

## **HB 19: COMMERCIAL VEHICLES: The Lone Star Chapter Opposes HB 19 (Leach) as filed**

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**HB 19 is an overreach by trucking companies to shield themselves from liability for the catastrophic injuries and deaths they cause on Texas highways.**

In 2019, Texas had more than 39,000 commercial vehicle crashes and 613 deaths. Texas leads the nation in large truck crashes and the trend keeps continuing upward. Now is not the time to make Texas roads less safe.

The bill excuses company liability in all but the most extreme circumstances. How does it make sense to give a company a “get out of jail free” card when the company admits the driver is an employee furthering its business at the time of the crash? It absolves companies from any independent compliance with federal or state safety regulations, such as for training and maintenance on their vehicles.

The bill severely limits an injured victim's access to crucial discovery to only 24 months of a company's prior bad conduct. This includes evidence that the company ignored falsified driver's log books, failed to maintain their vehicles, and did not provide adequate training, among other things. It also restricts the Texas Rules of Evidence and ties the hands of the judge in allowing the jury to see a bad company's prior history of safety violations.

The bill expands the terms used in commercial vehicle crashes and encompasses much more than tractor trailers or other traditional commercial vehicles. Under this bill, the only excluded vehicles are ones used primarily for household, family, and personal use.

The bill creates one-sided procedural barriers to commercial vehicle crash cases by limiting damaging evidence against the company and allowing delay tactics via mid-lawsuit appeals. It allows a company to slowly dole out compensation to victims and creates a perverse profit incentive for the victim's death.