



May 28, 2026

The Honorable Mike Kehoe
Governor of Missouri
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 720
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Dear Governor Kehoe:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries and contain costs, urges you to veto Senate Bill (SB) 1408. This legislation would increase the maximum speed limit to 75 miles per hour (mph) on rural interstates and freeways, up from 70 mph, endangering state residents and visitors.

In 2025, there were an overall estimated 914 traffic fatalities in Missouri according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).¹ Speeding is a major factor leading to traffic fatalities, contributing to 33 percent of traffic fatalities in the state in 2024 which exceeds the national average of 29 percent.² The data shows Missouri needs less speeding, not more people traveling at high speeds.

Speeding reduces a driver's ability to react to emergencies created by driver inattention, unsafe maneuvers of other vehicles, roadway hazards, vehicle issues (such as tire blowouts) or hazardous weather conditions. Higher speeds will result in more preventable fatalities as well as serious and expensive injuries. Traffic crashes are not only devastating to individuals and families, but they are also costly. In 2019, the estimated cost of traffic crashes in Missouri was approximately \$6.8 billion, effectively imposing a \$1,104 "crash tax" on all Missouri residents.³ When updated for inflation alone, in 2026, costs would equate to nearly \$8.8 billion.⁴

Research and statistics consistently and convincingly show speeding is a major safety problem and raising speed limits increases traffic fatalities. Even seemingly modest speed limit changes can have huge impacts on overall traffic safety. Crash tests conducted in 2019 showed that five to 10 mph increases in speed can have a severe impact on a driver's risk of injury or even death.⁵ According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), "Raising speed limits leads to more deaths. People often drive faster than the speed limit, and if the limit is raised, they will go faster still. Research shows that when speed limits are raised, speeds go up, as do fatal crashes."⁶ A study found that from 1993-2017, a five mph increase in state speed limits led to 37,000 more traffic deaths.⁷ Moreover, speed limit increases do not reduce travel times as an analysis by the American Automobile Association (AAA) found.⁸

With over 900 annual traffic fatalities in Missouri, we respectfully urge you to reject SB 1408 to prevent further endangering Missouri families and visitors to the state. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

¹ Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2025, NHTSA, April 2026, DOT HS 813 800, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813800>.

² State Traffic Safety Information for Missouri, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>; Overview of Motor Vehicle Crashes in 2024, NHTSA, Apr. 2026, DOT HS 813 791 available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813791>.

³ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (Revised), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT HS 813 403, February 2023, available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.

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- 4 CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2026, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- 5 Impact of Speeds on Drivers and Vehicles – Results from Crash Tests, AAA Foundation for Safety, Humanetics, and IIHS, Jan. 2021, available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastore/document/bibliography/2218>.
- 6 “Speed.” Topic Overview. IIHS, available [here](#).
- 7 Farmer, Charles M., The effects of higher speed limits on traffic fatalities in the United States, 1993–2017, IIHS, April 2019; available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastore/document/bibliography/2188>.
- 8 A Multi-site Examination for the Impact of Changes in Posted Speed Limit on Traffic Safety, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, July 2023, available at https://info.oregon.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023_Speed-Limit-Impact_Brief.pdf.