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Truck Weight Levels

MO-8 & IN-4 Congressional Districts



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Executive Summary:

Constituents in Missouri's 8th congressional district (MO-8) and Indiana's 4th congressional district (IN-4) overwhelmingly disapprove increasing truck weight limits from the current 80,000 pounds to 97,000 pounds. In MO-8, support to raise the weight limit is 17 percent, while in IN-4, support is an almost identical 15 percent; just under 3-in-4 constituents in both districts (74 percent each) oppose increasing truck weight limits. The data from 1,000 combined interviews clearly indicates that in two of America's rural, conservative districts, heavier trucks are not wanted on highways. Demographic highlights include:

- Women are more likely than men to oppose increased truck weight limits, although in both districts support among men only registers 20 percent in MO-8 and 18 percent in IN-4; this compares to a disapproval of 75 and 72 percent respectively.
- Older residents are more likely to oppose increased truck weight limits, with support in the single digits for both districts. Younger residents are slightly more likely to support an increase in the weight limit, but still register a more than 3-to-1 ratio opposed to a weight limit increase.
- There is little significant difference between the two political parties when it comes to a truck weight limit increase, with 71 percent of Republicans in MO-8 and 73 percent of Republicans in IN-4 disapprove of increasing truck weight limits. This compares to 75 and 80 percent respectively among district self-identified Democrats.

The Missouri survey (the first survey) only tested the approval of increasing the weight limit, while the more recent Indiana survey tested two additional questions to measure whether each sides arguments (only one each was posed in this survey due to time limitations) are convincing.

While the survey did not test the full range of arguments for increasing the truck weight limit, residents in IN-4 are not convinced of the idea that heavier trucks will make safer roads since freight will be consolidated to fewer trucks. Consider:

- Overall in the district, only 12 percent found the idea of heavier trucks making roads safer a convincing argument, while a clear 81 percent are not convinced.
- Younger residents are the most likely of all subgroups to find the argument convincing, but still this group only clock in with an 18 percent convincing rating, while 76 percent are not convinced. Age is the biggest demographic factor on whether one finds the argument convincing or not.
- Gender had little/no effect on whether the argument is convincing, with only 13 percent of men and 11 percent of women convinced of the safer road argument; both genders register 81 percent not convincing.
- Self-identified Democrats and Republicans both agree that the safer road argument is not a convincing reason to increase the truck weight limit, with 86 percent of Democrats and 80 of Republicans of the same opinion.

On the other hand, the final question in the survey tested the argument that heavier trucks will create even more wear-and-tear on infrastructure, and that current freight trucks pay only 80 percent of the damage they do to roads and bridges. Overall, two-thirds of IN-4 residents find this a convincing reason to prohibit heavier trucks on roads. Additional demographic data shows:

- Gender is the biggest factor on whether one finds the argument convincing or not, with women registering 72 to 22 percent convincing to not convincing rating, while men show a 62 to 32 percent rating. This is a 20 percentage point gap (a gender gap) between the two genders.
- Age is not a factor on whether one finds the argument convincing, with 67 percent of young residents, 66 percent of middle age residents and 69 percent of senior residents finding the argument convincing.
- With regard to political parties, there is no significant difference of opinion, with a 46 percentage point gap for convincing/not convincing for Democrats and 39 percentage point gap for Republicans (71/25 and 66/27 percent respectively).

Based on data from two Middle America congressional districts -- solid Republican districts -- the numbers indicate that there is little support for heavier trucks on America's highways. And additional 'education' by the trucking industry is likely to fall flat, based on the resounding numbers for one key argument on why to increase truck weight limits. On the other hand, a key argument for keeping truck weight limits at the current levels is found to be a very convincing reason.

In conclusion, while we cannot assign the strong results found to all districts around the country, there is nothing in the data that indicates the potential of finding different results from either neighboring districts or districts halfway across the country.

Survey Methodology:

Interviews: March 18th-19th 500 respondents in the 8th District of Missouri
 April 15th-18th 500 respondents in the 4th District of Indiana

Margin of Error: ± 4.4 percentage points for both the Missouri and Indiana Surveys

Sample: Stratified Sample. Random digit numbers for the two congressional districts provided by Survey Sample International (SSI) of Fairfield, CT. SSI provided Stone Research with 4,000 residential random phone numbers for each district from a pool of listed and unlisted numbers in the boundary area, which then were stratified into distinct geographical regions to ensure that all section of each district were thoroughly represented in the survey.

Survey Sponsor: SMART Transportation Division, National Legislative Office

Project Management: Project management and data analysis was completed by Dean Mitchell of DFM Research in St. Paul, Minnesota. In addition to 22 years of political experience, including working with polling data, Dean is a graduate of the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and has completed course work in survey techniques and statistics as part of his Master in Public Policy (MPP) degree. Dean has worked on a variety of rail projects at the state level since 1997 and the national level since 2010.

Reading the Survey Results:

When reading the results, it should be noted that the survey have been weighted to reflect the current demographics of each district. Weighting is a standard technique in survey analysis to best reflect the total population being surveyed without contacting all residents.

In addition, the reader should take into account the margin of error (MoE) when analyzing the data. To put in practice, if a particular question result shows 50 percent, with the MoE factor, the true response range (95 percent of the time) would be from 45 percent to 55 percent (numbers rounded). The MoE decreases the closer any particular result is to either zero percent or 100 percent; a question result of 20 percent has a MoE of ± 4.3 percentage points. The MoE for crosstabs range from six to nine percentage points.

The attached report provides the topline number for each selected question, followed by key demographic cross tabulation (crosstabs) results. The results are one question per page. Crosstabs results are for key demographic groups: based on gender, age, district geographic region, and political self-identification.

In questions where (VOL) is before the answer category, this means the respondent volunteered that response (it was not read to the respondent). Due to rounding, numbers in the topline and crosstabs may not equal 100 percent.

Missouri 8th District Survey

Interviews: 500 respondents by live caller from Stone Research Services of Indianapolis, Indiana.
Margin of Error: ± 4.4 percentage points with a 95 percent confidence interval.
Interview Dates: March 18-19, 2013.
Sample: Stratified Random Sample. Random digit numbers provided by Survey Sample International (SSI) of Fairfield, CT. SSI provided Stone Research with 4,000 residential random phone numbers from a pool of listed and unlisted numbers in the boundary area, which then were stratified into three distinct Missouri 8th Congressional geographical regions.
Survey Sponsor: SMART Transportation Division, Missouri State Legislative Board

Q16: Some in Congress want to increase the maximum allowable truck weight on our nation’s highways from 80,000 to 97,000 pounds. Based on what you know, do you approve or disapprove of increasing the maximum truck weight?

Approve **17%**
 Disapprove **74**
 (VOL) Unsure **8**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Men	20%	75	5
Women	15	74	11

<u>Age</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
18-44	22	69	9
45-64	17	76	7
Over 65	9	83	8

<u>Region</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
St. Louis Exurbs/Northeast	19	71	10
Bootheel/Southeast	13	79	8
Central/West	19	73	8

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Democrat	14	75	11
Independent	17	78	4
Republican	19	71	10

Indiana 4th District Survey

Interviews: 500 respondents by live caller from Stone Research Services of Indianapolis, Indiana.
Margin of Error: ± 4.4 percentage points with a 95 percent confidence interval.
Interview Dates: April 15-18, 2013.
Sample: Stratified Random Sample. Random digit numbers provided by Survey Sample International (SSI) of Fairfield, CT. SSI provided Stone Research with 4,000 residential random phone numbers from a pool of listed and unlisted numbers in the boundary area, which then were stratified into four distinct Indiana 4th Congressional geographical regions.
Survey Sponsor: SMART Transportation Division, Indiana State Legislative Board

Q17: Changing themes a little before we finish. Some in Congress want to increase the maximum allowable truck weight on our nation’s highways from 80,000 to 97,000 pounds. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove increasing the maximum truck weight?

Approve **15%**
 Disapprove **74**
 (VOL) Unsure **11**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Men	18%	72	10
Women	12	76	12

<u>Age</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
18-44	20	67	13
45-64	12	81	8
Over 65	6	81	13

<u>Region</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Amtrak Cities	15	74	11
Exurbs and South District	17	69	14
East District	10	82	8
West and North District	16	75	9

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Democrat	11	80	9
Independent	17	72	11
Republican	15	73	12

Q18: Some say that heavier truck weights will make roads safer, since trucking companies will be able to consolidate freight onto fewer trucks. Do you find this a convincing or not convincing reason to allow heavier trucks on roads?

Convincing Reason **12%**
 Not Convincing Reason..... **81**
 (VOL) Unsure **7**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Men	13%	81	5
Women	11	81	8

<u>Age</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
18-44	18	76	6
45-64	7	87	6
Over 65	6	82	12

<u>Region</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Amtrak Cities	8	79	12
Exurbs and South District	13	81	5
East District	12	80	7
West and North District	15	82	3

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Democrat	10	86	4
Independent	15	77	7
Republican	12	80	8

Q19: Others say that truck weights should stay where they are, since current freight trucks pay only about 80 percent of the wear-and-tear damage they do to roads and bridges through fees and fuel taxes. If heavier trucks are allowed on the roads, the wear and tear on infrastructure will be even more. Do you find this a convincing or not convincing reason to prohibit heavier trucks on roads?

Convincing Reason **67%**
 Not Convincing Reason..... **27**
 (VOL) Unsure **7**

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Men	62%	32	7
Women	72	22	7

<u>Age</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
18-44	67	27	7
45-64	66	29	6
Over 65	69	22	9

<u>Region</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Amtrak Cities	64	27	10
Exurbs and South District	68	26	7
East District	67	25	9
West and North District	67	33	1

<u>Party Identification</u>	<u>Convincing</u>	<u>Not</u>	<u>Unsure</u>
Democrat	71	25	4
Independent	65	27	8
Republican	66	27	8