



June 8, 2026

Honorable Tim Briggs
Chairman
Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee
302 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2149

Honorable Rob W. Kauffman
Minority Chairman
Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee
313 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2089

RE: Opposition to House Bill 1913

Dear Chairman Briggs, Chairman Kauffman, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association (PMTA), I write to respectfully express our opposition to House Bill 1913.

PMTA represents more than 1,100 trucking companies and industry partners across the Commonwealth. Pennsylvania's trucking industry includes over 72,000 trucking companies and supports almost 372,000 jobs. Trucks deliver the food, medicine, fuel, consumer goods, and raw materials that Pennsylvania families and businesses depend on every day.

Our concern with HB 1913 is not about limiting access to the courts or preventing injured individuals from receiving fair compensation. Rather, it is about preserving a civil justice system in which damage awards are based on evidence and the independent judgment of jurors rather than psychological tactics that can distort the deliberative process.

For nearly a century, Pennsylvania courts have recognized the risks associated with "anchoring" arguments in which attorneys suggest arbitrary lump-sum amounts or mathematical formulas to assign a value to pain and suffering damages. Pennsylvania's longstanding approach has protected the integrity of the jury system by allowing jurors to determine appropriate compensation based on the facts presented at trial rather than numbers selected by counsel.

HB 1913 would reverse that approach and expressly permit attorneys to suggest specific dollar amounts or formulas for noneconomic damages. Research has consistently shown that anchoring can significantly influence decision-making by providing jurors with a reference point that may have little connection to the evidence presented in court. The concern is particularly acute with noneconomic damages, where there is no objective method for assigning a monetary value to pain and suffering. When jurors are presented with arbitrary figures or formulas, those numbers can become the benchmark against which all subsequent deliberations are measured, regardless of whether they are supported by the evidence.

These concerns are especially important for Pennsylvania's trucking industry. Insurance cost and availability consistently rank among the industry's most pressing challenges. At the same time, trucking companies continue to face a prolonged freight recession, high operating costs, workforce challenges, and intense competition.

While trucking companies continue to invest heavily in safety, liability costs have grown substantially faster than underlying crash rates, placing increasing pressure on insurance affordability and business operating costs. This widening gap suggests that the rising cost of claims and litigation is becoming an increasingly significant factor in the cost of doing business.

The implications extend well beyond the trucking industry. Every additional cost imposed on freight transportation ultimately moves through the supply chain and affects the price of goods delivered to Pennsylvania consumers. Recent research examining commercial automobile litigation costs found that these costs contribute to higher consumer prices and could account for as much as 15 percent of future food-at-home inflation. The study further concluded that reducing litigation costs would provide the greatest benefit to lower-income households, which spend a larger share of their income on essential goods such as food.¹

At a time when policymakers are appropriately focused on affordability, inflation, and the cost of living, Pennsylvania should be cautious about adopting policies that may contribute to higher litigation costs and greater uncertainty in the civil justice system. The costs associated with excessive litigation do not remain confined to the courtroom. They are reflected in higher insurance premiums, increased transportation costs, higher prices for consumer goods, and ultimately fewer resources available for business investment, job creation, and economic growth.

Pennsylvania already faces challenges associated with rising litigation costs and large verdicts. HB 1913 would overturn longstanding legal precedent that has helped ensure damage awards are determined by the evidence presented at trial rather than by arbitrary figures suggested by counsel. PMTA believes the Commonwealth should preserve these safeguards and maintain a balanced legal environment that fairly compensates injured parties while protecting the integrity of the jury process.

We respectfully urge the Committee to reject House Bill 1913 and maintain Pennsylvania's longstanding approach to ensuring that damage awards are determined by the evidence, the law, and the sound judgment of jurors.

Thank you for your consideration of PMTA's views. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,



Rebecca K. Oyler
President & CEO

Cc: Members of the Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee

¹ <https://institutelegalreform.com/research/tort-costs-in-america-commercial-auto-an-analysis-of-the-economic-impact-of-commercial-automobile-tort-costs/>