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12 [STUDY: RAISING SPEED LIMITS INCREASES TRAFFIC DEATHS](#)

By **Amanda Essex**

Higher speed limits mean people can get where they're going faster. However, according to a [study released today by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety \(IIHS\)](#), increased speed limits have resulted in more than 33,000 additional deaths in the last 20 years.



In 1973, Congress tied certain federal funding to a requirement that states set the maximum speed limit at 55 miles per hour. In 1995, Congress repealed the national maximum speed limit and states were given authority to set their own maximum speed limit. Since this repeal, 38 states have set the maximum speed limit at 70 mph or over.

The IIHS study found that "each 5 mph increase in the maximum speed limit resulted in a 4 percent increase in fatalities." On interstates and freeways, that number was 8 percent.

In 2014, more than 9,200 traffic fatalities occurred in speeding-related crashes according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Last year, at least eight states enacted legislation increasing speed limits, while four states enacted legislation lowering speed limits.

To learn more about state legislative action related to speeding and speed limits from 2013 to 2015, read NCSL's January [Transportation Review](#). NCSL's resources related to speeding [are available online](#).

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