



POLITICS WOULD BE FUNNY IF IT WASN'T SO SERIOUS

Can you imagine if the participants in the recent Republican and Democratic debates were asked their opinion of motor carrier legislation regarding the pending Hours of Service rules?

We would have one candidate access some information from the candidate's private server. Another may whip out a map to see if the wall that will be built between Mexico and the US would have any impact. Yet another would have all of the drivers that want to go back to college for free education give up driving. Another former candidate who has experience with bridge traffic delays may have a lot to say on this matter.

All kidding aside, we should get serious if it wasn't comical that a line was unintentionally left out of the Hours of Service proposed legislation. The current administration indicated on May 16 that it would veto a fiscal 2017 transportation funding bill in the Senate if the bill's final version includes provisions that go beyond the scope of funding legislation. A provision in that bill would set at 73 hours the allowable hours per week truckers may work before taking a break.

From the administration's perspective it is concerned the bill could potentially undercut public safety if the Senate approves the hours-of-service provision. "The administration strongly objects to the inclusion of problematic ideological provisions that are beyond the scope of funding legislation," the White House wrote in its statement on administration policy. The hours of service provision is included in a \$56 billion fiscal 2017 transportation funding bill senators are considering this week. The bill would address a technicality in a fiscal 2016 funding law.

The HOS provision in the FY2017 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill also aims to prevent drivers from abusing the restart rule by capping the amount of time they can spend behind the wheel or on duty at 73 hours per week.

It further explains: "If the 34-hour restart rule in effect on June 30, 2013 is restored, then drivers who use the 34-hour restart may not drive after being on duty more than 73 hours in a 7-day period." The new bill will enable truck drivers to "continue utilizing the hours-of-service restart provision if a congressionally mandated study is unable to demonstrate the July 2013 restart restrictions improve driver safety and health."

The ATA weighed in by saying "while professional truck drivers do not work wildly inflated weekly work hours that anti-truck groups claim, we understand the Subcommittee's sensitivity to claims [that] a handful of drivers might abuse the restart rule to work long hours in a week. We look forward to working with members in both chambers and on both sides of the aisle to ensure that professional truck drivers continue to have the opportunity to get extended off-duty rest periods that reset their work week."

This kick the can down the road approach is not something new. It is something that has become expected based on the time it has taken to resolve the very serious matter of HOS. There are many safety groups that feel they have a lot of skin in the game. There is also the world that revolves around motor carrier transportation in the US, including trucking companies and consumer groups who are concerned about how reduced hours of service will impact trucking companies' costs and those of the ultimate consumer.

Don't kick the can down the road when it comes to your transportation costs. We can accelerate your ability to reduce transportation costs. To learn more about how Data2Logistics can guide you through these surprising times please contact Harold B. Friedman, Senior Vice President Global Corporate Development at: harold.friedman@data2logistics.com or +1 609.577.3756.