

July 11, 2006

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Wall Street Journal
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The basic premise of your editorial “Safe at Any Speed” (July 7) - that the fatality rate has been dropping since repeal of the national speed limit in 1995 - is dead wrong. The fatality rate declined 50 percent from 1974 to 1995, when the speed limit was in effect. In contrast, it has declined by just 16 percent since repeal. Meanwhile, the number (not rate) of people dying in traffic crashes is increasing. Highway deaths declined under the national speed limit, but since repeal, they have risen from 40,000 to 43,000 annually. Faster is not safer.

Peer-reviewed studies by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and other credible researchers have concluded that higher speed limits have caused more highway deaths. In 2005, the Governors Highway Safety Association reported that state crash data since 1995 show that higher speeds led to more deaths and injuries. Data shows that fatalities have increased on roads with speed limits of 65 mph and higher, while fatalities on roads posted at 50 mph and lower have remained stable.

When the overall stock market rises, it does not follow that every stock also went up. Similarly, the fatality rate is an overarching statistic influenced by many factors some of which, like air bags, seat belt use, energy-absorbing vehicle structures, teen and drunk driving laws and child restraints are proven lifesavers that are driving down the fatality rate. Conversely, raising speed limits increases deaths, slowing safety gains.

Contrary to WSJ opinion, safety does not result in a loss of liberty – rather, it provides freedom from harm.

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