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Chair, Election Laws

State of South Carolina

8/17/2015

Mr. James Burns
Chief of Staff to Governor Haley
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Burns:

I wanted to follow up on our phone conversation and give you a copy of the letter I received from Mr. Anthony Cachilli of Sage Technical Services. As I mentioned in our conversation, SAGE has some concerns about the CDL test site concerns.

As SAGE is one of the largest providers of CDL training in the country, I would suspect that their concerns should at least be heard. I believe they have 25 training facilities around the country so clearly they have experience and insight that could be valuable.

How could I best facilitate some dialogue between SAGE and the Governor's office and her cabinet about these concerns? If a meeting is needed I will make time to attend when it suits Mr. Cachilli and your schedule.

My cell is 803-467-6209. Please feel free to call at any time. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Rick Quinn
House District 69

CC: Rick Todd, South Carolina Trucking Association
Kevin Shwedo, Department of Motor Vehicles
Anthony Cachilli, SAGE Technical Services

SAGE *Technical Services*

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May 27, 2015

Subject: CDL Test Site Concerns

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is requesting state assistance to correct significant problems that are occurring at state Department of Motor Vehicles test sites for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) test.

SAGE Technical Services is a truck driver training school located in Lexington, South Carolina. SAGE is licensed as a CDL training school by the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles, and has operated successfully in South Carolina for about 10 years. The school is owned by The SAGE Corporation, which operates over 25 truck driving schools nationwide, since 1989. SAGE also provides specialized defensive driver training to fleets and companies operating trucks.

As a CDL training school, we are proud to serve our students who are seeking to start a new, middle-class career in the trucking industry, which is in need of thousands of truck drivers. Our students come from all over South Carolina, and we are honored that our students come to us to help make their future brighter. In addition to providing CDL training, SAGE offers very effective job placement assistance that puts people to work.

Professional Truck Driver Training
www.sageschools.com

However, due to recent events, we feel that it is our responsibility to bring to light important problems we have experienced within the past few months with the CDL test sites operated by the Department of Motor Vehicles. It is our understanding that these issues are not unique to the Columbia area, but are causing problems in other parts of the state as well.

This letter serves the purpose of bringing these important matters to your attention so that these issues will be addressed and corrected.

The following is a summary of the problems at the State Testing Facilities at the Department of Motor Vehicles:

1. Changes in CDL Test Procedures with No Advanced Notice

On April 6, 2015 our school found out that the CDL skills tests procedures were being changed. We had previously been told by DMV staff that those changes would not go into effect until June 1, 2015. DMV provided no official notice that the new skills procedures would start two months earlier than expected, and provided no guidance as to the nature of the changes. In addition, multiple CDL test sites were shut down. This action was effective immediately, costing our school several thousands of dollars to change our training approach and retrain students based on new test procedures (that we had little information on). This meant that students who had already paid for school and were about to test had to continue training. Students who expected to start work had to delay, costing them income. Some students had completed training and had to pay additional costs to "retrain" based on new test standards. This was very costly for SAGE and for students since DMV had not provided guidance on the specific test changes. Students were angry, school staff was frustrated, and the workforce agencies

who fund retraining for some students felt they spent workforce funds that produced little.

2. Lack of Training of State CDL Examiners

Although SAGE has been provided only minimal and informal guidance on test site changes, it appears that CDL Examiners who work for DMV have not been adequately trained or prepared to administer the CDL test. This is based on the information we have received from some DMV employees, from students who have been tested, and from SAGE staff that are familiar with testing procedures. Since the change over to the new skills test, our instructors have been teaching our students using the state CDL manual. However, it has come to our attention that the examiners are not following the manual. It appears that procedures are changing without notice. DMV approved schools are not being apprised of these changes. The result has been that students who have paid for and completed a DMV approved training program are failing to achieve their CDL and cannot go to work to earn a living. This is an unacceptable situation.

3. Inconsistent Administration of CDL Tests by State Examiners

There is significant inconsistency in the administration of the state CDL test by DMV Examiners. The testing of our students is inconsistent, such that where one student has passed a portion of their testing, another has failed on the same portion when doing the same thing. Different Examiners are using different standards for the CDL skills. This means that it is almost impossible to prepare for the CDL test since the school and staff never know what a student is going to be asked to do, what standards a particular Examiner will use, or what subjective interpretation will be enforced by an Examiner. When these instances are relayed back to us, we treat it with the upmost urgency and

try to adjust as we are trying to teach the correct procedure according to the CDL manual. But the lack of uniformity on what is supposed to be a standardized test, has had a huge cost. SAGE has to retrain students, change training procedures and attempt to adjust student preparation, even though we are never sure what standard will be applied by a particular Examiner.

4. Testing Statistics Demonstrate the Problems

We are not aware of exact data regarding the CDL test pass/fail rate at DMV test sites. However, it is our understanding that the fail rate is exceptionally high at some test sites. This indicates that the test is being administered in a manner that is inconsistent, not in accordance with DMV training school standards, and/or by CDL Examiners who are failing most people because they have not been trained and do not understand the test procedure.

The negative impact and the costs of the problems caused by the DMV test sites are considerable:

First, there are the costs to students. For example, veterans that are using their Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits are being delayed so that their benefits are running out, costing them money, keeping them from being employed. Students who are paying out of pocket are using limited savings to complete their training. Students that are receiving assistance through state workforce funding are also a concern since the funds are limited. In all these cases, students are trying to get a better future, but issues at the DMV test sites are preventing them from doing so.

Second, there is a tremendous cost to the economy and the trucking industry. Students who want to work, and are qualified to work, cannot do so because of the test sites are so poorly managed. Trucking companies who are ready to hire drivers today so they can haul freight are unable to do so as drivers retrain and test several times.

Finally, there is a very significant cost to SAGE, which is a small business contributing the future of South Carolinians who want to become truck drivers. SAGE employees are affected, as money that would otherwise go to better pay and benefits is wasted on unnecessary retraining and management of a broken CDL test system.

The issues that we are dealing with are worse than they have ever been before and we hope that by contacting the State Representatives, Local Representatives, and the Governor's Office that the issues will be addressed with the high priority they deserve. We would be happy to meet with stakeholders to help improve this situation. Should you have any questions regarding our complaint, please feel free to contact me at our school at (803) 520-8453. We would be happy to assist you in any way. Your attention to this matter is sincerely appreciated, as we take these issues and concerns very seriously. Thank you again and we look forward to working with you in the near future.

Respectfully,



Anthony Cachilli
School Director

Cc: The Honorable Nikki Haley
Rick Todd, South Carolina Trucking Association
Rick Quinn, South Carolina Representative for District 69
Kevin Shwedo, Department of Motor Vehicles Director
CDL Compliance