



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Kennedy Sponsored Legislation to Address Truck Driver Shortage Signed into Law

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY November 30, 2021

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ALBANY, N.Y. – Legislation sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and Assemblymember Donna Lupardo (D-Binghamton) creating a Young Adult Commercial Driver’s License- Class A program for 18-20 year olds has been signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul. Currently, New York allows 18-20 year-olds to obtain a CDL Class B license to drive within state lines, however these same drivers are ineligible to apply for a CDL Class A license until they are 21-years-old. This bill ([S5486/A6295A](#)) will allow 18-20 year olds, under

strict training and safety guidelines, to obtain their CDL Class A to drive tractor-trailers and other larger vehicles. The bill's signing comes at an opportune time, with the signing of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, which will allow 18-20 year olds to drive trucks across state lines, but requires enabling legislation at the state level.

According to the American Transportation Research institute, the trucking industry is responsible for 1 out of every 27 jobs in New York State. However, due to an aging workforce, there is an urgent need for new drivers, but it is becoming more difficult to recruit commercial drivers. It is estimated that the industry will need to hire almost 1 million new drivers over the next 10 years. The signing of the bill also comes as the nation continues to face a disruption to supply chains, in large part due to the pandemic's shutdown and an increased demand for goods.

"As New York and our nation build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic, we know employers are struggling to fill positions. For the trucking industry, this problem is compounded by the short supply of commercial truck drivers that has weighed heavily on our nation's economy and supply chains for decades. This legislation will directly address that shortage, while simultaneously opening up opportunities for younger New Yorkers entering the workforce, and preparing our labor pool for additional advancement under the federal infrastructure bill," said **Senator Tim Kennedy, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.**

Assemblymember Donna Lupardo, said, "New York's trucking industry is central to our state's economy, ensuring that products make it to market in a timely manner. This legislation will help address the shortage of truck drivers by attracting younger drivers, at a time when many are in the process of choosing their careers. I'd like to thank Governor Hochul, my colleagues and all the advocates for their support for this commonsense measure."

Kendra Hems, President of the Trucking Association of New York said, “The Trucking Association of New York thanks Senator Kennedy for his sponsorship of this important legislation. This law brings New York in line with the rest of the country which allows younger drivers to obtain a license to drive a tractor trailer while under the direct supervision of an experienced driver. It also comes just weeks after the President signed into law legislation creating a pilot program allowing drivers between 18 and 20 years of age to operate interstate as part of the national effort to alleviate the commercial driver shortage.”

Tom Mulvaney, Corporate Recruiting Manager of Wadhams Enterprises said, “As a corporate recruiter I have seen the challenges firsthand with encouraging students to consider careers as professional truck drivers when they’re unable to start training until 21 years of age. Most would look for different careers. Enactment of this legislation now provides a career path upon graduation from high school. Important to trucking, it balances the needs of workforce development and safety, by requiring completion of a vigorous training and certification program before students will be eligible to obtain their commercial driver’s license. We applaud Senator Kennedy for his foresight on this issue and his sponsorship of this important legislation.”

Jim Calvin, President of the New York Association of Convenience Stores said, “We’re grateful to Senator Kennedy and Assembly Member Lupardo for crafting this strategy for expanding the pool of available Class A drivers to help ease the driver shortage that is disrupting deliveries of gas, groceries, and other essential products to retail stores statewide.”

Ashley Ranslow, Assistant State Director of the National Federation of Independent Businesses said, “Small businesses continue to face unprecedented and enormous challenges with labor shortages and supply chain disruptions, further complicating and delaying their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. NFIB applauds Governor Hochul and sincerely thanks Assemblywoman Lupardo and Senator Kennedy for their tireless work and support of

legislation that creates more opportunities for younger New Yorkers to pursue a CDL license. This commonsense legislation will help ease the CDL driver shortage while also ensuring safety on our roadways. New York's small businesses and our state's economic recovery depends on a functioning transportation and logistics network – that only exists if there's enough people to operate trucks.”

"There is a significant need for additional truck drivers in New York to transport goods as the supply chain continues to suffer from pandemic related disruptions. The Governor's signature today expanding CDL Class A licenses for young adults who are at least 18 years old will address this critical issue. We must maintain good supply lines, especially for New York farm products and perishable food that our customers need. New York Farm Bureau appreciates the Governor's support and Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Donna Lupardo and Senator Tim Kennedy for sponsoring the legislation to increase the number of available drivers and help alleviate supply shortages," said **David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President.**

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