Saving Lives by Strengthening Education

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

8.9.2022

AAA Colorado

OUR HISTORY

ROCKY MOUNTAIN AAA MOTORISTS INC.

AAA Colorado

More people dying on Colorado Springs roads in 2022; On track with record year for most traffic deaths

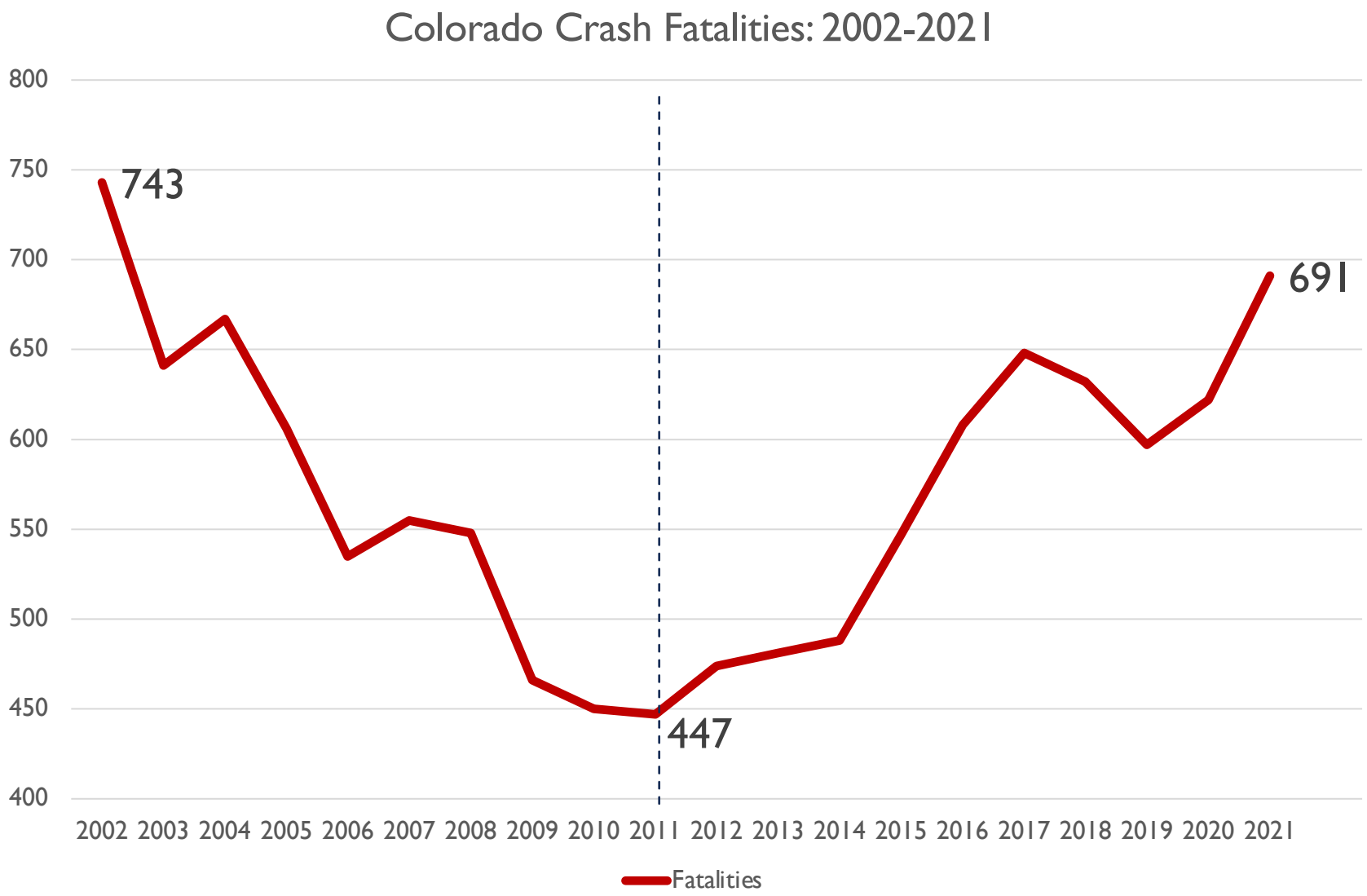
Multiple deaths, including an infant, following 2 crashes on I-25 in Colorado on Monday

| LAW ENFORCEMENT |

Why Denver Could Set an All-Time Record for Traffic Deaths in 2022

MICHAEL ROBERTS | JUNE 27, 2022 | 8:35AM

Colorado recorded its most traffic deaths since 2002 last year, and has seen a 50% increase in deaths over the last decade, officials said.



Every year since 2017 has been the deadliest year on our roads since 2002. 2022 likely will be, too.

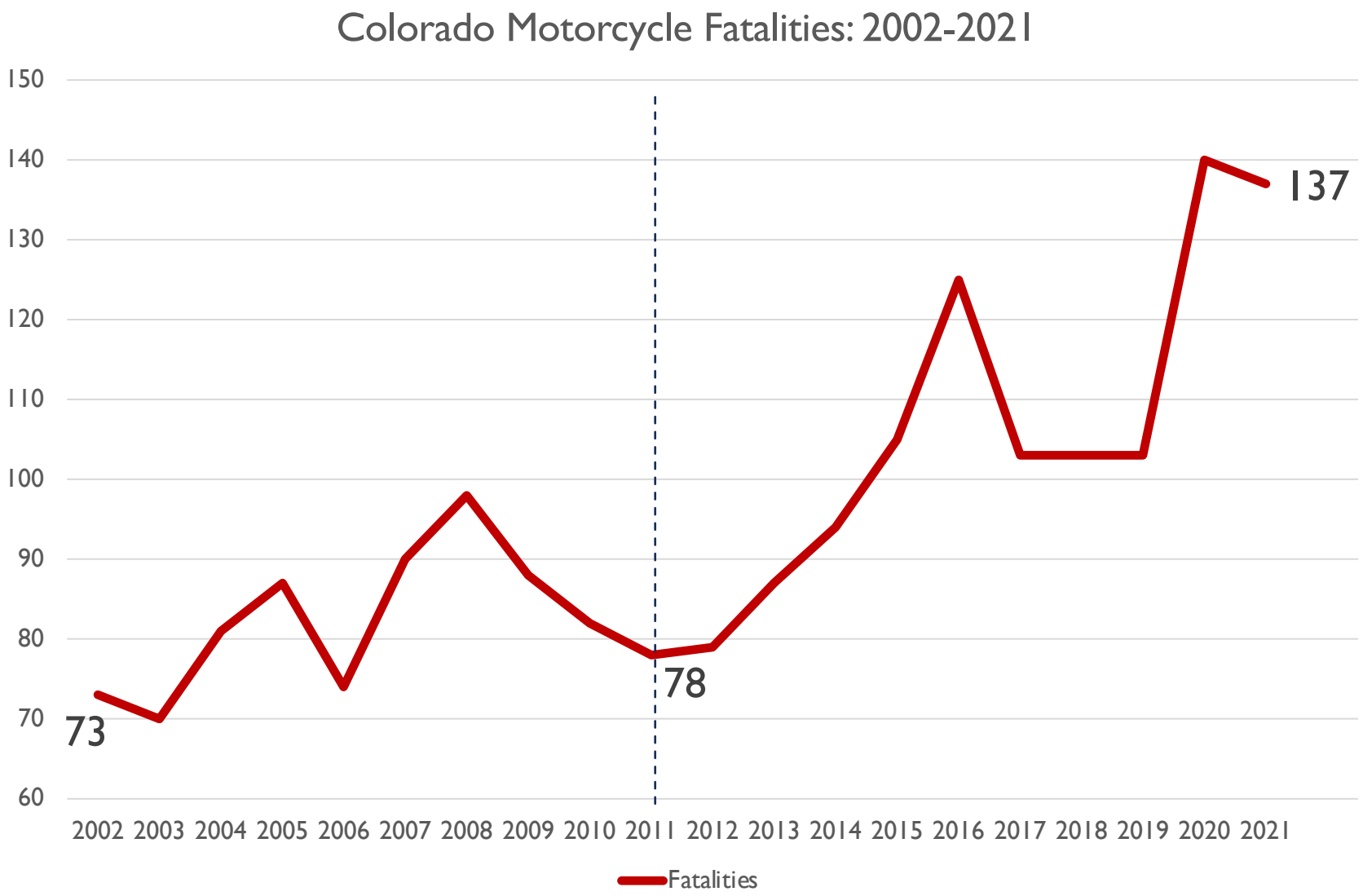
Source: CDOT, 8/1/22

Rising fatalities should be raising MAJOR alarm bells because deaths *should* be decreasing:

- Vehicles have become much safer since 2002.
- Technologies have emerged to make drivers safer and reduce the attractiveness of drunk driving and other selfish choices.
- Generally, traffic safety laws have gotten stronger.

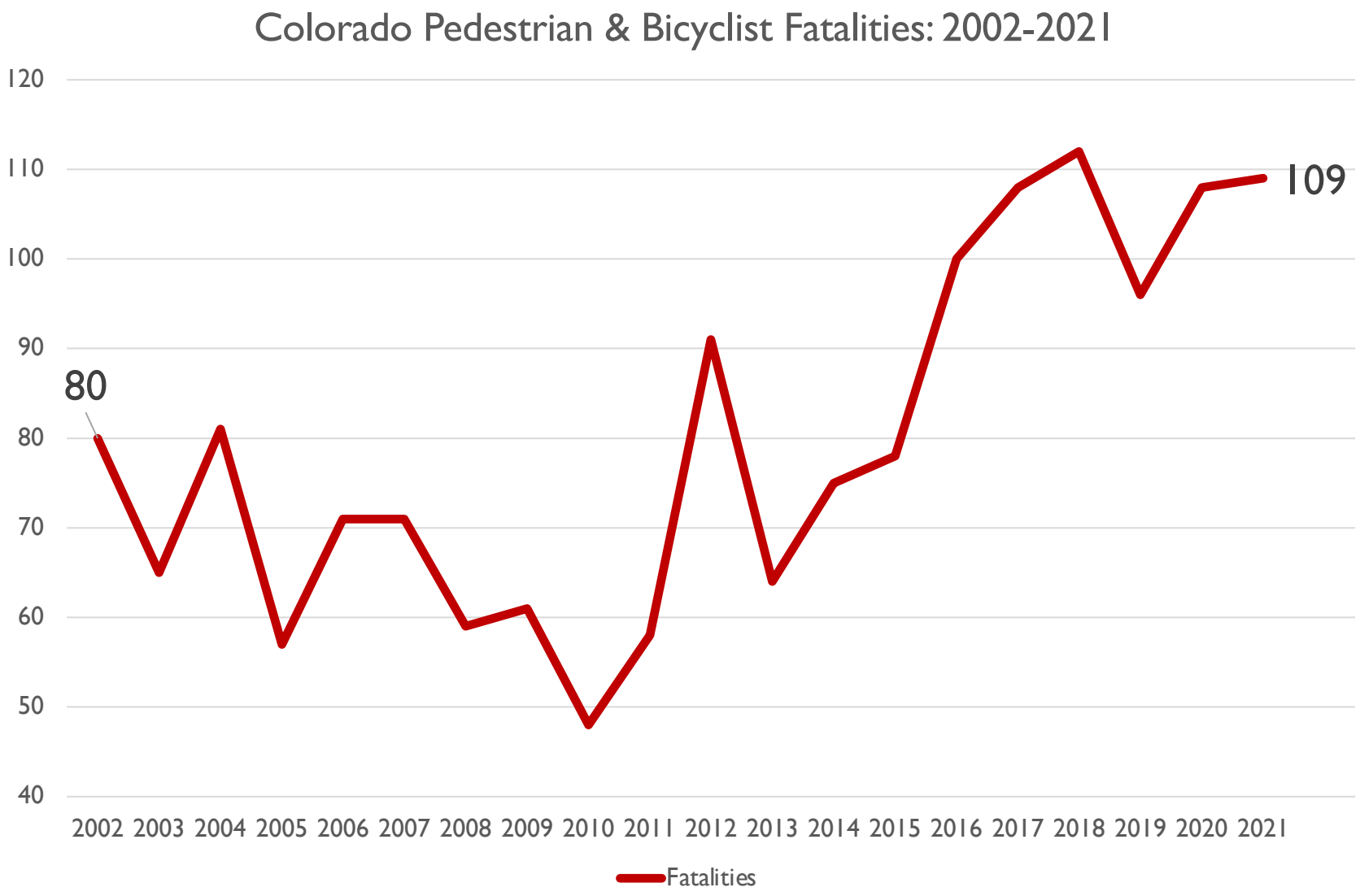
It's true that you'd expect a rise in fatalities as more people drive more miles. But:

- Total Colorado vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) *plummeted* from 2019 to 2020, but fatalities *rose* by more than 4%.
- 2021 VMT was slightly below 2019, but fatalities were up 15%.
- 2022 on track to be the deadliest year ever.



It is nearly 2 times more dangerous to be a Colorado motorcyclist in 2021 than it was in 2002.

Source: CDOT, 8/1/22



Source: CDOT, 8/1/22

The Colorado General Assembly has worked to encourage bicycling and pedestrian-centric transportation freedom – at the same time it's become significantly more dangerous to move around *outside* of a car in Colorado.

SIGNIFICANT EQUITY CONCERNS

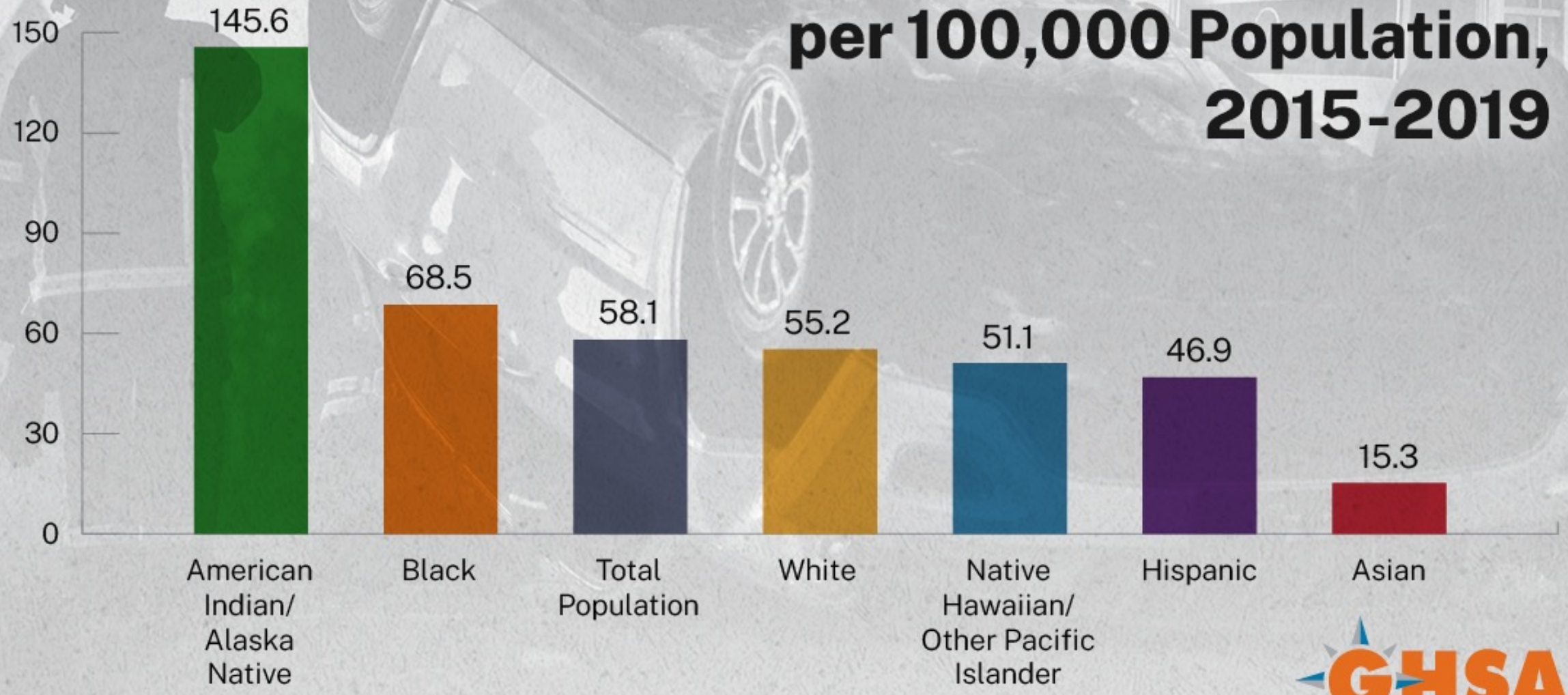
GHSA, 2015-2019 Fatality Review (USA)

- "It is clear from the review of previous research and from the analysis of 2015-2019 FARS data that Black, Indigenous and People of Color are disproportionately represented in fatal traffic crashes. This disproportionate representation is a **significant health disparity** and represents a **chronic public health issue** in minority communities."

AAA, 2009-2018 Pedestrian Fatality Review (Colorado)

- "Non-white populations are over-represented among pedestrian fatalities. Deaths of Black and Hispanic pedestrians increased by a larger amount than white pedestrians on a percentage basis."

Total U.S. Traffic Deaths per 100,000 Population, 2015-2019



GHSA
Governors Highway Safety Association
The States' Voice on Highway Safety

CRASHES HURT BUSINESS

- 2019 Network of Employers for Traffic Safety Study
  - In 2018, crashes on and off the job cost employers:
    - **$72.2 Billion**
    - **Average of $751, 382 for each fatality**
    - **$75,176 for each non-fatal injury**
    - **$5,483 for each crash resulting in property damage only.**

CRASHES COST COLORADANS MONEY

- 2020 National Safety Council Economic Cost Study
- The calculable costs of motor-vehicle crashes are wage and productivity losses, medical expenses, administrative expenses, motor-vehicle damage, and employers' uninsured costs.
  - Each Death: **$1.75 Million**
  - Disabling: **$101,000**
  - Property Damage Only: $4,700

CRASHES COST COLORADANS MONEY

- Comprehensive costs also include a measure of the value of lost quality of life, obtained through empirical studies of what people actually pay to reduce their safety and health risks. The average comprehensive costs on a per injured person basis were:
  - **Each Death: $11.5 Million**
  - **Disabling: $1.25 Million**

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT (2021)

- If we take just the NSC data, Colorado traffic fatalities in 2021 alone cost Colorado businesses and Coloradans:

- $1,209,250,000 to

- $7,981,050,000

CRASHES COST COLORADANS MONEY

- The costs of preventable crashes are passed onto all Coloradans and their employers:
  - Higher health insurance costs
  - Higher car insurance costs
  - Lost productivity & lost efficiencies caused by preventable crashes increase costs on everything
- Even minor fender-benders caused by a preventable crash are expensive: Average repairs run $1,200, per AAA. $4,700 per NSC.

WHAT TOOLS CAN WE USE TO COMBAT BAD BEHAVIOR?

Criminalization → Education → Enforcement

CRIMINALIZATION & ENFORCEMENT

Criminalization

In many cases, these laws are already on the books: Speeding, red-light running, anti-DUI measures, and so on. Already illegal, people still do it. We're all occasionally guilty.

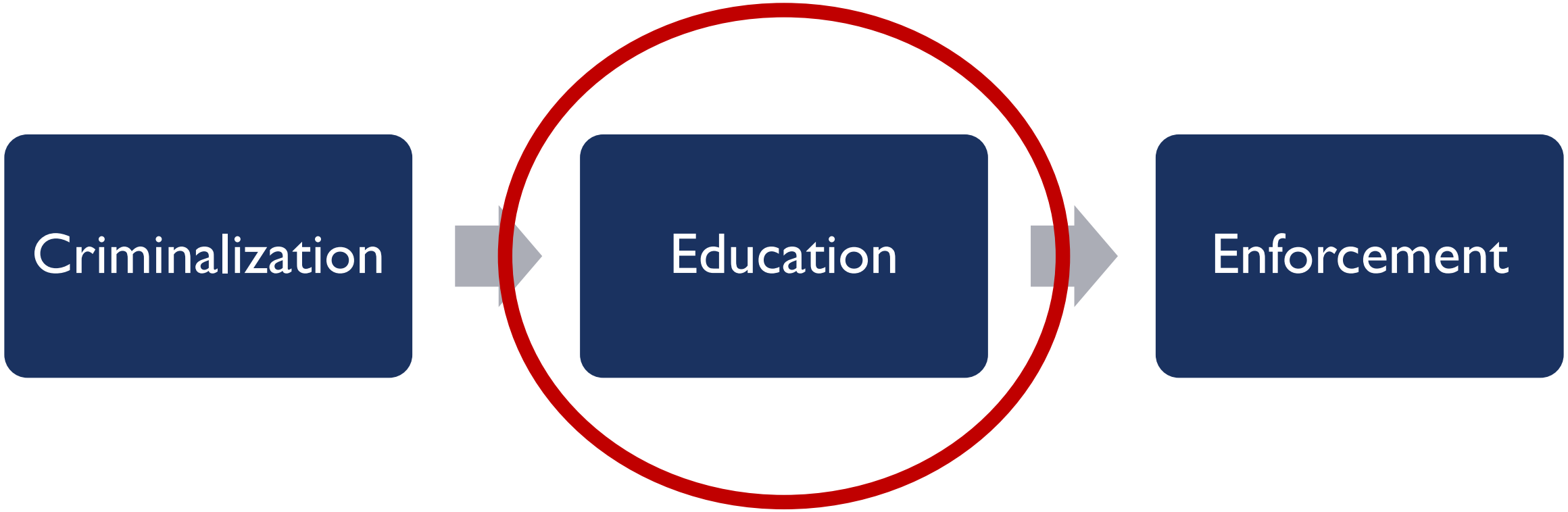
In other cases, the legislature has decided there were compelling reasons that weigh *against* criminalization, as we see with **primary seat belt** and **handheld phone ban** defeats year after year.

Enforcement

We know enforcement works to dramatically reduce the incident rate of traffic safety violations. But police can't be everywhere all the time, and automated enforcement is controversial.

As in any area of criminal justice, there are distinct civil liberty and social equity concerns: *Who* gets pulled over, *why* do they get pulled over, and are how do outcomes differ by race and class?

WHAT TOOLS CAN WE USE TO COMBAT BAD BEHAVIOR?



HERE'S THE PROBLEM: COLORADO LAW ENCOURAGES SKIPPING DRIVER'S ED

Age	30 Hours of Driver's Ed	4-hour Driver Awareness Program	50-hours supervised driving time	6-hours formal behind-the-wheel training
15-15.5	REQUIRED	Not Available	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
15.5 to 16	OPTION A	OPTION B	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
16-17	NOT REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED	REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED
18+	NOT REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED

ABSURD ASSUMPTIONS

- As a general proposition, the State of Colorado believes that driver's education leads to better, safer outcomes among drivers and requires it of its citizens *unless*:
  - I'm older than 15 and a half.
  - I'm older than 16.
  - I'm older than 18.
- We're trying to get the best of both worlds - and **failing**. We either believe in driver's education and should require it more consistently across the board, or we do not believe in driver's education whatsoever and should attempt to address this public health crisis through criminalization and enforcement.
- As currently conceived, we only want you to be the safest, best-educated driver possible if you're younger than 15 and a half.

WHAT DO OTHER STATES DO? **CALIFORNIA**

- Under 18?
  - 30-hours classroom training
  - 6-hours behind the wheel training

WHAT DO OTHER STATES DO? **ILLINOIS**

- Under 18?
  - 30-hours classroom training
  - 6-hours behind the wheel training

WHAT DO OTHER STATES DO? **MASSACHUSETTS**

- Under 18?
  - 30-hours classroom training
  - 18-hours behind the wheel training

WHAT DO OTHER STATES DO? **NEW HAMPSHIRE**

- Under 18?
  - 30-hours classroom training
  - 16-hours behind the wheel training

IT'S NOT POLITICAL - "RED" STATES & REQUIREMENTS

Idaho – 64% of 2020 Vote to Donald Trump

- Under 17? 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 behind the wheel

South Carolina – 55% of 2020 Vote to Donald Trump

- Under 17? 30 hours of classroom instruction, 6 behind the wheel, 6 observing.

Texas – 52% of 2020 vote to Donald Trump

- Under 18? 32 hours of classroom and 44 hours of skills training.
- Under 25? 6 hours of classroom training.

COLORADO PROFESSIONAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Barber

- 50 credit hours of formal training > 1500 contact hours > formal exam

Nail Technician

- 50 credit hours of formal training > 600 contact hours > formal exam

Notary Public

- Formal, state-approved training (varies in length)

WHAT WOULD SENSIBLE REFORMS LOOK LIKE?

Age	30 Hours of Driver's Ed	50-hours supervised driving time	6-hours formal behind-the-wheel training
15-15.5	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
15.5 to 16	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
16-17	NOT REQUIRED	REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED
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COSTS OF DRIVER'S EDUCATION IN COLORADO

Average

Driver's Education in Colorado costs an average of **$500** to **$950** per student, depending on training choices.

Remote Options

The pandemic has had an impact here, too. With new, online driver's education options, Coloradans can pay between **$40 and $90** for 30-hour classroom instruction – and shop around for behind-the-wheel instruction.

Savings

The average annual cost of insurance for Coloradans (required by law): **$1,435**. The annual cost of insuring a teen driver runs from **$6,955** (16) to **$3,190** (20) per year. Drivers in their 20s pay $1,901 for insurance.

The high costs of insurance are one reason there are so many under- and un-insured drivers in Colorado. Requiring drivers go through driver's education will lead to safer outcomes and *SAVINGS* that will bring costs down.

IDEAS WE'RE KICKING AROUND

Driver's Ed	Require comprehensive driver's education for all drivers under the age of 18. Require safety training for drivers between 18-21.
Saving Money	Provide a Colorado state **tax credit** for the costs of driver's education to parents who enroll their students.
Structural Reforms	Most people who regularly interact with minors for instruction purposes are crosschecked with national fingerprint databases for criminal history. Weird exemption? Driving school instructors.
	DOR does not charge application or certification fees for driving schools or driving instructors. This is unique for a regulatory agency in this context. Revenues raised from a fee structure could subsidize scholarships for driver's ed or other driver-related services.

Questions? Comments?

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