



It's time to end jaywalking laws in Washington

In the 1920s, automotive companies introduced the term “jaywalking” as part of their effort to shift the blame for pedestrian deaths from drivers to walkers.

Today, jaywalking laws are used to disproportionately ticket and search BIPOC community members, while failing to protect people who are walking and rolling from traffic crashes.

Enforcement of jaywalking causes disproportionate harm to Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. These laws can be used for pretextual stops, and can lead to police violence. The cost of a ticket can have outsized financial impacts, and court involvement can lead to collections, deportations, or impacts to employment.

Jaywalking laws do not make us safer

A person crossing mid-block has the same likelihood of being struck and killed by a driver as a person crossing at an intersection. Federally sponsored research in the 1990's looked at the types of situations in which “serious pedestrian crashes” occurred and found that cars struck people crossing in a crosswalk almost as often (25% of the time) as they struck people crossing midblock (26%). Pedestrian crossings may be miles apart on some streets, making jaywalking more likely.

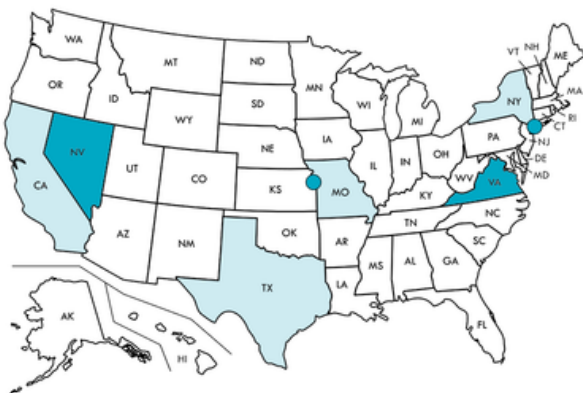
Lowering vehicle speeds, as well as creating a network of safer crosswalks, lighting, and sidewalks are the best defense against pedestrian deaths. Washington State has already identified nearly \$10 billion in active transportation funding needed over the next 10 years to meet the needs of people walking and rolling.

Of the 1,710 jaywalking tickets issued by the Seattle Police Department from 2010 to 2016, 447 — more than one in four — went to a Black pedestrian. Black people represent just about 7 percent of the city's population.

We ask Washington State Legislators and local jurisdictions to **repeal laws which make it illegal to cross mid-block**, cross against a signal, or walk in the street.

We also ask legislators to **collect data at the state and local levels** on the number of citations and warnings, the types of citations, demographics including race and income of people stopped, and the context of the stop.

Jaywalking repeals across the country



Virginia and **Nevada** both decriminalized jaywalking in 2021, as did **Kansas City, MO**. **New York City** proposed legislation in 2020. Both **California** and **Texas** have attempted to advance legislation to overturn jaywalking laws.

People and groups that support repealing jaywalking laws

- **Whose Streets? Our Streets!** is a Seattle-based, majority-BIPOC workgroup that recommends "Affirm that people belong in the streets and repeal anti-jaywalking laws."
- **Washington State's Cooper Jones Active Transportation Safety Council** suggested Washington "reduce or eliminate police contacts related to low-level traffic incidents and develop non-enforcement-based approaches to traffic safety, such as allowing mid-block crossing of pedestrians when no vehicles are within the block and there is no risk to the pedestrian or vehicle driver."
- Walkability advocates **Charles T. Brown and Angie Schmitt** wrote about nine reasons to eliminate jaywalking laws now.
- **People for Mobility Justice** emphasize that "Jaywalking laws rarely protect pedestrians and they are abused to racially profile people."
- The **Transportation Equity Caucus** called for redefining safety to remove enforcement from safety programs.
- **Bike Walk KC** advocates for decriminalization of walking and biking.
- **California Walks and America Walks** called for California to decriminalize jaywalking.
- The **California Bicycle Coalition, California Walks, Los Angeles Walks, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area** plus dozens more wrote in support to repeal California jaywalking laws by legalizing certain common and safe street crossings that currently qualify as traffic infractions.

Learn more

Read research about jaywalking's disparate impacts in Florida, Missouri, California, and New York as well as more about Transportation Choices Coalition's work at transportationchoices.org/jaywalking.

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