

ATA Legislative Report

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president in 1932 and the subsequent passage by Congress of the National Recovery Administration in his first 100 days of office were highlights of a historical moment for trucking industry executives and employees. Congress passed legislation that required each major business industry to submit and comply with a Code of Fair Competition. Industry executives came together to comply with the new congressional action, and as a result American Trucking Associations was created.

Motor Carrier Act of 1980 and the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982. All of these laws changed trucking's way of doing business.

In 1934, delegates to the first ATA Convention voted for self-regulation. However, the Motor Carrier Act of 1935 gave the Interstate Commerce Commission authority to regulate the trucking industry by granting operating permits, approving trucking routes, and setting tariff rates. ATA played a significant role in shaping the original ICC Safety Regulations, which took effect in 1939 and were the forerunner of today's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

Two decades later, Congress passed The Interstate Highway Act of 1956, which established and funded the Interstate Highway System and set weight limits on trucks. The picture of trucking began to change. Fifty years later, Congress is debating the future of the Interstate Highway System and how to continue to fund it, as well as truck size and weight issues.

In 1962, President John Kennedy became the first president to send a transportation message to Congress recommending a reduction in the regulation of surface freight transportation. President Gerald Ford followed 13 years later and President Jimmy Carter spurred Congress to enact the Motor Carrier Act of 1980. This act changed how trucking companies operated. The new law deregulated the trucking industry — allowing for competition among all motor carriers.

Under the Reagan administration, Congress passed the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982. The STAA addressed concerns about the surface

transportation infrastructure, requiring states to permit trucks of 80,000 pounds gross vehicle weight to operate on the interstates and designated primary roads. The act added

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Neil J. Curry, founder of Cal Cartage Co., Inc., President Kennedy, Vice President Johnson and Congressman Michael Kerwin met in the early 1960s.

Congress has been passing legislation that affects the industry ever since. Among the most defining congressional actions in the past 75 years are The Motor Carrier Act of 1935, The Interstate Highway Act of 1956, The

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a nickel to the gas tax (the first such increase since 1961) which then was dedicated to restoring interstate highways and bridges.

Congress abolished the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1995 and created the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration in 1999.

Advocating on behalf of the trucking industry, ATA has been a force on Capitol Hill through the years. It has worked with both parties to ensure that the trucking industry is treated fairly and that Congress does not enact senseless regulations.

ATA has testified on a host of transportation issues, including taxes, the environment and labor and, most recently, energy. Next up is the 2009 Highway Reauthorization legislation, which Congress already has begun debating.

ATA's grass-roots network has been an integral part of

the association's overall advocacy efforts, as well as Truck PAC, ATA's political action committee.

The trucking industry has realized its voice needs to be heard. Over the past two decades, numerous state associations and their member companies have traveled to the nation's capital to "Call on Washington" and discuss trucking's agenda with their members of Congress.

Since the late 1960s, ATA has had an office on Capitol Hill for its legislative staff, at first renting space in the old Congressional Hotel. In 1974, ATA purchased three old town houses at 430 First Street, SE, and built the William A. Bresnahan Building in 1974. Through the years, the ATA building has proved to be as powerful as the association itself. Every member of Congress, whether it's their first day on Capitol Hill or third decade serving Congress, knows where the "Truckers" building is. Last year, the building began an extensive renovation and is expected to be completed in 2009. ■



Rep. Harold T. "Bizz" Johnson, (D-Calif.) left, presents an American Flag — previously flown over the Capitol — to William A. Bresnahan, president of American Trucking Associations, at the entrance of ATA's Capitol Hill Office Building in 1974.