



Testimony before
House Transportation Committee

Matthew Hall, Political Coordinator
Teamsters Joint Council 56

March 29th, 2022

Oppose SB 546

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Matthew Hall, I am the Secretary Treasurer for Teamsters local 696 and Political Coordinator for Teamsters Joint Council 56. The Joint Council represents over 10,000 Teamsters in Kansas. The Teamster's Union is the nation's largest transportation union, representing workers in almost every transportation industry. Teamster members could be delivering anything from bakery goods to ready mix concrete, palletized material to your latest online-ordered package – or transporting your kids to school.

Planning and incorporating new technologies into our member's daily lives is not new to our Union. Our Teamsters Union logo to this day proudly displays a team of horses, which was how our membership delivered goods in the early 1900's. In my opinion the task here today is to make sure that as new technology is introduced it is done safely and with as little impact on our lives and society as possible. We ask that this bill include all the measures and guardrails needed to ensure our families safety and our members safety and to make sure that everything is done with public transparency and oversight.

Truck drivers, bus drivers and thousands of other transportation workers will be sharing the road with AVs for years to come. The performance of AVs will be of paramount importance to the safety of our members, not only for those who operate on the roads, but for those who work directly with those vehicles in other roles, such as performing maintenance or loading and unloading the vehicle. All workers deserve to know that an autonomous vehicle or bot traveling next to them is safe enough to share the same road or worksite. To that end, it is imperative that transparency exists in the development and testing of AVs. Extensive data collection and reporting by manufacturers is key to driving good policy and eventual promulgation of regulations in this AV space and must be required. Manufacturers and operators need to collect and report crash, injury, and fatality data, much of what is required now under various state and federal laws, but also data relating to malfunctions, disengagements and interventions will better inform both regulators and the public about the safe operation of

these vehicles. The more regulators know about human interface with technology in testing and development the better they will be equipped to ensure the safe operation of AVs. Analysis of crash data is often essential in preventing further accidents from occurring. We've all seen the value of the black box in the airline industry in helping determine crash causation. Automated vehicles should be no different than any other transportation system user. Investigating agencies must be able to obtain a recorder or recorded information relating to an accident involving an AV. We urge public reporting be part of this.

The issues facing autonomous commercial trucks are fundamentally different and potentially more dangerous than those facing passenger cars and warrant their own careful consideration. Regardless of the technology, automated heavy trucks will still have maneuverability issues including longer stopping distances, and their crash impact on smaller vehicles, occupants and pedestrians will still be devastating. Human intervention must remain as a necessary safety component to take over control of commercial AVs when technology fails. In the case of an automated commercial vehicle, a human driver should be in the vehicle regardless of the level of automation. And a level of training for the driver, perhaps with a specific AV endorsement on the CDL, should be mandated, so that only those trained on the AV technology can assume control of the vehicle when that technology fails to operate properly.

It is our opinion that the legislation before you today are too wide open. This is the roadmap for AV and the roadmap for safe driving for the future of all Kansan's. We must make sure that the right guardrails are in place and that the safest most careful rules governing this new technology is in place. We ask for weight limits to be added to this bill to slow down the risk of major accidents from happening, we ask for a human failsafe to be added to all trucks, and we ask that public reporting be made mandatory. The cost of us getting it wrong is too high and we must do this right.

We appreciate the committee giving us time to talk today and stand for questions.