

Statement of Marcus Coleman
Sanctuary Policies, Tragic Consequences
Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement
House Judiciary Committee
September 1, 2026

Chairman Jordan, Members of the Committee, and distinguished guests:

My name is Marcus Coleman. I am a professional truck driver. But today, I am here for one reason. I am Dalilah's dad.

My daughter was five years old when our lives changed forever. Before the crash, Dalilah was supposed to be thinking about kindergarten, swimming, gymnastics, playing with her brothers and sisters, and what she wanted to be when she grew up. Instead, she entered a world of hospitals, surgeries, rehabilitation, feeding tubes, neurological injuries, and therapy.

She suffered a catastrophic traumatic brain injury. And more than two years later, she is still paying the price.

On August 3rd, Dalilah underwent yet another surgery on her skull because of the injuries she suffered in that crash. Thankfully, the surgery was successful. But think about what I just said. More than two years later, my little girl is still being wheeled into operating rooms because of something that happened when she was five years old.

That is what government failure looks like after the cameras leave. It follows a child home. It follows her into therapy. It follows her into operating rooms. It follows her brothers and sisters. It follows her mother. And it follows her father. Every single day.

When Washington talks about illegal immigration, immigration status, commercial driver's licenses, and enforcement failures, eventually people become numbers. Dalilah is not a number. My daughter is what those statistics look like when

government safeguards fail. And my family is what those failures look like two years later.

I also want to address something directly. Dalilah's mother, Ileana, is an immigrant. My family is made up of immigrants. We are not racist. We are not anti-immigrant. And I will not allow legitimate concerns about illegal immigration and public safety to be dismissed as hatred toward immigrants.

This is not about where someone was born. It is not about skin color. It is not about an accent. It is about whether our laws mean something.

There are millions of immigrants who came to this country, followed the process, obeyed our laws, worked hard, raised families, and contributed to America. They deserve our respect. And frankly, refusing to enforce our immigration laws is an insult to every immigrant who sacrificed to follow them.

My daughter does not care what country the truck driver beside us came from. Neither do I. I care whether that person is legally authorized to be here and to work here. I care whether that person is properly licensed. I care whether that person was properly trained. I care whether that person can understand our road signs, communicate with law enforcement, and safely operate an 80,000-pound commercial vehicle. And above everything else, I care whether that person can safely share the highway with my children.

That is not racism. That is responsibility.

I am a commercial driver myself. I know what that CDL represents. Professional drivers undergo medical examinations. We comply with hours-of-service regulations. We undergo drug and alcohol testing. We maintain our licenses. We submit to inspections. We sacrifice birthdays, holidays, and time with our families because America depends on professional truck drivers to keep this country moving.

So I have a very simple question: Why should someone who follows every rule be expected to share the highway with someone our government failed to properly verify?

Before someone is entrusted with an 80,000-pound commercial vehicle, government should know who that person is. Government should know whether that person is legally eligible to work and operate here. Government should know whether the CDL was lawfully issued. Government should know whether the driver received legitimate training. And government should know whether that driver can safely communicate and understand the laws governing that vehicle.

Those are not extreme demands. They are the bare minimum.

And this is where DHS, DOT, Congress, and the states need to stop pointing fingers at one another. Immigration enforcement and commercial-driver enforcement intersect on America's highways.

The databases need to communicate. The agencies need to communicate. Immigration status needs to be verified. Work authorization needs to be verified. Identity needs to be verified. Commercial-driver eligibility needs to be verified.

And when someone is not legally eligible or qualified to operate a commercial vehicle in this country, our government needs to discover that before the truck starts moving. Not after the crash.

Because enforcement after the crash is not prevention. An investigation after the crash is not prevention. A congressional hearing after the crash is not prevention. And condolences after a child has been catastrophically injured are certainly not prevention.

Prevention means doing your job before another family pays the price.

People in this room may disagree about immigration. You may disagree about Republicans and Democrats. You may disagree about which administration, agency, state, governor, or official deserves blame.

I am not asking you to agree on politics. I am asking you to agree on something much simpler:

A five-year-old child should never pay the price because adults in government refused to enforce the laws already on the books.

Dalilah has already paid that price. My wife has paid it. My children have paid it. And I have paid it. We continue paying it every day.

I cannot undo what happened to Dalilah. Congress cannot give my daughter those years back. DHS cannot erase her injuries. DOT cannot undo her surgeries. But every person sitting here has the ability to decide whether another family will someday be sitting where I am.

So please—do not give us another report. Do not give us another study. Do not give us another excuse about jurisdiction. And do not wait until another child becomes evidence that the system failed.

Enforce the law. Verify who is operating commercial vehicles in this country. Hold states and agencies accountable when they fail. Protect the professional drivers who follow the rules. Protect the immigrants who came here and followed the rules. And protect the families who have no choice but to trust that the government did its job before an 80,000-pound truck comes down the highway beside them.

Dalilah was five years old. She never asked to become part of America's immigration debate. She never asked to become part of America's trucking debate. And she certainly never asked to become the reason her father had to sit before Congress.

But she is.

And until this system changes, I will continue using my voice for the little girl whose life was forever changed by its failures.

Do not wait for another Dalilah.

We already have one.