

January 30, 2025

The Honorable Jake Fey
Chair, House Transportation Committee
Washington State House of Representatives

The Honorable Andrew Barkis
Ranking Member, House Transportation
Committee
Washington State House of Representatives

Dear Chair Fey and Ranking Member Barkis,

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to making Washington's roads safer. On behalf of the organizations listed above, we applaud the Washington State Legislature's efforts to address the issue of speeding by introducing **House Bill 1596**, sponsored by Representative Mari Leavitt. This important and timely legislation establishes an Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) Program, offering a safe driving alternative for individuals whose licenses would otherwise be suspended. We respectfully urge the Legislature to pass HB 1596 this session, as it represents a vital step towards creating safer communities, promoting safe driving habits and saving lives.

Driving in Washington state has become increasingly dangerous. Over 30% of fatalities on Washington roads involved speeding drivers. Nationally, 29% of all crash fatalities occurred in speed-related crashes in 2022 and 38 percent of all fatal speeding crashes involved drunk drivers. The linkage between substance-impaired driving behaviors like drunk and drugged driving with speeding is indisputable. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2022, alcohol impairment was found to be more common among speeding drivers in fatal traffic crashes than those drivers who were not speeding. Thirty-eight percent of speeding drivers involved in fatal crashes had BACs of .08 g/dL or greater, while 18 percent of non-speeding drivers were in this BAC range. Not only are these avoidable deaths tragic, but the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that in 2019 alone, the economic cost of speed-related crashes across the United States was \$46 billion.

Current law requires license suspension for reckless driving or repeated moving violations in a single year, aiming to enhance road safety but often failing. The sudden loss of transportation can cause job loss or hardship for drivers responsible for dependents. Moreover, the system is ineffective, as 75% of offenders continue driving with a suspended license.

If adopted, HB 1596 would allow drivers convicted of reckless driving, or three or more moving violations, at least one of which is excessive speed, to install and use technology that limits a motor vehicle's speed based on the applicable speed limits, in lieu of license suspension. An ISA device uses GPS technology to recognize speed limits and prevent the vehicle from operating beyond pre-set limits.

HB 1596 provides individuals an opportunity to integrate back into their routines and maintain their responsibilities, while simultaneously enhancing road safety for the entire community, and changing driver behavior. An ISA device is designed to give the driver visual feedback, reinforcing safe driving habits over time.

This technology has been a proven effective method to change driver behavior for over two decades. In London, ISA reduced bus speeding from 15%-19% to 1%-3%. In New York City, a pilot

program with 300 municipal vehicles saw 99% compliance with speed limits over 1 million miles, along with a 37% drop in hard braking, improving safety.

We strongly urge the passage of HB 1596 this year to ensure that Washington remains a traffic safety leader by preventing speed-related traffic fatalities. We believe Washington can achieve this by introducing a safer and more effective alternative to current speeding penalties.

Respectfully,



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY



cc:

Members of the House Transportation Committee

Leo Othón, House Democrat Caucus

Dana Quam, House Republican Caucus