

# Study finds higher speed limits **LESS** more lethal

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

11-25-03

WASHINGTON • States that raised their speed limits to 70 mph or more have seen a big jump in traffic deaths, according to a report Monday by an auto safety group.

About 1,880 more people died between 1996 and 1999 in the 22 states with higher speed limits on rural interstates, said the study, compiled by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, funded by insurers. It was based on data collected by the Land Transport Safety Authority of New Zealand. Congress repealed the 55 mph national speed limit in November 1995.

An institute researcher said New Zealand did the study because the country has groups pushing to raise its speed limit, which is 100 kilometers per hour — 62 mph.

Supporters of higher speed limits

said federal highway data show the nation's vehicle fatality rate fell each year from 1996 to 1999, from 1.69 deaths per million miles traveled to 1.55 deaths.

"We've moved toward a transportation system where cars are a lot safer and there are better measures like guardrails on highways," said Stephen Moore, a proponent of limited government and president of the Club for Growth.

Institute researcher Susan Ferguson agreed that other factors are making highways safer, and that the nation's death rate dropped as a whole. But she said the study expands upon institute studies from the late 1990s, which showed a 12 percent to 15 percent increase in deaths when speed limits rose.

The study said the 10 states that raised limits to 75 mph had 38 percent more deaths per million miles driven

than states with 65-mph limits. That's approximately 780 more deaths. **False.**

The 12 states that raised their limits to 70 mph included Florida. The 12 states reported a 35 percent increase, or about 1,100 additional deaths.

The report didn't examine the effects of other trends, such as the tendency to drive faster in rural states where cities are far apart. Nor did it analyze the increasing number of sport utility vehicles on the road in the late 1990s.

A separate review of six states by the institute found drivers are traveling faster than at any time since the institute began collecting data in 1987. Researchers observed in Colorado, which has a 75 mph speed limit, one in four drivers going above 80 mph. In California, where the speed limit is 70, one in five drivers was clocked at 80 mph.

The institute's study of speeds in Georgia, Massachusetts, Maryland,

New Mexico, Colorado and California also found that when rates were raised on rural interstates, speeding increased on urban interstates.

Average travel speeds on urban interstates in Atlanta, Boston and Washington were the same as or higher than on rural interstates near those cities, even though the speed limits on those urban interstates were 55 mph. In Atlanta, 78 percent of drivers on one urban interstate exceeded 70 mph, the report found.

Institute President Brian O'Neill said tolerance of speeding and advertising that encourages drivers to speed is part of the problem. He pointed out a Dodge ad that invited consumers to "Burn rubber."

"It's up to drivers to obey speed limits, but the manufacturers aren't helping with ads that equate going fast with having fun," O'Neill said.

FALSE  
FHWA  
SLS  
FDOT

A - Absolute nonsense. 1995 LADH Fatal Crashes = 5769 1999 = 5913  
144 More F.C. over entire LADH system. Add VMT = 800 LESS fatalities.  
Montana in 1996 had a record safe year - with NO DAYTIME Speed Limit!!

B - Nonsense. There were 400 LESS fatalities 1995-1997 on LADHs.  
1995 (55/65 S.L.) = 5769 Fatal crashes. 1997 (36 States raise S.Ls) = 5659  
or 110 LESS F.C. + 39 B.VMT = -400 fatalities.

C - Western states maintain higher MFRs due to much longer EMS response times. S.Ls. are NOT to blame.  
OH/IL: I.F.C. increase [+75] or worse than all 11 States posting 75 Speed limits [+65]. Add VMT = -35 F.C.  
Note: under-posted SLs = MORE TICKETS + MORE CRASHES.

D. False. German Autobahn 2/3 NO SL = .77 MFR 95-97 +12% SAFER  
US Int. Sys. = .87 MFR 95-97  
FL Rural Int. F.C (70) = 166 in '97, 145 in '99, 113 in '01 [-53]

Interstate Fatal Crashes		
State	1995	1999
IL (65)	150 [+34]	184
OH (65)	105 [+41]	146
CO (75)	118	104
NM (75)	99	88
11 States (75)	723 [+65]	788
Vehicle Miles Traveled on LADHs 95-99 = +100 Billion VMT		

Speed limits set illegally low. Data shows that S.L.s have no effect on real world travel speeds. According to Federal Law (Mutcd) most rural hwy's should be posted 80 MPH to maximize SAFETY. Most urban areas: 70 MPH. IHS usurps \$6 billion annually from "speeding" ticket surcharges. Biased. Conflict of interest.

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