

**Prepared Remarks by Anne S. Ferro  
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Women in Buses Roundtable  
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***Introduction***

Thank you, Camilla [Camilla Morris, Chair of the Women in Buses Committee] and Vicki [ABA's Vicki Osman] for inviting me to join you.

As the inaugural chair of Women in Buses, Camilla is a true champion for women in the bus industry. At the operations level, I applaud the empathy Camilla has shown for her employees AND her ability to make tough decisions in her day job, as Director of Sales for Oneonta Bus Lines.

Outside of the public transit industry, women aren't very dominant in the bus transportation field. That is why it is especially important for me to talk to you about how women can assume leadership roles, and how women safety leaders benefit the bus industry.

No matter the position or title, when we have the opportunity and seize it, women can achieve anything.

***Women at DOT/FMCSA***

I am proud to be part of an Administration that's doing so much to put the rights of women at the top of our national agenda.

One of President Obama's very first official acts was to sign the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act – seeking an end to pay discrimination for women. And early on, he established the White House Council on Women and Girls.

At DOT, we're doing our part. We're working to highlight opportunities to bring a new generation of women into the transportation industry as engineers and diesel mechanics; as airline pilots and maritime ship pilots; as highway designers truck and bus drivers and company owners. And we need them in operating roles and also represented in the board room.

We need to keep up the call for women to seek new and better opportunities in transportation.

At FMCSA, many of my top positions are filled by women. Annie Collins is our Associate Administrator for Field Operations; Kelly Leone is our Associate Administrator for Research and Technology; Pamela Reed is our Chief Financial Officer, and Loretta Bitner is our Division Chief for Commercial Passenger Carrier Safety. These women are among many talented and experienced individuals who happen to be women and you will find them within the top ranks at FMCSA.

By having a greater presence in the workforce, women can solve any challenges and be positive role models for more women to join us.

### ***Women in Buses***

Every year, motorcoaches carry three-quarters of a billion passengers around the country. Motorcoaches help people of all ages get to their destinations.

Women belong in operations. And they belong in roles where they can make the bus industry *safer, stronger, and smarter*.

Often I get questions about what it takes for a woman to be successful in the transportation industry. There's no clear-cut answer.

In my experience, success has everything to do with hard work and the decisions we make in our careers and in our lives. And it also has a little to do with good timing and making yourself available to new opportunities.

Being a member of the Women in Buses Committee is an excellent way to help prepare you for bigger successes. By participating in a volunteer organization that supports women, you can practice the skills you are seeking in your career.

### ***Women as Safety Leaders***

For bus transportation, success is also directly linked to safety performance.

Safety on the road has everything to do with the decisions we make when we're behind the wheel or when we place others behind the wheel. Those who put safety *first* are poised to be successful.

We need to think about safety not as it applies to one task or one job but as an overarching integrated culture. Safety in the bus industry means all of us affect overall safety performance.

My role as FMCSA Administrator is to ensure that we're doing all we can to make our roadways safer – for motor carriers, commercial motor vehicle drivers and everyone they share the road with.

The most important thing FMCSA can do for this industry is to do our job – and to do it well, listening to key users and bringing in new voices. Briefly, let me give you an idea of where we are with our safety agenda:

### ***FMCSA Safety Agenda***

Because there is no higher priority than safety, we have taken action to crack down on unsafe drivers and companies by carrying out our Motorcoach Safety Initiative. We reach out to the public through our webpage, SaferBus App and other consumer education tools to raise the public’s awareness about thinking...“safety, every trip, every time.”

On a related front, we are moving forward with a new rule on Electronic Logging Devices to improve hours of service compliance and meet the requirements placed on DOT by Congress.

Safe roadways depend on responsible employers and drivers that comply with the Agency’s drug and alcohol testing requirements.

FMCSA is completing a rulemaking that proposes a Drug & Alcohol Testing Clearinghouse that would record positive drivers' test results for controlled substances and alcohol and other violations of the testing regulations.

These government initiatives complement the fine examples of many safe bus companies and what they do to prevent crashes and save lives.

### ***Help Other Women***

I would like to leave you with a few things to consider.

Network with other women – open the door for other women.

Learn all that you can.

Align yourself with those who will make a positive impact on your career – watch, listen, and learn. Ask questions.

Find out the how and more importantly, the why. You are working with living, breathing, walking, talking examples of how to get it done.

There's nothing quite like the opportunity to learn from the person who actually wrote the book you're trying to read.

To those who've been around the block a time or two, become a mentor. If you're not mentoring, you're cheating the next generation. Teach them what you did to lay that foundation of safety.

Setting goals and breaking barriers isn't easy. Stay focused. Keep your passion. Remember what brought you to where you are and what you want to learn going forward.

When you are the only woman in the room, don't be afraid to speak up. But also know when to pick your battles.

Keep learning -- especially in areas of new technology. If you're not tech savvy, take a class. If you're not on social media, get an account. This is where the action is today, and women need to be there.

Keep developing your communication skills. I've often thought that we women have a bit of a natural advantage in this area, and we need to make the most of it. So practice public speaking – join a speaking group if you know of one -- and don't be shy about speaking to the media. The more you do it, the more comfortable you'll become, and the easier it will be.

When you work hard and don't compromise your standards –success can be yours.

### ***Conclusion***

Eleanor Roosevelt said it best, "You must do the things that you think you cannot do."

Realize that the qualities you bring – compassion, a sense of collaboration, appreciation for work-life balance, are positive values that improve the operating environment for the bus industry.

Keeping employees happy and productive is simply good business – because *what makes the job better, often makes the job safer*. Make decisions that improve the work environment.

As members of the transportation community – whether you are a driver, sales manager, dispatcher, or CEO – the most important thing the American people count on us to deliver is safety.

With your help, we can open more doors for more women, open minds, and make safety everyone's top priority. Thank you. ###