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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4504

332 SENATE DIRKSEN OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
(202) 224-5141

1 CHURCH STREET, 2ND FLOOR  
BURLINGTON, VT 05401  
(802) 862-0697  
1 (800) 339-9834

[www.sanders.senate.gov](http://www.sanders.senate.gov)

November 9, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

You have pledged to help truck drivers throughout America. As you have said, "Nothing gets done in America without the hardworking men and women of the trucking industry. America depends on you for the fuel that powers our cars, the produce that nourishes our communities, and the beautiful steel that sends up our tallest skyscrapers."

Sadly, the truck drivers at our nation's ports are some of the most abused and exploited workers in America. They need our help now more than ever. As has been reported in the *USA Today* investigative series, "Rigged: Forced into debt. Worked past exhaustion. Left with nothing," drivers in the port trucking industry are being ruthlessly exploited and abused by their employers. Trucking companies are misclassifying drivers as independent contractors, requiring them to lease their own trucks and trapping them into a viscous cycle of debt they cannot possibly afford. Companies are using this debt as leverage to force drivers into working incredibly long hours for starvation wages. At the end of the month, some workers end up owing more on the lease than their paycheck is worth forcing them to essentially work for free.

This should not be happening in the United States of America. Truck drivers are the backbone of the American economy. They deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, not like modern-day indentured servants.

Adding insult to injury, many of the companies that are engaged in this abusive and predatory behavior are receiving lucrative contracts with the federal government. That is unacceptable. The federal government should not be rewarding trucking companies that exploit and abuse their own workers.

Instead, our government should make it a priority to provide federal contracts only to trucking companies that pay workers a living wage with decent benefits and do not force drivers to lease their own trucks.

If you are serious about your support for our nation's truck drivers, I would urge you to sign an executive order to deny government contracts and subcontracts for trucking companies that misclassify workers as independent contractors, force workers to lease the trucks they drive, and engage in other abusive labor practices.

In addition, I would urge you to direct the Labor Department to conduct an audit of all federal contracts and subcontracts awarded to port trucking companies to ensure sure that they are in compliance with the prevailing wage and labor requirements of the McNamara - O'Hara Service Contract Act. Those companies that are not in compliance with our nation's labor laws should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law and required to pay back wages to their workers so that they receive all of the benefits they are legally entitled to receive.

Driving a truck for a living used to be a solid and secure middle class job, but today too many are working longer hours for extremely low wages. The revelations about the abuse of workers in the port trucking industry should outrage every American. It is time for us to end this exploitation.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bernard Sanders". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bernard" being more prominent than the last name "Sanders".

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator