cost infrastructure safety improvement projects for consideration by all of our counties, 12 of our major cities, and our four Tribes.

Through these plans, they have an opportunity to submit projects readily with minimal work at their level for consideration for funding through the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

As I understand it, our Highway Safety Improvement Program is continually at capacity. By that, I mean that we have more projects identified than funding available. So, the additional funding was very welcome and is being used immediately.

Senator Kelly. As we look ahead to the next surface transportation reauthorization bill, are there any challenges that States face when utilizing their Highway Safety Improvement Program funding? Challenges that you are facing in using the funding, what can we do in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill to fix it? Anything you can think of?

Ms. Mongeon. Chairman Kelly, the only thing that readily comes to mind is additional funding, because we have the capacity to spend it through our Local Road Safety Program.

Senator Kelly. Ms. Neville?

Ms. Neville. Additional funding is always welcome.

Senator Kelly. Ms. Ricks?

Ms. Ricks. Additional funding is welcome, and also local control and flexibility for local communities to apply the right design interventions for their situations that they are trying to, the objectives that they are trying to achieve.

Senator Kelly. Thank you.

I have just a couple more questions, and then we will see if any other members, I don't believe anybody else is on their way, so we may adjourn a little bit early.

I want to get to Ms. Neville. I don't know if you mentioned this, or maybe we thought you were going to mention land ports of entry in your opening remarks as a type of infrastructure that we need to focus on and get upgrade. We put that in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, so we are upgrading some of this infrastructure now.

Just last night, my mother-in-law was on the south side of the port of entry in Arizona, and I believe she was on a bus. She had to wait three and a half hours to get through what I assume was probably the Nogales Port of Entry because of backups and bottlenecks.

Can you share more about how bottlenecks at international ports of entry have a big impact on our freight networks?

Ms. Neville. Land ports of entry are gateways for commercial vehicles and, obviously, people. Many of them, however, were constructed over 50 years ago, and they just don't have the sufficient capacity or technology to accommodate the current trade environment.

On average, for 2023, every day approximately 20,400 trucks cross the U.S.-Mexico border, and 15,300 trucks cross the Canadian border. Currently, commercial vehicles face extended wait times, and obviously, so do buses, due to closed entry lanes, staffing shortages, and lack of functioning inspection equipment.

I think it is essential that we continue to look at these bottlenecks, look at these facilities, and give them the funds or the guidance, obviously, to operate more efficiently at the cross border for the movement of goods. I think that is a prime example. You shouldn't have to be waiting three hours, right, and think about the truck drivers that have to do that and how that impacts productivity and how that impacts and disrupts the supply chain.

Senator Kelly. In some cases, these truck drivers are carrying products that need to get to refrigeration, yes? Very time sensitive.

Ms. Mongeon. Absolutely, time sensitive. Yes. I think it is something that we really need to continue to invest in. Obviously, thank you for your leadership on the BEST Facilitation Act for border trucks. That was important, and we just need to continue to make those kind of investments and keep those a priority item, as well.

Senator Kelly. We are upgrading these ports of entry not only for commercial traffic, but car traffic and foot traffic as well. But from a standpoint of trade, even just with the State of Arizona, we are talking about tens of billions of dollars.

Ms. Mongeon. And many trucks go in and out. Freight movement between Canada and Mexico is increasing, so it is essential that we take a real global perspective on those.

Senator Kelly. Ms. Ricks, we are seeing several new types of vehicles that are coming into service in recent years, including electric vehicles, some of which are trucks. I drove one myself here around the mall about a year and a half ago or so, but also autonomous vehicles, e-bikes.

What new challenges do these new vehicle types pose to local and State transportation officials? Are State and local governments prepared to address the new safety challenges that are posed by these vehicles?

Ms. Ricks. I think the short answer is no, they are not ready for the changes that these vehicles and devices propose. We anticipate that we are going to see a lot more disruption in vehicle types and form factors, especially as we are seeing, for example, e-bike sales outstripping zero emission motor vehicle sales.

We can anticipate that there might be more things like golf carts and electric tuk tuks and truck trikes and last mile freight delivery happening in all kinds of different form factors. These are vehicles that the typical State motor vehicle code is unprepared to deal with. Are they a bicycle, are they a vehicle? Do they belong in a general purpose travel lane? Can they be on the sidewalk? Can they be in a bike lane?

We are going to need to think about new lane types, for example, slow lane designations, distinct from general purpose

lanes, so that we can have these vehicles traveling with others that are somewhat in the same speed. That helps my friends in the trucking industry by moving those slower-moving vehicles away from heavier vehicles that do tend to have significant blind spots on them.

I think that all users of the road want to be able to travel safely with one another. but that does mean that we are going to need to design our policies so that we can give each one of these users a proper place in the road.

I think we can also use some of the technology that is coming with these new vehicle for factors to introduce things like speed governors in dense, complicated urban areas where the connected vehicle system, where both automobiles and scooters and bicycles all have the ability to communicate with the overall infrastructure system. We can harmonize speed so that they are all travelling in something close to one another.

If you can get all of the speeds down to a rational speed, traffic can flow smoothly and actually get you to your destination, although at a slower speed, in the same amount of time without the stops and starts.

Senator Kelly. It used to be just cars and trucks, and now we are having to deal with a whole --

Ms. Ricks. It is a brave new world.

Senator Kelly. I was, not too long ago, maybe about a year

ago, I was in an autonomous vehicle in Phoenix with nobody in the front seat, and I was surprisingly comfortable with that situation. But we will see, when there are more and more of these, how this progresses and what changes we need to make to infrastructure to accommodate for them.

I want to thank each of you for being here today. It is very helpful to us to hear your perspectives. I want to, before I close, I just want to get, is there anything you feel like you didn't share with the subcommittee that you would like to share, or maybe something we didn't ask that we should have asked? Any of you? Now is your chance.

Ms. Ricks. I will take the opportunity. I think that one of the issues is that, in particular for these low cost safety countermeasures, these are small cost, small dollar amount projects, which there is an ingrained tendency in the system that we have with the reporting requirements with the other obligations of the use of Federal funds that really has an incentive to move those dollars to larger projects, if you are going to have that kind of oversight, if you are going to have that kind of reporting.

If we really want to invest these dollars in small-scale, widely distributed, low-cost safety improvements that have some of the most profound safety effects, we really need to think about how we can streamline those reporting requirements, how we

can make it easier to deploy those funds to these very, very meaningful and impactful projects rather than lumping them together into those easier to report on, larger capital improvements.

Senator Kelly. Ms. Neville?

Ms. Neville. I will continue to advocate for truck parking, and again, applaud you for the introduction of the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act. I will tell you, this is some of the most exciting legislation that our industry has seen in a very long time, because it impacts everybody.

While I am here wearing a hat for trucking, truck parking impacts everybody, every single motorist. It helps safety, it helps workforce development, productivity, emissions, the law enforcement community, and everybody that is in a car, everybody in the motoring public.

So I have to put one more plug in for that and I really appreciate it. That is a commitment to safety. That will impact highway safety. If we are serious about it, then we need to be serious about investing in truck parking, sooner rather than later.

Senator Kelly. Thank you. Ms. Mongeon?

Ms. Mongeon. Chairman Kelly, from a North Dakota DOT perspective, I believe what would help is predictable funding. We do support a higher percentage of program funds by formula

and reducing distribution through the lower spending discretionary programs. We always appreciate flexibility in spending. Thank you.

Senator Kelly. Thank you, and thank you, all of you.

Before we adjourn, I think we have some housekeeping, but I want to ask the committee staff, can I ask for unanimous consent when I am the only person here? I can? All right.

[Laughter.]

Senator Kelly. I am asking for unanimous consent to submit -- like I would oppose my own request -- a letter from the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, a statement for the record from the American Traffic Safety Services Association, a letter from the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, and 20 other industry groups about the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act, a news release from national and State law enforcement groups, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Arizona State Troopers Association, and the North Dakota Highway Patrol supporting the Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act, and also a letter from the National Asphalt Pavement Association.

Without objection, we will submit those.

[The referenced information follows:]

Senator Kelly. Senators will be allowed to submit written questions for the record until 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 28th, which is two weeks from today. We will compile those questions, and send them to our witnesses, who will be asked to reply by Tuesday, December 12th.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:10 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]