

**THE HUMAN COST OF A PUBLIC POLICY WHICH HINDERS AND PREVENTS  
MUNICIPAL POLICE FROM ENFORCING THE MAXIMUM SPEED LAWS  
IN PENNSYLVANIA**

In 2011, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had the third highest number of speeding fatalities in the United States of America. (See Table 1) What may be even more significant that year is that Pennsylvania had the second highest percentage of speeding fatalities to total fatalities in the nation behind the State of Maine. (See Table 2) An analysis of the speeding fatalities in Pennsylvania, by roadway function in 2011, shows that the interstates, freeways and expressways, where maximum speed limits are primarily enforced by the State Police using radar, account for only 13.2 percent of the fatalities. On all other roadways, where municipal police enforce maximum speeds to varying degrees using speed-timing equipment that is inferior to radar (and unusable on many roadways because of their slopes and curvatures), the traffic fatalities related to speed are three to six times higher. (See Tables 3 and 4)

While there may be a number of ways to quantify the cost in human life of a public policy which hinders and prevents municipal police from enforcing the maximum speed laws determined by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania to be safe speeds, the following is considered to be as good as any. It starts with the percentage of speeding fatalities to total fatalities in Pennsylvania, which is 47.82 percent, and it asks the question: "How many fewer speeding fatalities would there need to be to bring the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under the national average of 30.72 percent?" The answer is 318 lives.

If the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had 318 fewer total traffic fatalities, it would have 968 total fatalities (1,286 - 318) and 297 speeding-related fatalities (615 - 318). This would result in a percentage of speeding fatalities to total fatalities of 30.68 (968/297) which is slightly less than the national average. In 2011, the cost of a public policy which hinders and prevents municipal police officers from enforcing the maximum speed laws is estimated to be 318 lives and unknown related physical injuries and property damage.

**Table 1  
TOP TEN STATES IN 2011 WITH THE HIGHEST SPEEDING FATALITIES**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total Fatalities</b>	<b>Speeding Fatalities</b>	<b>Speeding as a % of Total</b>
1	Texas	3,016	1,165	38.63
2	California	2,791	890	31.89
3	Pennsylvania	1,286	615	47.82
4	North Carolina	1227	474	38.63
5	Illinois	918	439	47.82
6	New York	1169	338	28.91
7	Missouri	784	310	39.54
8	Ohio	1,016	299	29.43
9	Alabama	894	298	33.33
10	Florida	2,398	296	12.34

**Table 2**  
**TOP TEN STATES IN 2011 WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES**  
**OF SPEEDING FATALITIES TO TOTAL FATALITIES**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total Fatalities</b>	<b>Speeding Fatalities</b>	<b>Speeding as a % of Total</b>
1	Maine	136	69	50.74
2	Pennsylvania	1,286	615	47.82
3	Illinois	918	439	47.82
4	Hawaii	100	45	45.00
5	New Hampshire	90	39	43.33
6	New Mexico	353	147	41.64
7	Colorado	447	183	40.94
8	Missouri	784	310	39.54
9	North Carolina	1227	474	38.63
10	Texas	3,016	1,165	38.63

**Table 3**  
**SPEEDING-RELATED TRAFFIC FATALITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA**  
**BY ROADWAY FUNCTION CLASS IN 2011**

<b>Function</b>	<b># of Fatalities</b>	<b>% of Fatalities</b>
Minor Arterial	143	23.2
Collector	140	22.8
Local	127	20.6
Other Principal Arterial	124	20.2
Urban Interstate	38	6.2
Rural Interstate	24	3.9
Freeway/Expressway	19	3.1
Totals	615	100

**Table 4**  
**SPEEDING-RELATED TRAFFIC FATALITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA**  
**BY ROADWAY FUNCTION CLASS IN 2011**  
**FROM LOCAL ROADS TO RURAL INTERSTATES**

<b>Function</b>	<b># of Fatalities</b>	<b>% of Fatalities</b>
Local	127	20.6
Collector	140	22.8
Minor Arterial	143	23.2
Other Principal Arterial	124	20.2
Freeway/Expressway	19	3.1
Urban Interstate	38	6.2
Rural Interstate	24	3.9
Totals	615	100

