

**ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD**  
1ST DISTRICT, ARKANSAS

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*Congress of the United States*  
*House of Representatives*  
2422 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

☐ WASHINGTON, DC  
2422 RAYBURN HOB  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
PHONE: 202-225-4076

☐ JONESBORO  
2400 EAST HIGHLAND  
SUITE 300  
JONESBORO, AR 72401  
PHONE: 870-203-0540  
FAX: 870-203-0542

☐ CABOT  
112 SOUTH FIRST STREET  
CABOT, AR 72023  
PHONE: 501-843-3043  
FAX: 501-843-4955

☐ MOUNTAIN HOME  
1001 HIGHWAY 62 EAST  
SUITE 9  
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72653  
PHONE: 870-424-2075  
FAX: 870-424-3149

☐ DUMAS  
101 E. WATERMAN STREET  
DUMAS, AR 71639  
PHONE: 870-377-5571

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May 3, 2024

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the Commercial Driver Training Truck Pad Expansion project in Fiscal Year 2025. The entity to receive funding for this project is Arkansas State University Mid-South, located at 2000 West Broadway, West Memphis, Arkansas 72301. The funding will be used to expand the school's current Commercial Driver Training Program. The training facility, which currently has a 32,000 square foot truck pad, will use the funds to expand to a 45,000 square foot truck pad. Currently, the limited size of the facility has capped the program's enrollment and there are more than 100 students on the wait list for future classes.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it will allow the university to educate more Americans in commercial truck driving. Nationally, we have an estimated shortage of nearly 80,000 truck drivers, and our workforce needs are only going to grow. Over the next decade, it's estimated that we will need to recruit and train 1.2 million new drivers to meet the growing demands of truck-based freight movement coupled with the pending retirements of current drivers. West Memphis, Arkansas, is at the intersection of Interstates 40 and 55, proximate to the Port of West Memphis, the Port of Memphis, the Burlington Northern and Union Pacific intermodal yards, and the FedEx worldwide hub in Memphis. With its advantageous location to multiple logistics hubs that all require a well-educated, commercial driver workforce, Arkansas State University Mid-South is in a unique position to help America with our truck driver shortage.

This project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized in 42 U.S.C. 5305(a)(4).

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford  
Member of Congress