

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC, October 20, 1998.
Acting Comptroller General JAMES
HINCHMAN,
General Accounting Office,
Washington, DC

DEAR MR. HINCHMAN: There is a growing
concern that trucks are dangerous. Cur-
rently, commercial trucks represent just 3
percent of all registered vehicles in the
United States, but they are involved in 13
percent of the total traffic fatalities. Over
the past ten years, the fatal accident rates
for all vehicles have been declining; however,
commercial motor vehicle accidents, fatali-
ties, and fatality rates are increasing.

I am writing to request that the General
Accounting Office conduct an investigation
on the effectiveness of the Federal Highway
Administration's motor carrier safety pro-
gram in reducing truck accident and truck
safety violations in the United States. This
review should focus on trends since 1990.

I would appreciate a briefing on this issue
prior to our hearing on the Federal Highway
Administration's 2000 federal appropriations,
which is tentatively scheduled for late Feb-
ruary or early March. A report should be
issued by June, 1999.

If you have any questions about this re-
quest, please contact Stephanie Gupta of the
Subcommittee staff on (202) 225-2141

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Chairman.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA,
DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE,
Fairfax Station, VA, August 28, 1998.

Hon. FRANK R. WOLF,
Herndon, VA.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN WOLF: On August 26,
1998, members of the Coalition for Safe
Roads met with you at your Herndon office
to discuss legislation relative to trucks with
triple trailers using our highways. I was in-
vited to attend, and spoke to you about the
number of motor carrier checks our troopers
had conducted during 1997.

During the meeting you expressed interest
in the statistical information the Virginia
Department of State Police had concerning
motor carrier checks and the drivers and
trucks/buses placed out-of-service. I have
outlined below statistical information for
both the entire State of Virginia during the
calendar year of 1997:

Table with 3 columns: Inspection summary, Statewide, NOVA. Rows include Inspections conducted, Drivers in violation, Defective vehicles, etc.

The all other violations row above includes
all deficiencies found, and an arrest, sum-
mons or warning was given.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to
speak with you about the issue of highway
safety specifically as it relates to trucks and
tractor-trailers. Your support for highway
safety is most important in providing Ameri-
ca's citizens a safe means of travel. If my
staff or I can be of assistance to you, we may
be contacted at 703-323-4500.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

DONALD P. GARRETT,
Captain,
Division Seven Commander.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 19, 1998]

ROAD SAFETY—AND HILL PITFALLS

A House-Senate Transportation appropri-
ations conference is wrestling to resolve dif-

ferences over two important highway safety
issues that shouldn't even be in dispute: the
identification of trucks carrying agricul-
tural chemicals, and a proposal to consoli-
date federal highway safety responsibilities
under a single agency best organized to do
the job.

The battling over hazardous-materials
warnings has to do with a federal require-
ment that, effective Oct. 1, trucks carrying
agricultural chemicals such as fertilizer, pes-
ticides, herbicides and insecticides must
carry placards identifying the material on
board and providing an emergency telephone
number. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), chairman
of the transportation appropriations sub-
committee in the House, explains that the
placards will provide emergency response
teams with important information on the
substances they are called upon to handle.
For instance, a truck carrying topsoil should
be handled quite differently from one trans-
porting ammonium nitrate.

In the Senate bill, an exemption to the
placard requirement has been granted for a
number of states. Opponents claim the iden-
tification requirements burden farmers. It
can't be much of a financial burden, through:
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety,
which supports the requirement, calculates
the cost of 58 cents a placard. The lack of a
placard advising rescue teams of what is on
board could cost lives. Dozens of national
and local firefighting units oppose any weak-
ening of the provisions.

The second proposal involves more than a
mere shift of boxes on federal agency flow
charts. It would relocate the Transportation
Department's Office of Motor Carriers—
which oversees trucking laws—from the Fed-
eral Highway Administration to the Na-
tional Highway Traffic Safety Administra-
tion, which focuses on safety. The point: The
office of motor carriers is responsible for
truck safety requirements such as the length
and weight of the vehicle and the time that
a trucker may drive; the logical home for
this office is in the agency that deals with
other vehicle safety issues.

ON EDUCATION AND DRUGS

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, there is
something missing from the recent education
debate . . . and what is missing is President
Clinton's record on illegal drugs and its effect
on the America's education system.

The media seem to buy the Democrat's
claim that they care more about education
than do Republicans. What seems to be miss-
ing from this debate—or what the media
seems willing ignore is the fact that illegal
drug use by school age children has doubled
since President Clinton took office. Studies
show that illegal drug use—including mari-
juana—robs students of their motivation and
self-esteem, leaving them unable to con-
centrate and indifferent to learning.

There is not a parent in America who sends
their children off to school without worrying
that they will become exposed to illegal drugs.
And it's not just teenagers anymore.

Parents are now concerned about their 6th,
7th and 8th grade children getting involved
with illegal drugs. Since 1992, marijuana use
has jumped 150% among 12 and 13 year old
students and 300% among high school stu-
dents.

For the first time, more than half of all mid-
dle-school students report that illegal drugs
are used, kept and sold at their schools.

During the Reagan/Bush years drug use
dropped, from 24 million individuals using
drugs in 1979 to 11 million in 1992. These
hard fought gains were wasted by President
Clinton.

The number one reason young people drop
out of school is because of their involvement
with illegal drugs. In a study conducted among
a sample of 9th to 11th graders, more than
half of the heavy drug users dropped out—
twice the rate of those who are drug free.

Studies also show that students involved
with drugs are four times more likely to re-
ceive poor grades than are drug free students.
The rise in illegal drug use also correlates
closely with rising school violence.

Today in America, one third of high school
students smoke pot. The message we need to
send America's parents and grandparents in
the education debate is that President Clinton
has earned a failing grade in keeping illegal
drugs out of the hands of their school aged
children and grandchildren.

You cannot claim to be an education Presi-
dent while ignoring rising illegal drug use in
America's schools.

LATIN AMERICA: CHALLENGES TO
STABILITY

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, as 1998
draws to a close, four countries in the Western
Hemisphere bear close observation. Events
taking shape in those nations could have a
substantial impact on the region's stability, the
pace of democratization and the success of
economic reform. These nations worth watch-
ing include: Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and
Paraguay.

BRAZIL

As the contagion of the "Asian/Russian" fi-
nancial crisis spreads into Latin America, the
next three months could be critical to the eco-
nomic and political stability of the hemisphere.
All eyes are currently focused on Brazil and its
attempts to stave off the effects of the Asian
flu. A major financial downturn in Brazil, the
region's third largest economy and the world's
ninth largest could spell economic trouble
throughout the entire region, including within
the United States.

Brazil is by far the most important economy
in South America. With a population of 157
million, Brazil's Gross Domestic Product
(GDP) stood at approximately \$806 billion in
1997. Brazil accounts for some 45 percent of
all Latin America's GDP. U.S. banks have
some \$34 billion in outstanding loans to Brazil
and over \$100 billion in Latin America. U.S.
private investment in Brazil stands at \$25 bil-
lion and trade between the U.S. and Brazil
ranges around \$16 billion. Since August, how-
ever, Brazil's stock market has plunged 40
percent and its cash reserves have plum-
meted \$30 billion. This, in turn, has forced in-
terest rates up to 50 percent and has resulted
in a budget deficit of 7 percent of GNP, twice
what it was when Cardoso first took office.
Deficit spending has led international and do-
mestic short term investors to pull out of Brazil