

August 11, 2014

To the Honorable Members of the  
Illinois Senate, 98<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

In accordance with Article IV, Section 9(b), of the Illinois Constitution, I hereby veto Senate Bill 930 of the 98<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

Senate Bill 930 increases the maximum speed limit for trucks on interstate highways outside of an urban district from 55 to 60 miles per hour in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties.

Increased speeds on urban interstate highways for trucks will result in the increased loss of human life. Research has shown a correlation between increased speed limits and increased highway deaths. Higher travel speeds lengthen stopping distances, making it more difficult to react to an emergency in time. Speed also exacerbates the size and weight differences between large trucks and passenger vehicles, leading to more severe crashes. In 2013, more than 2,400 commercial vehicles, including trucks, received speeding citations on Illinois roads for driving anywhere up to 51 miles over posted speed limits. Illinois has lost more than 149 lives over the past four years from fatal speed-related crashes involving tractors with and without semi-trailers. National data shows that truck occupants comprise 15 percent of fatalities in large truck crashes, while passenger vehicles, motorcyclists, and pedestrians suffer the greater numbers of fatalities.

The deaths of dedicated public servants over the past 18 months, including Illinois State Trooper James Sauter, 28, of Vernon Hills and Illinois Toll Highway Worker Vincent Petrella, 39, of Chicago, illustrate the devastating impacts of trucks traveling at high speeds on interstate highways. On March 28, 2013, Trooper Sauter pulled over to the left shoulder of I-294 to help a motorist. A fast-approaching semi-truck collided with his squad car, bursting both vehicles into flames. More recently, on January 28, 2014, a semi-truck slammed into the vehicles of Illinois State Trooper Douglas Balder and Vincent Petrella as they attempted to assist a disabled motorist on the Reagan Memorial Tollway near Aurora. Trooper Balder suffered serious injuries and Mr. Petrella lost his life.

Most recently, on July 21, 2014, two fatal traffic accidents involving semi-trucks occurred within three miles of each other along I-55. In the first accident, the driver approached a construction zone at a high rate of speed, totaling the vehicles. Five innocent people lost their lives as a result of that accident: Ulrike Blopleh, 48, of Channahon; Vicky Palacios, 54, of Coal City; Kimberly Britton, 43, of Urbana; Timothy J. Osburn, 64, of Urbana; and little Piper Britton, 11, also of Urbana. Three additional victims were sent to local hospitals. Sixteen minutes after this fatal accident, a rear-end collision between two semi-trucks occurred in the southbound lanes at U.S. 5. One driver was injured, and the other, Deividas Mockus, 41, of Darien, lost his life.

No amount of fines, penalties or jail time can ever replace the lives of those whom we have lost to fatal traffic accidents on our interstate highways. The families, friends, co-workers and communities of these victims are constantly faced with the heartache of their absence.

I urge the General Assembly to stand with me in vetoing Senate Bill 930 in light of recent traffic fatalities involving trucks that were travelling at high speeds on our interstate highways. The convenience of increased speeds for truckers on roadways does not outweigh the safety risks to children, families, and our dedicated public servants.

Accordingly, I must return this bill without my approval. Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9 (b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 930, entitled "AN ACT concerning government.", with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN  
Governor