

Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 2628
House Committee on Transportation

Prepared by
Colonel Herman T. Jones
Kansas Highway Patrol

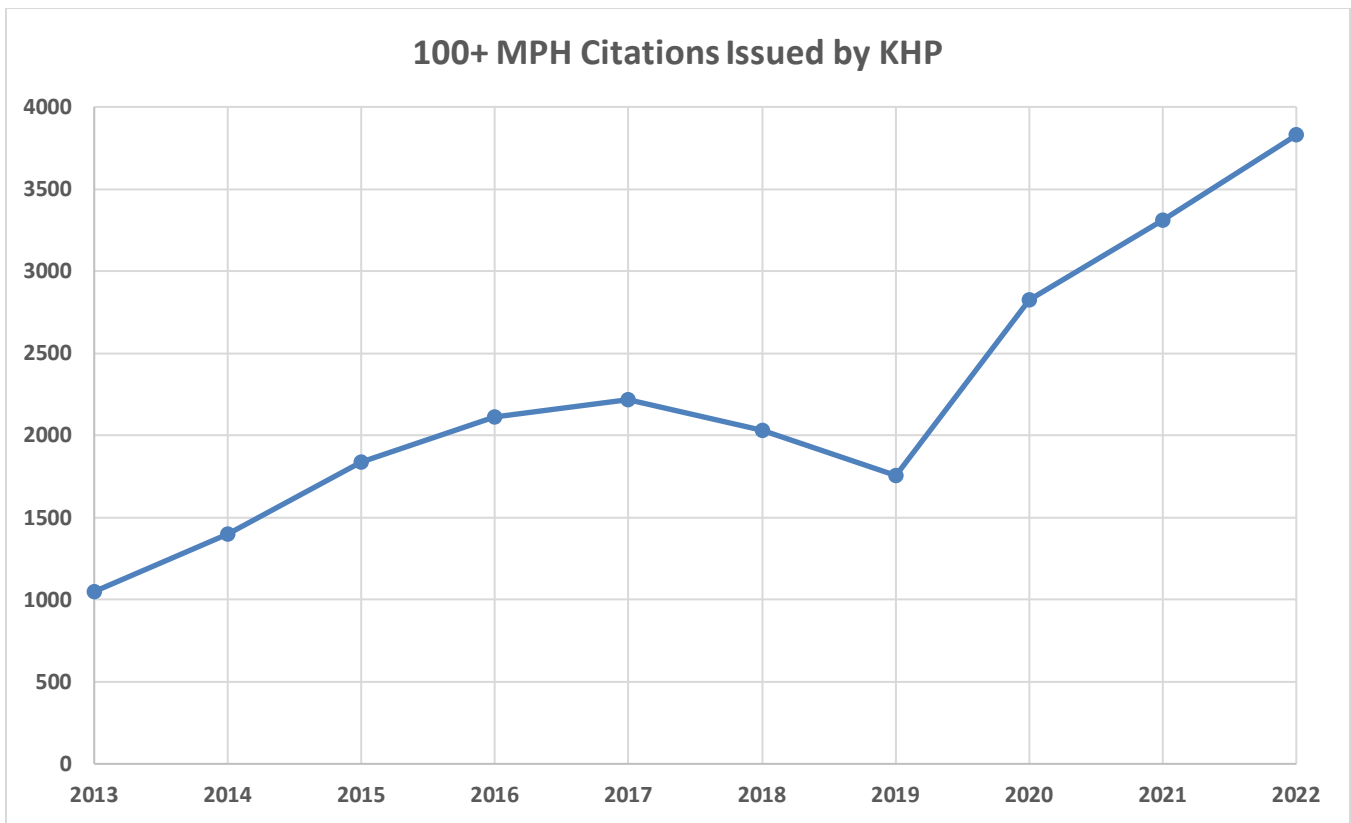
February 14, 2022

The Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 2628, and we respectfully request the Committee consider our agency's recommendation of the bill. House Bill 2628 amends K.S.A. 8-1566 by making any person operating a vehicle at a speed of 100 miles per hour or more guilty of reckless driving, excluding drivers of authorized emergency vehicles subject to the conditions of K.S.A. 8-1506.

Drivers who exceed the maximum posted speed limit endanger their lives and the lives of all other motorists. Speeding presents a greater potential for the loss of vehicular control, particularly on wet or icy roads. Speeding reduces the effectiveness of occupant protection equipment, such as seatbelts and airbags, while also reducing the effectiveness of roadway safety measures, such as guardrails and median barriers. When one's speed doubles, one's stopping distance quadruples, making every increase in speed an exponentially more dangerous act. Speeding increases the degree of a crash's severity. As more force comes into the crash equation, there are more likely to be injuries and death. Speeding also puts the lives of our law enforcement personnel in peril as they must oftentimes exceed the speed of the violator's vehicle in order to initiate a traffic stop.

According to the latest published data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA, 2019), speed was a factor in over 25% of all traffic fatalities nationwide. In 2020, the Kansas Department of Transportation reported 4,599 speed-related crashes with an estimated cost to motorists of \$1,602,241,692. In the same year, 88 motorists lost their lives in speed-related fatality crashes, and 1,447 speed-related injury crashes occurred. While these figures are slightly lower than the prior year, total vehicle miles traveled also decreased resulting in a higher overall rate of speed-related deaths and injuries per mile traveled.

Our agency has seen a significant increase in the number of citations issued to drivers who are traveling 100 or more miles per hour since 2019. That year, 1,758 citations were issued for triple-digit speeds. In 2020, that number increased by over one thousand to 2,823 citations. 2021 saw an increase of nearly 500 more citations at 3,309, and if 2022 continues its trend from January, the total number of citations issued for drivers traveling 100 or more miles per hour will exceed 3,800. This is a 117% increase from 2019. Over 230 citations issued in the last three years were for speeds of 120 miles per hour or more. One citation was issued for traveling 174 miles per hour in a 75 miles per hour speed limit zone. In another case from July of last year, an Audi A7 was checked at 202 miles per hour in a 65 miles per hour construction zone on the Turnpike. The driver was stopped, found to be under the influence of alcohol, and arrested on multiple charges.



2022 total extrapolated from January 2022's trend of 319 citations.

This trend is not affecting Kansas alone. Other states are experiencing similar increases in speeding. The Missouri State Highway Patrol issued 1,628 citations in 2019 to drivers for traveling 100 miles per hour or more. In both 2020 and 2021, their agency issued over 2,600 citations each year for the same violation. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol's citations for 100 miles per hour or more increased from 1,304 in 2019 to 1,769 in 2021. There were 601 citations in 2019 and 982 citations on average in 2020-2021 by the Nebraska State Patrol. The Iowa State Patrol issued 659 triple-digit speeding citations in 2019. In 2020 and 2021, that number increased to over 1,200.

By making traveling 100 miles per hour or more a reckless driving violation, the Kansas Highway Patrol believes that House Bill 2628 will decrease the occurrence of this type of dangerous behavior. Being a misdemeanor violation, House Bill 2628 would allow officers to arrest an individual for the action. There would be a mandatory court date and possible jail time in lieu of a violator simply paying a fine. This creates a stronger deterrent and gives law enforcement the ability to immediately remove hazardous drivers from our roadways while also providing explicit guidance on what speed constitutes reckless driving.

In closing, the Kansas Highway Patrol fully supports House Bill 2628 as we believe it increases the safety of Kansans on our state's roadways. We sincerely thank members of the Committee for their consideration of our testimony.

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