

We're Not All Big Companies. And We're Not All Bad Actors.

First and foremost, thank you for taking the time to even open this message. I know that your time is extremely valuable and I do not want to take up more than necessary.

I represent a South Carolina trucking company. We have about 70 drivers and 75 trucks. We are regional, traveling regularly in SC, NC and GA and our drivers are home every night. My official title is Safety Director; however, on any given day, I am a trainer, a nurse, a parent, a psychologist, a legal expert and a therapist. When you manage drivers (or people in general really), sometimes you have to wear all the hats.

I come from a long line of farmers, like so many other original SC families. My two uncles, who were peach farmers, began hauling peaches, from which a trucking company began. The two brothers quickly realized they were better at being brothers than business partners so they split, one taking the trucking side and the other taking the farming (peaches) side. Fast forward 20ish years, when my father came into the work picture, my uncle took him under his "truck" wings and taught him all the "trucking" things. Once in high school, (but still while he was working part-time for my uncle) he got a "real" job with Southern Bell, climbing power poles. Super dangerous, but good insurance. Once he graduated high school, he and my mother immediately got married. After 3-4 years, my mother found out she was pregnant with my older sister. One night, as my mom was very much pregnant and waddling around, my dad came home from work, put his things down. and said to my mother, "Well. Honey. I have 3 things to tell you." Skeptically, she said "ok... what is it?" Calmly, he replied, "I quit my job. I took all of the money out of the bank except for \$500. And I bought a truck." My sweet mom responded in disbelief with, "Oh no, you didn't. Did you really?" He said "Yes. I just need you to trust me." She said ok and 50 years later, here we are.

Our office and shop are filled with other family members, (and of course family members who are not blood-related, but have become family) who have joined the company over the years. My sister is down the hall from me. My cousin sits across from me. My dad still can be found in the shop under a truck, covered in grease some days.

As stated earlier, I get to manage about 70 drivers. Between the employees and the drivers, that translates into about 350 human beings we serve. 350 mouths we feed. And, because they have entrusted us as their employer, in turn, they feed us as well.

I tell you this family history to give some perspective. This is the perspective of a family-owned trucking company, like so many other SC trucking companies. In fact, did you know Senators, that **97.5%** of the trucking companies in SC have 20 trucks or less? And **99.6%** of trucking companies have 100 trucks or less. Isn't that incredible? These are mostly family-owned companies. These are not huge, deep-pocketed corporations. These are drivers who started out with one truck, then saved his money and bought another truck, then another, so he could work an honest living. These are mothers who got her CDL, bought herself a truck and now makes local deliveries in her small town. These are veterans who wanted to contribute to our state's economy. These are fathers and grandfathers who reached into their non-deep pockets, emptied out their bank account one day, and bought a truck in order to feed his wife and soon-to-be baby, in the face of much uncertainty.

I could give data, and numbers and hard facts – such as 81% of accidents involving commercial motor vehicles were found to be caused by the passenger vehicle. Or according to the US Chamber of Commerce, tort costs in 2020 averaged \$3,621 per household, rising from \$350 billion in 2016 to \$443 billion in 2020. With this annual growth of 6% per year, we can estimate (based solely on these figures), that tort costs in 2024 would average \$4,490 per household. Of course, these are nationwide averages.

However, I'll leave you with these numbers instead.

We have a total of **120** employees. We feed **350** mouths. We have an **11%** turnover rate (in an industry with a 91% average turnover rate). We lost **5** drivers during COVID. We laid off **ZERO** employees during COVID. Every October, we have a “Family Fun Day” where we host over 700 people (employees, their families and friends) – and of course, each of you are invited to attend, as it would be an honor to have you!

It's these kind of companies – my company – small, family-owned businesses that are affected by the current tort laws of our state. It's my company, along with 99.6% of the other trucking companies in the state, who are at risk. Please consider this perspective while making your decision.

Thank you so much for your time.

~ Just another Trucker