



STATE OF FLORIDA

JAMES UTHMEIER ATTORNEY GENERAL

August 25, 2025

Secretary Sean P. Duffy
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

People are fleeing “sanctuary states,” where policymakers cater to criminals and illegal immigrants at the expense of law-abiding American citizens. But the crash that occurred last week in St. Lucie County shows that no one in America is safe from sanctuary states.

As you know, on the afternoon of August 12, a truck driver named Harjinder Singh attempted an illegal U-turn at an official access point on Florida’s Turnpike. The access point was conspicuously marked with a red no U-turn sign and the message “OFFICIAL USE ONLY.” Nevertheless, Singh’s erratic turn created a sudden barricade across the roadway. A minivan struck Singh’s trailer, instantly killing the minivan’s two passengers, a 54-year-old Miami resident and a 37-year-old Pompano Beach woman. The minivan’s driver, a 30-year-old man who resided in Florida City, died at the hospital.

Investigations launched by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) quickly revealed the following facts: Singh is an illegal immigrant, he does not speak English, and he cannot identify basic road symbols. Federal law prohibits states from issuing a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) to individuals who possess *any* of these traits, let alone all three.¹

California and Washington have treated these legal requirements as optional. In July 2023, Washington issued Singh a CDL, for which aliens are categorically ineligible. The following year, California issued Singh a Non-domiciled CDL. While individuals domiciled in a foreign country may qualify for a Non-domiciled CDL by obtaining an employment authorization document (EAD) or an approved I-94, 49 C.F.R. § 383.71(f)(1-2), states still must ensure that the applicant possesses English proficiency and the knowledge and skills necessary to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle. 49 C.F.R. § 383.71(f)(2)(i).

¹ 49 C.F.R. § 383.71(b)(9) (requiring the applicant to be a United States citizen or permanent resident or qualify for a Non-domiciled CDL); 49 C.F.R. § 391.11 (requiring the applicant to “read and speak the English language sufficiently to converse with the general public, to understand highway traffic signs and signals in the English language, to respond to official inquiries, and to make entries on reports and records”); 49 C.F.R. §§ 380.609, 383.71(a)(2), 391.11, 383.110 (requiring the applicant to demonstrate “the knowledge and skills necessary to operate a CMV safely”).

Under your leadership and at the direction of President Trump, the Department of Transportation has taken important steps toward reinstalling “commonsense rules of the road for America’s truck drivers.” Executive Order 14286, 90 FR 18759 (Apr. 28, 2025). Indeed, this May, the Department published guidance reaffirming that “a violation of the English language proficiency requirement results in the driver being placed out-of-service.” And the Department is currently conducting an audit to identify “unusual patterns or numbers or other irregularities” with respect to the issuance of Non-domiciled CDLs. *Id.* at §§ 3–4; FMCSA, MC-SEE-2025-0001 (May 20, 2025).

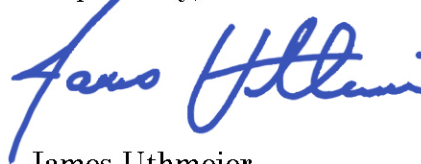
I write to request two additional actions. First, because the State of Washington issued Singh a *regular* CDL, I recommend that the pending audit be expanded to include both regular and Non-Domiciled CDLs.

Second, I request that you direct the FMCSA Administrator to decertify California’s and Washington’s CDL programs if the audit confirms a pattern or practice of deliberately, recklessly, or negligently issuing CDLs in violation of federal law. 49 C.F.R. 384.405. The administrative and financial consequences attending to decertification² would incentivize offending states to quickly bring themselves into compliance, making all American roadways safer.

Decertification for California and Washington under the present circumstances would also match the tone set by President Trump on his first day back in office. The American people elected the President with a mandate to secure the nation’s borders and apprehend illegal aliens who “present a threat to public safety,” “commit vile and heinous acts against innocent Americans,” or “abuse the generosity of the American people.” Executive Order 14159, 90 FR 8443 § 1 (Jan. 20, 2025). However, President Trump knew that liberal jurisdictions would do their best to impede immigration enforcement. So he directed his administration, “to the maximum extent possible under law,” to “evaluate and undertake any lawful actions to ensure that so-called ‘sanctuary’ jurisdictions, which seek to interfere with the lawful exercise of Federal law enforcement operations, do not receive access to Federal funds.” *Id.* at § 17. He further encouraged “any other lawful actions, criminal or civil,” necessary to deter inference with immigration enforcement. *Id.*

My office will ensure that Harjinder Singh—and any employer that illegally enabled him to cause violence on our roads—is held accountable to the fullest extent of Florida law. But avoidable tragedies like this will continue so long as sanctuary states are permitted to shirk their gatekeeping responsibilities with impunity. I invite you to remind California and Washington that there are consequences to breaking the law.

Respectfully,



James Uthmeier
ATTORNEY GENERAL

² See 49 C.F.R. 384.401 (requiring up to 4% percent of appropriated Federal-aid highway funds to be withheld from any state in its first year of noncompliance and up to 8% for each noncompliant year thereafter).