**Opinion Editorial on the Big Rig Overhaul Report**

388 Words

April 23, 2014

**“Big Rig Overhaul” Report Paints Misleading Picture of Independent Truckers**

Independent truckers, commonly referred to as “owner-operators”, have been an integral part of the trucking industry for over 75 years. Recently, a report critical of port owner-operators titled “The Big Rig Overhaul”, was released. As organizations which represent the California trucking and intermodal goods movement industries, the California Trucking Association and Harbor Trucking Association believe claims made in the “Big Rig Overhaul” paint a misleading picture of owner-operators.

For instance, contrary to what “The Big Rig Overhaul” would lead you to believe, nobody is forced to become an owner-operator. A 2012 U.S. Department of Transportation-sponsored survey found that 80% of these owner-operators said it would be “easy” or “very easy” to be hired as an employee driver for a trucking company and that 85% of these owner-operators had previously worked as drivers for other trucking companies. An analysis of data collected in a recent informal survey conducted by CTA found that top-earning owner-operators can earn near six figure incomes, even when accounting for business expenses and that the median days worked for companies varied between 200-250 days a year.

These drivers choose independence and to be in business for themselves.

We also recognize that allegations of blatant misclassification are a serious matter. CTA and HTA encourage all truckers doing business in California to comply with the law and have used their collective power to promote and advocate best practices throughout the industry.

Contrary to what “The Big Rig Overhaul” would lead you to believe, there is significant labor law oversight with no less than five state and federal entities overseeing the proper classification of employees and independent contractors. That’s why we have long offered continuous education to our members about compliance with California labor laws.

Still we must recognize the vital role owner-operators play, not only to our industry, but to the economy as well by providing a pathway to business ownership and upward mobility for the working class. Reform efforts should be centered on making all laws, not just labor laws, easier to understand, navigate and enforce objectively, not limiting nor restricting the right of these entrepreneurial independent truckers to establish, operate and grow their own businesses.

*Shawn Yadon is CEO of the California Trucking Association and Alex Cherin is the Executive Director for the Harbor Trucking Association. For more information, please contact Shery Yang at (916)373-3524.*

*#####*