

Reason Foundation Review of Tennessee Senate Bill 310 (2025)



Automated vehicle technology could greatly improve road safety and efficiency. Unfortunately, Senate Bill 310 would move Tennessee in the wrong direction.

1. The Only State to Outlaw Driverless Commercial Vehicles?

- ❖ SB 310 would prohibit operation on public roads of an automated vehicle used to transport property in interstate commerce or passengers for compensation—including trucks and taxis—unless a human operator is seated within the vehicle.
- ❖ This would deter the introduction of safer automated trucks and robotaxis by preventing the realization of their business benefits.
- ❖ If enacted, Tennessee would become the *only state* in the country to enshrine in statute a blanket, preemptive ban on driverless motor vehicles carrying goods and passengers for compensation.

2. Embraces an Approach Rejected in California for Being Anti-Business

- ❖ SB 310 reflects the legislative approach first proposed in California in 2023 (Assembly Bill 316) aimed at banning driverless trucks.
- ❖ In 2023 and 2024 (Assembly Bill 2286), California Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed the proposed ban on driverless trucks as being unnecessary and harmful to the state's reputation for innovation.
- ❖ SB 310 would also ban driverless robotaxis, which even California did not consider.

3. Driverless Vehicles Are Already Making Roads Safer

- ❖ Automated driving systems cannot drive drunk, drugged, drowsy, or distracted and are programmed to follow the rules of the road. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, human error is a critical factor in more than 90% of vehicle crashes.
- ❖ According to the latest research by leading reinsurance company Swiss Re and autonomous vehicle developer Waymo, Waymo's automated driving system is already far safer when compared to a typical human driver—with an 88% reduction in property damage claims and a 92% reduction in bodily injury claims.
- ❖ Tennessee's urban highways are the most dangerous in the region. According to Reason Foundation's *27th Annual Highway Report*, Tennessee ranks #47 nationally in its urban highway fatality rate.

4. No New Authorities Are Needed to Prohibit Unsafe Driverless Vehicles

- ❖ Tennessee law already prohibits the operation of driverless vehicles that fail to follow the rules of the road, lack required equipment, or do not perform fail-safe procedures safely. Violation of any of these provisions is a Class A misdemeanor. (TN Code § 55-30-107).

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