



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**ATA Statement on Flaws in Bureau of Labor Statistics' Driver Shortage Article**  
*Industry's Foremost Economist Cites BLS' 'Misunderstandings' About Trucking*

**Arlington, Virginia** – Today, American Trucking Associations Chief Economist Bob Costello issued the following critique of a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics article downplaying the industry's challenges in finding quality drivers.

“Unfortunately in their article Mr. Burks and Ms. Monaco demonstrated some basic misunderstandings about the trucking industry generally and how we at ATA and in the industry discuss the driver shortage.

“First, the trucking industry is large and diverse – with many types of carriers, services, jobs and career paths for drivers. ATA has long recognized this when we discuss the driver shortage – repeatedly emphasizing that the shortage is generally contained to one segment of our industry: the over-the-road or long-haul for-hire truckload segment. The authors go out of their way to say their data could not tell the difference between drivers in this segment and other drivers – this error is compounded by the fact that some of the data utilized in the analysis is nearly two decades old.

“Second, this work ignores ATA's long-standing contention that at the heart of the shortage is the need for qualified drivers. Unlike other “blue collar” jobs the authors compare truck drivers to – motor carriers cannot simply hire anyone to do the job, there are many barriers to entry for new drivers: age requirements, CDL testing standards, strict drug and alcohol testing regimes and, perhaps most importantly for many fleets safe and clean driving records.

“Carriers repeatedly say it isn't that they don't have enough applicants for their open positions – they do. What they do not have is enough applicants who meet the demanding qualifications to be hired. In some cases, carriers must reject 90% of applicants out of hand because they fail to meet at least one of the prerequisites to drive in interstate commerce.

“Finally, the authors ignore the most critical difference between driving a truck and other “blue collar” jobs: unlike their blue collar brethren, truck drivers are often away from home for long stretches as part of the job. Not adjusting their conclusions for something as important as work-life balance leads the authors to make some ill-found claims.

“In addition to the misunderstandings about trucking, the authors' own concession that wages are going up significantly, as motor carriers are unable to hire quality drivers,



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undercuts their own conclusions. This alone suggests there is a systemic issue with getting enough labor in the for-hire truckload driver market.”

*[American Trucking Associations](#) is the largest national trade association for the trucking industry. Through a federation of 50 affiliated state trucking associations and industry-related conferences and councils, ATA is the voice of the industry America depends on most to move our nation’s freight. Follow ATA on [Twitter](#) or on [Facebook](#). [Trucking Moves America Forward](#)*

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