

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 7539

To direct the Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to conduct a study on chameleon carriers in the United States and plan, develop, and test an advanced automation tool to help enforcement personnel detect chameleon carrier applications under the registration process of the Department of Transportation, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Ms. HAGEMAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## A BILL

To direct the Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to conduct a study on chameleon carriers in the United States and plan, develop, and test an advanced automation tool to help enforcement personnel detect chameleon carrier applications under the registration process of the Department of Transportation, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Safety and Account-  
3 ability in Freight Enforcement Act” or the “SAFE Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. REPORT ON CHAMELEON CARRIERS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the  
6 date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General  
7 of the United States shall submit to Congress a report  
8 that contains the results of a study that examines chame-  
9 leon carriers on United States roadways.

10 (b) CONTENTS.—The report under subsection (a)  
11 shall include—

12 (1) the estimated number of chameleon carriers  
13 on United States roadways at any given time;

14 (2) the prevalence of chameleon carriers on  
15 United States roadways since the issuance of the re-  
16 port of the Government Accountability Office titled  
17 “Motor Carrier Safety: New Applicant Reviews  
18 Should Expand to Identify Freight Carriers Evading  
19 Detection”, issued March 22, 2012;

20 (3) the estimated number of fatalities caused by  
21 chameleon carriers since the report described in  
22 paragraph (2), including the number of fatalities  
23 broken down by State;

24 (4) the estimated number of serious bodily inju-  
25 ries caused by chameleon carriers since the report

1 described in paragraph (2), including the number of  
2 serious bodily injuries broken down by State;

3 (5) the estimated amount of property damage  
4 caused by chameleon carriers since the report de-  
5 scribed in paragraph (2);

6 (6) an identification and analysis of the meth-  
7 ods and techniques used by chameleon carriers to  
8 evade Federal enforcement, including how such  
9 methods and techniques have evolved over time;

10 (7) an identification and analysis of the existing  
11 monitoring and enforcement capabilities, along with  
12 any shortcomings, of the Department of Transpor-  
13 tation to detect and mitigate chameleon carrier ac-  
14 tivity, including—

15 (A) the registration processes for Depart-  
16 ment of Transportation numbers;

17 (B) the existing software capabilities of the  
18 Department of Transportation to detect chame-  
19 leon carrier applicants;

20 (C) any recommendations for improving  
21 data fields within the Motor Carrier Manage-  
22 ment Information System; and

23 (D) any existing penalties laid out under  
24 Federal statute and regulation for chameleon  
25 carriers;

1           (8) any other relevant priorities deemed nec-  
2           essary by the Department of Transportation; and

3           (9) any legislative recommendations to address  
4           chameleon carriers.

5           (c) COLLABORATION.—In carrying out the study  
6 under subsection (a), the Comptroller General may col-  
7 laborate with other Federal agencies, State and local gov-  
8 ernments, institutions of higher education, and private  
9 sector entities.

10 **SEC. 3. ADVANCED AUTOMATION TOOL.**

11          (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the  
12 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the  
13 Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration shall de-  
14 velop, test, and implement an advanced automation tool  
15 to help Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration reg-  
16 istration personnel detect chameleon carrier applications  
17 under the registration process for Department of Trans-  
18 portation numbers.

19          (b) COLLABORATION.—

20           (1) IN GENERAL.—In developing the tool under  
21 subsection (a), the Administrator may collaborate  
22 with other Federal agencies, State and local govern-  
23 ments, institutions of higher education, and the pri-  
24 vate sector as necessary to develop and test the ad-  
25 vanced automation tool.

1           (2) FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Administrator  
2           and any Federal agency the Administrator deter-  
3           mines is relevant shall enter into a memorandum of  
4           understanding to share information needed to imple-  
5           ment the requirements of the tool under subsection  
6           (c), which may include—

- 7                       (A) the Department of Treasury;
  - 8                       (B) the Department of Justice;
  - 9                       (C) the United States Postal Service;
  - 10                      (D) the Department of Homeland Security;
  - 11                      (E) the Department of Commerce;
  - 12                      (F) the Department of State; and
  - 13                      (G) relevant operating administrations
- 14           within the Department of Transportation.

15           (3) STATE AGENCIES.—The Administrator shall  
16           enter into a memorandum of understanding with any  
17           relevant State agency to share information needed to  
18           implement the requirements of the tool under sub-  
19           section (c).

20           (c) REQUIREMENTS.—The advanced automation tool  
21           developed under subsection (a) shall include—

- 22                      (1) the ability to detect chameleon carrier-like
- 23                      characteristics that support evidence of substantial
- 24                      continuity between entities, including—

1           (A) whether the new or affiliated entity  
2           was created for the purpose of evading statu-  
3           tory or regulatory requirements, a Federal  
4           Motor Carrier Safety Administration order, en-  
5           forcement action, or negative compliance his-  
6           tory;

7           (B) the previous entity's safety perform-  
8           ance history, including, among other things,  
9           safety violations and enforcement actions of the  
10          Secretary, if any;

11          (C) existing or inactive Department of  
12          Transportation numbers;

13          (D) consideration exchanged for assets  
14          purchased or transferred;

15          (E) dates of company creation and dissolu-  
16          tion or cessation of operations;

17          (F) commonality of ownership between the  
18          current and former company or between current  
19          companies;

20          (G) commonality of officers and manage-  
21          ment personnel;

22          (H) identity of physical or mailing address-  
23          es, telephone, fax numbers, or email addresses;

24          (I) identity of motor vehicle equipment;

1 (J) continuity of liability insurance policies  
2 or commonality of coverage under such policies;

3 (K) commonality of drivers and other em-  
4 ployees;

5 (L) continuation of carrier facilities and  
6 other physical assets;

7 (M) continuity or commonality of nature  
8 and scope of operations; and

9 (N) advertising, corporate name, or other  
10 acts through which the company holds itself out  
11 to the public;

12 (2) the ability to detect lapses in insurance cov-  
13 erage;

14 (3) the ability to compile evidence of the chame-  
15 leon carrier-like characteristics under paragraph (1)  
16 relevant to the determination of a registration appli-  
17 cation for Department of Transportation numbers;

18 (4) the ability to provide automated decision  
19 support relevant to the determination of any reg-  
20 istration application for Department of Transpor-  
21 tation numbers, while keeping responsibility for final  
22 determinations on employees of the Administration;

23 (5) the ability to automate information sharing  
24 between Federal agencies; and

1           (6) any other relevant priorities determined nec-  
2           essary by the Administrator.

3           (d) APPEALS FOR REDETERMINATION.—

4           (1) IN GENERAL.—In establishing the tool  
5           under this section, the Administrator shall develop  
6           an appeals process under which persons denied a  
7           Department of Transportation number on the basis  
8           of a flag by such tool may seek a review of the de-  
9           nial.

10          (2) NOTIFICATION.—In establishing the tool  
11          under this section, the Administrator shall provide  
12          for a process under which a person denied a Depart-  
13          ment of Transportation number as described in  
14          paragraph (1) shall receive a notification of such de-  
15          nial that includes the factors flagged by the tool and  
16          provides instructions to such person to correct the  
17          application for such number not later than 30 days  
18          after receipt of the notification.

19          (3) TIMING OF REDETERMINATION.—The ap-  
20          peals process developed under paragraph (1) shall  
21          provide for a redetermination on the amended appli-  
22          cation for a Department of Transportation number  
23          to take place not later than 30 days after the receipt  
24          of the information described in paragraph (2).

1       (e) BRIEFING.—Not later than 30 days after the date  
2 of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall brief the  
3 congressional committees of jurisdiction on the issue of  
4 chameleon carriers and any ongoing efforts or progress  
5 that the Administration has made to combat such issue  
6 or meet the objectives of this Act.

7       (f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act  
8 shall be construed to allow the final use of an automated  
9 decision by the tool created under this section for Depart-  
10 ment of Transportation number registration.

11       (g) DATA PRIVACY.—In developing the tool under  
12 subsection (a), the Administrator shall ensure that data  
13 used by such tool is not disclosed for a purpose not de-  
14 scribed in this section.

15       (h) AUDIT AND REPORT ON EFFECTIVENESS.—

16           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after  
17 the date of implementation of the tool established  
18 under this section, the inspector general of the De-  
19 partment of Transportation shall submit to Congress  
20 a report on the effectiveness of such tool.

21           (2) CONTENTS.—The report under paragraph

22       (1) shall contain—

23           (A) the results of an audit of the effective-  
24 ness of the tool established under this section;

1 (B) empirical data on outcomes of the use  
2 of the tool, including the number of flagged and  
3 rejected applications for Department of Trans-  
4 portation numbers, any reduction in severe  
5 crashes, and the number of errors and applica-  
6 tion redeterminations under subsection (d); and

7 (C) any recommendations to improve the  
8 effectiveness of the tool.

9 **SEC. 4. DEFINITION OF CHAMELEON CARRIER.**

10 In this Act, the term “chameleon carrier” means a  
11 motor carrier, intermodal equipment provider, broker, or  
12 freight forwarder, or an officer, employee, agent, author-  
13 ized representative, or other affiliated party of such an  
14 entity, that has, directly or indirectly, operated or at-  
15 tempted to operate a motor carrier, intermodal equipment  
16 provider, broker, or freight forwarder under a new identity  
17 or as an affiliated entity to—

18 (1) avoid complying with a Federal Motor Car-  
19 rier Safety Administration order;

20 (2) avoid complying with a statutory or regu-  
21 latory requirement;

22 (3) avoid paying a civil penalty;

23 (4) avoid responding to an enforcement action;

24 (5) avoid being linked with a negative compli-  
25 ance history;

1           (6) avoid or evade increased insurance pre-  
2           miums, policy cancellations, or underwriting restric-  
3           tions by obtaining or attempting to obtain insurance  
4           coverage under a new or materially different iden-  
5           tity, ownership structure, or corporate form;

6           (7) misrepresent ownership, control, manage-  
7           ment, or operational continuity to an insurer,  
8           broker, or underwriter for the purpose of securing  
9           lower insurance rates or favorable coverage terms; or

10          (8) reincorporate, re-register, or otherwise re-  
11          constitute a carrier entity following the denial, non-  
12          renewal, or cancellation of an insurance policy due  
13          to safety, claims, or compliance history.

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