

Mr. KLUCZYNSKI. Do you want to put that in the record and hit the highpoints?

Mr. WEBB. It is a very brief statement and as you request, I will omit some portions of it.

Mr. KLUCZYNSKI. Without objection, the statement will be made a part of the record in its entirety, and you may proceed.

(The full statement of Mr. Webb follows:)

STATEMENT OF CHARLES A. WEBB, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MOTOR BUS OWNERS BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ROADS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS ON H.R. 14474, JUNE 6, 1968

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, my name is Charles A. Webb. I am President of the National Association of Motor Bus Owners, often referred to as NAMBO.

NAMBO is the national trade association for the intercity motor bus industry. Our member carriers provide more than three-fourths of the intercity motor bus transportation in the United States. In addition to its operator members, NAMBO has associate members engaged in the manufacture of motor buses, bus tires, bus seats, and other motor bus equipment, parts, and accessories. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee to present the view of the Association.

NAMBO favors enactment of H.R. 14474 to liberalize the vehicle size and weight limitations imposed by section 108(j) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (23 U.S.C 127). These restrictions, based on standards more than twenty years old, have been outmoded by improved highway construction and design. As a consequence, motor common carriers are not permitted to make the fruits of advanced technology available to their patrons.

The intercity bus industry is materially and adversely affected by the prohibition against use of the Interstate System of vehicles exceeding 96 inches in width. Continuance of existing weight limitations would not adversely affect the bus industry in the immediate future. Wider and safer buses can be manufactured without exceeding the axle and overall weight limitations prescribed by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. However, as a matter of principle, we favor the removal of any weight restriction which has been rendered obsolete by improved highway construction and design.

On November 17, 1932, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) recommended 96 inches as the maximum width of motor vehicles.¹ That was more than 35 years ago. At that time, more than half of the nation's primary rural highways had traffic lanes less than ten feet wide. The general condition of our highways at that time was reflected in AASHO's recommendations of 45 miles per hour as the maximum speed of buses and trucks and 16,000 pounds as the maximum single-axle weight. On April 1, 1946, AASHO again recommended 96 inches as the maximum width of motor vehicles but recognized that "certain conditions inherent in the design of vehicles suggest the desirability of 102 inches as a standard of maximum width."²

Between 1932 and passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, the percentage of primary rural highways with lanes less than ten feet wide declined from approximately 60 percent to 26 percent. In the bill which became the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, the House of Representatives imposed no limitation on the maximum permissible width of vehicles authorized to use the Interstate System. The Senate amendment to the House bill included a maximum width limitation of 96 inches which was adopted by the conference committee.³

Obviously, the maximum width limitation was not imposed to protect the Federal government's investment in 90 percent of the cost of the Interstate System. Since no bus manufacturer had plans in 1956 to produce intercity buses exceeding 96 inches in width, the limitation was not opposed. In sum, the legislative history of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 shows that the Congress merely adopted AASHO's 1946 recommendations on vehicle width and

¹ *Policy Concerning Maximum Dimensions, Weights and Speeds of Motor Vehicles To Be Operated Over the Highways of the United States*, American Association of State Highway Officials, page 33, Appendix I (1946).

² *Id.* at 5.

³ H. Rept. 2436, 84th Cong., 2d Sess., p. 32.