

WASPC Provides Data Showing the Need to Revise Pursuit Laws

A recent peer review of a study, cited by advocates and legislators to further delay and study the need for revisions to current pursuit restrictions, [has been debunked](#). **There is no reason to further delay full House and Senate consideration of [SB5352](#) and [HB1363](#).**

To be clear, there is not an absence of data on the topic of pursuits. There is clear data, from four independent sources, that demonstrate why the changes must be considered. Below are illustrations of the number of people “fleeing” lawful authority, the increase in traffic deaths, and increasing auto thefts.

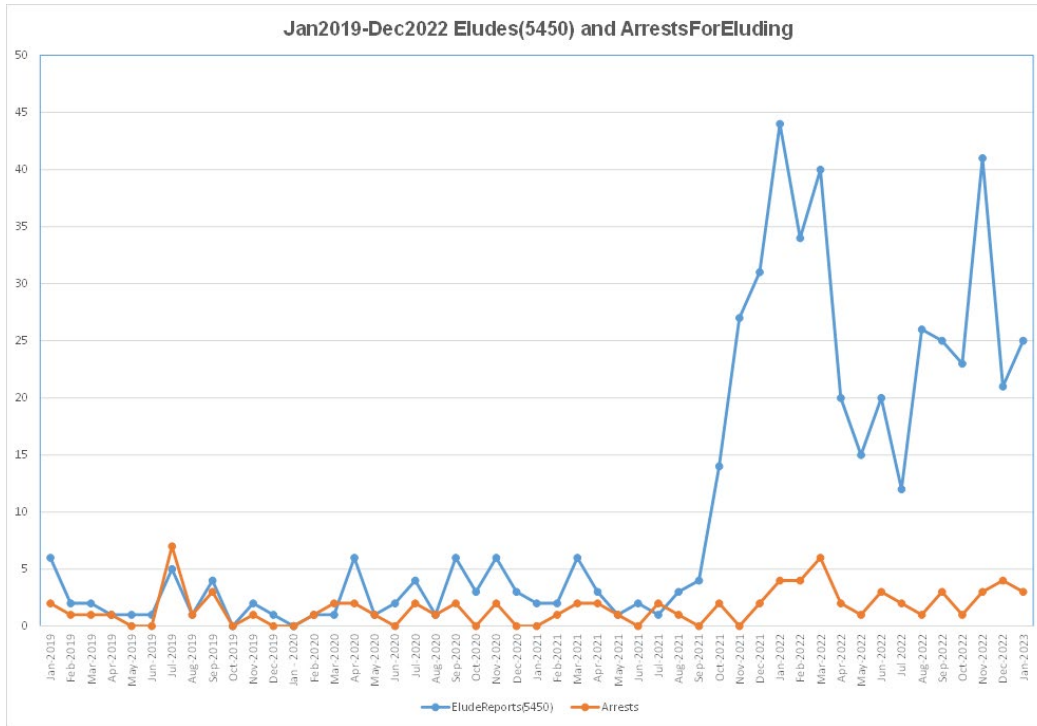
Data available is both convincing and self-evident that the July 2021 law change has led to more dangerous roadways, contributed to increased crime, and has allowed criminals to act with impunity. A drive down any freeway will demonstrate the way dangerous driving behavior and the lack of perceived consequences have changed.

Following the July 25, 2021 change in the law to significantly restrict vehicle pursuits, the Washington State Patrol (WSP) began tracking what they termed “Fleds”, meaning there was no pursuit because it was now restricted, while also still tracking actual pursuits which were still allowable under the more restrictive new law. There was no previous collection of “Fleds” in their data collection because it almost never occurred. As demonstrated in the graph below, actual pursuits did decrease, down to 501 in 2022, but an additional 3110 drivers fled and were not pursued, under the new law, from State Troopers making lawful traffic stops. **In other words, the data shows that after the law change, the number of people fleeing troopers more than doubled.**



Source: Washington State Patrol

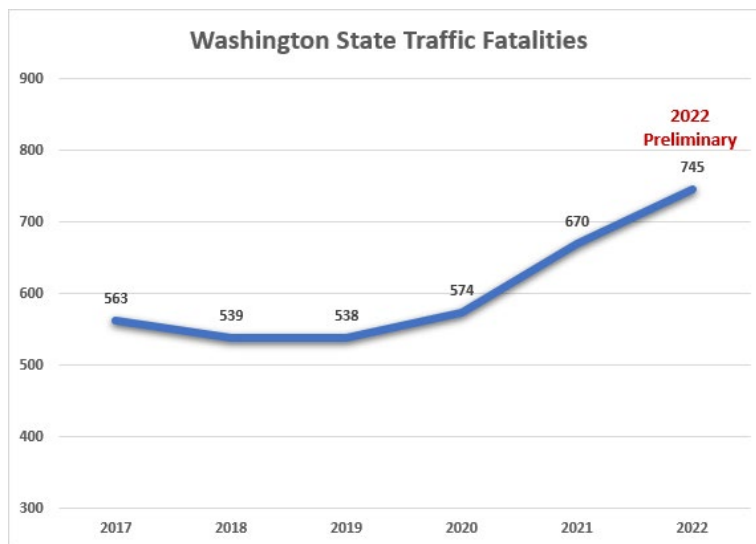
The Lakewood Police also began tracking people running from lawful traffic stops both before and after the law change. Here is the data by month, which indicates that many more people are fleeing police who would have stopped for law enforcement prior to the new law- because they know they can. Also, although Lakewood P.D. works to follow up and make arrests even in cases where the person flees, only a small fraction of incidents results in an arrest.



Source: Lakewood Police Dept

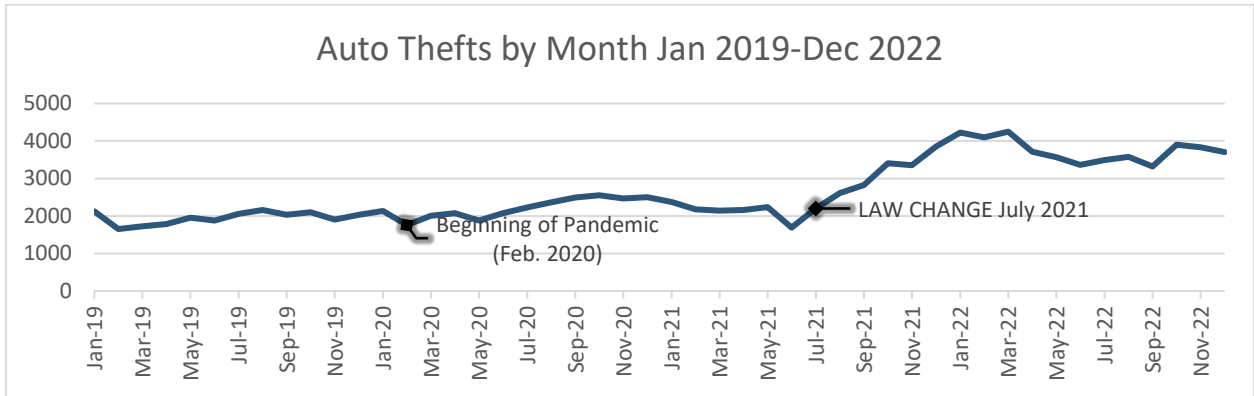
This data represents only the State Patrol, with about 600 troopers, and the Lakewood Police Dept. (city population 65,000) but provides a broad and clear picture of the flagrant and brazen behavior being encountered each day by law enforcement, and the increased danger presented by criminals who view the current law as a “get out of jail free card.”

Most county and municipal agencies are not tracking this data but are experiencing similar behavior. Additional data from the Washington Traffic Safety Commission shows the total number of traffic fatalities is rising through 2021. **Preliminary data for 2022 shows approximately 745 traffic deaths in 2022, the highest number since 1990.**



Source: Washington Traffic Safety Commission [Fatalities Dashboard - Washington Traffic Safety Commission](#)

Auto thefts continue at a high level, with the most marked increase occurring immediately following the July, 2021 law change.



Source: Washington Crime information Center (WACIC)