

TRAFFIC SAFETY FOR ALL

House Bill 1512

Traffic deaths reached a 33-year high in Washington in 2023 and have steadily increased each year since 2020. Yet, while most of the 810 traffic deaths in 2023 were the result of impaired, distracted, and dangerous driving, our limited resources are being used to enforce minor maintenance issues like broken taillights. Data has also long shown that these traffic stops disproportionately affect drivers of color, often leading to unnecessary tension, racial profiling and violence — all without improving public safety.

House Bill 1512, also known as Traffic Safety for All (TSFA), focuses our limited resources on what matters most: enforcing traffic laws that pose a serious and immediate threat to driver safety.

HB 1512 IMPROVES ROAD SAFETY BY MAKING SMART USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES:

Traffic Safety for All focuses law enforcement resources on enforcing serious moving violations that are likely to cause injury or death on our roads, rather than minor car maintenance issues like a single broken taillight or a registration that has been expired for less than a year. Examples of high-risk behaviors include:

- DUIs
- Distracted Drivers
- Speeding/Reckless Drivers.

Officers will still enforce all traffic violations under the bill — ticketing for issues like a broken taillight will continue, but will no longer be the primary reason a driver is pulled over.

HB 1512 IMPROVES RACE EQUITY:

Data consistently shows drivers of color, particularly Black drivers, are stopped and searched by law enforcement at higher rates than white drivers. These stops leave drivers feeling targeted and profiled, and have regularly resulted in instances of violence and death. Traffic Safety for All will reduce needless encounters between law enforcement and drivers, allowing everyone to get home safe. Prioritizing stops specifically for safety threats reduces racial disparity in overall traffic stops and improves safety for all Washington drivers.

GRANT PROGRAM HELPS DRIVERS KEEP CARS IN COMPLIANCE:

Traffic Safety for All creates a grant program that helps low-income drivers fix their vehicles and keep them in compliance, instead of charging them fees and fines. Equipment violations are often a sign of poverty, not dangerous driving. Drivers want functioning vehicles, but not everyone can afford repairs or tab renewals, forcing them to choose between using their paycheck on repairs or other basic needs. Imposing fees and fines on a person who cannot afford them will not make any of us safer on the road — it will just trap people in poverty. This bill ensures that we can have safer roads without excessive fines.