



## OPERATION OPEN ROADS

As we approach the holiday season, our states are committed to ensuring the free and fast flow of commerce. Americans enjoy a high quality of life, and as government officials, our job is to not only maintain the standard of living for our citizens but to improve it. Getting goods to market is a fundamental baseline of our open economy, and under the Biden Administration, the American supply chain is in crisis.

Rather than unleashing the economy, President Biden dramatically increased regulations and rulemaking authority that prevent private sector growth. The President mandated vaccines on private businesses, putting more jobs in jeopardy as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. With 7.4 million people unemployed and 10.4 million job openings, we have a shortage of 80,000 truck drivers, an all-time high for the trucking industry. With more paychecks at risk, American families are forced to pay more for food, gas, and everyday goods as inflation surges to a 30-year high under President Biden's watch.

Higher gas prices and energy costs not only hurt American families, but they also hurt our trucking and shipping industries, making it harder to stock store shelves. Disruptions due to supply shortages increased 638% during the first half of 2021 for essential products, including semiconductor chips, plastics, and cardboard. The delay of shipping vessels arriving to North American ports from Asia has ballooned from 14 hours in June 2020 to 13 days in September 2021. Supermarkets are receiving 40% of what they order compared to pre-pandemic fulfillments of 90%. Approximately 40% of U.S. shipping containers pass through west coast ports that sit in a logjam, and yet our east coast ports remain open for business. Problems are exacerbated by critical shortages in containers, chassis, and drivers to unload and move goods. Once again, where the Biden Administration has failed the American people, our governors will step up to lead.

From coastal ports to inland ports to road and rail, our states can take action to address workforce shortages and prevent bottlenecks, logjams, and other transportation issues. Our families must put food on the table, gas in the car, and buy clothes, medicine, and supplies for their children and loved ones. Our hospitals and healthcare providers must have personal protective equipment, medical devices, and other resources to care for their patients. For consumers and industry alike, we must strengthen and support America's supply chain. Research from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology shows that a small adjustment, such as 12 minutes of additional road time per day, would significantly address industry strain and improve outcomes for a short-staffed industry. If we can get government out of the way, our trucking industry can safely do what it does best: move. Our state economies are on the rise, and Operation Open Roads will help reinforce America's economic comeback.

Therefore, as governors, we commit to using our authority where allowable to modify weight, size, or load restrictions to allow more cargo to move more efficiently; adjust hours of service constraints to provide truck drivers more time and flexibility; deregulate education and occupational licensure barriers to get more commercial truck drivers on the road; and convene state agencies in transportation, commerce, workforce, and other related fields to coordinate with private industry, local governments, and neighboring states where appropriate to ensure greater efficiency, connectivity, and data sharing among shippers and receivers at ports, distribution points, storage facilities, and other intrastate corridors for the expedited loading,

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unloading, and transport of freight. Specifically for those states with costal ports, we commit to support our ports to operate at full capacity, increase tonnage capacity, and accept more Panamax ships waiting off the west coast.

Further, we call on the Biden Administration to suspend outdated federal regulations that unnecessarily require commercial driver's license holders to be 21 years old and lower the age to 18 years old so that well-trained, working adults can work across state borders. In addition, we call on President Biden to suspend the burdensome federal mandate for COVID-19 vaccines for all private employees, specifically for the trucking and transportation industry so that driver shortages are not further exacerbated by an additional barrier to employment. Further, we call on the Biden Administration to review and revise any federal policies that deter use or domestic manufacturing of essential transportation equipment, including intermodal containers, chassis, and automobiles, trucks, and tractor trailers. Finally, we call on President Biden to halt attempts to raise taxes, spend trillions more in taxpayer dollars, and grow the debt, all of which will cripple the American economy and spur inflation causing sky high consumer prices for American families.

Joined this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November 2021 by:

Governor Bill Lee  
State of Tennessee

Governor Doug Ducey  
State of Arizona

Governor Ron DeSantis  
State of Florida

Governor Brian Kemp  
State of Georgia

Governor Brad Little  
State of Idaho

Governor Kim Reynolds  
State of Iowa

Governor Larry Hogan  
State of Maryland

Governor Mike Parson  
State of Missouri

Governor Greg Gianforte  
State of Montana

Governor Pete Ricketts  
State of Nebraska

Governor Doug Burgum  
State of North Dakota

Governor Mike DeWine  
State of Ohio

Governor Kevin Stitt  
State of Oklahoma

Governor Henry McMaster  
State of South Carolina

Governor Greg Abbott  
State of Texas