

# National Carrier Hiring Standard Could be in Highway Funding Bill

**By Kevin Scullin, Product Manager, DAT Solutions**

A bill to create a national carrier hiring standard was re-introduced in the House of Representatives in February and could become part of the MAP-21 Reauthorization Bill, due to expire May 31.

## **National standard for hiring motor carriers**

H.R. 1120 calls for a national hiring standard for motor carriers. Specifically, it would require that before using a carrier, a broker or shipper must ensure that the carrier is:

1. Properly registered with the FMCSA.
2. Has obtained the minimum insurance.
3. Has not been given an unsatisfactory safety rating.

This clarification should make life easier for freight brokers, according to the Transportation Intermediaries Association (TIA). “The current state of affairs of CSA and the ever-increasing threat of negligent selection lawsuits based on the BASIC data are hurting the transportation industry,” said Robert Voltmann, president of TIA, in a statement released by the organization. “Every time a shipper, broker, forwarder, or receiver hires a carrier, they are essentially playing Russian roulette for their business’ livelihood.”

“We feel very good about the prospects of H.R. 1120 being included in the highway bill,” said Chris Burroughs, senior government affairs manager for TIA.

Burroughs also mentioned a possible stumbling block. He said that if Congress passes only a short-term extension of the highway funding bill, the hiring standard would not be part of it because the extension would only include funding—not new policy provisions.

## **Call to remove CSA scores from public view**

According to Burroughs, other changes to trucking regulations could also be included in the highway funding bill.

**H.R. 1371**, introduced last month, calls for the FMCSA to remove CSA scores from public view until they improve the quality of the data. Industry groups such as ATA and OOIDA, support the bill. They argue that FMCSA’s Compliance, Safety, and Accountability scores harm carriers because they don’t accurately reflect a carrier’s accident risk.

## **Lawmakers push to make HOS suspension permanent**

Even Hours of Service (HOS) could be addressed in the highway bill.

In December, the government [suspended certain HOS rules](#) until September 30, 2015 and called for the FMCSA to conduct a further study. And even though FMCSA is currently recruiting drivers for the study, some lawmakers don’t want to wait until September to take action.

“Some members of Congress would like to make the HOS suspension permanent,” Burroughs said. “It’s likely to be addressed in the highway bill.”

A permanent suspension of the HOS rules would be a positive for truck capacity, because the more restrictive rules were estimated to reduce fleet productivity by [3 to 5 percent](#) or more.

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