

I object firmly and vehemently to allowing drivers under the age of 21 to drive trucks in interstate commerce. The highest proportion of crashes in this country involve teen-age drivers. Safe driving requires patience, awareness, courtesy, knowledge and skill. The lack of patience in the young cannot be compensated for by training. Road sense, that is awareness on the road, requires experience. Driving skill can only develop from experience. Only knowledge can be gained through training, and that is not of sufficient value in the overall requirement package to make safe drivers. Drivers with fewer than five years of driving experience must not be allowed to take on the responsibilities inherent in driving in interstate commerce. Drivers under the age of 21 must also not be so licensed.

Also, unless the U.S. government establishes a uniform national driver education curriculum and a uniform national driver test for interstate drivers, adherence to regulations will be compromised. Allowing the trucking industry to self perform and regulate and certify driver training and testing is placing the fox in the chicken coop to guard the chickens.

The USDOT is exhibiting an extreme level of irresponsibility by acceding to any proposition that would allow younger drivers in trucks. The government's own statistics cry out against such a regulation. There may be a shortage of drivers attracted to the industry by the long hours and low net wages. However, there is no shortage of death on our highways. We already have enough of that.

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