

Request for Research Funding for FY 2025–2026

Project Number (Research Center Use Only): SFTY-26-05

Requesting Office	Safety Office	Priority	5 of 11
Proposed Title	Evaluating the Impact of Florida’s 2019 Texting While Driving Law on Crash Reduction and Citation Trends Across Police Jurisdictions		
Justification	<p>Distracted driving remains a leading cause of crashes and traffic fatalities, and the enactment of Florida’s 2019 law banning texting while driving as a primary offense offers a unique opportunity to evaluate the impact of legislative and enforcement changes on road safety. By allowing officers to stop drivers for texting alone, the law aimed to increase compliance and reduce risky behaviors. Understanding the law’s effectiveness in reducing crashes on freeways and other road types is essential for guiding future legislative and enforcement strategies.</p> <p>This project aligns with FDOT’s Safety component by directly addressing behavior-related crash risks and supporting evidence-based countermeasures. The research also supports the FDOT Compass elements of Communities, by improving the safety and quality of life for road users, and Technology, by leveraging data-driven methods to evaluate enforcement and crash patterns.</p> <p>The need to isolate the law’s specific impact is crucial, as confounding factors like other traffic safety initiatives or economic changes could influence crash trends. A robust analytical framework will ensure that the findings accurately reflect the law’s effectiveness, enabling Florida to refine its distracted driving strategies and serve as a model for other states.</p>		
Impact	<p>This project has the potential to inform Florida’s distracted driving policies by providing evidence of how well the 2019 law reduced crashes and changed driver behavior. It can identify jurisdictions or road types where the law has been particularly effective or where further interventions are needed. Without this research, Florida risks continuing ineffective or poorly targeted enforcement practices, leaving significant crash reduction opportunities unrealized. The results could also support public education campaigns, improve enforcement resource allocation, and contribute to FDOT’s Target Zero goal of eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries.</p>		
Affected Offices	FDOT Safety Office		
Existing Work	<p>Some related work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> An Investigation of the Relationship Between Speed Enforcement, Vehicle Speeds, and Injury Crashes in New Zealand (Povey, Frith, & Keall, 2003) 		
Keywords Used In Existing Work Search (Cannot leave blank)	Distracted driving, texting, citation, crash reduction, law enforcement, behavioral analysis, impact evaluation		
Related Contracts (Give contract numbers)			
Funding Request	\$300,000	Anticipated Duration	24
Project Manager	Loreen Bobo	Contracting Method	RFP to all registered vendors
Urgency	2	<p>Distracted driving remains a significant contributor to crashes and fatalities, making it urgent to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2019 law to guide enforcement and educational strategies. With sufficient post-implementation data (2019–present), there is a critical opportunity to assess the law’s impact before external factors, such as new legislation or technological changes, introduce additional variables. Understanding whether the law has successfully reduced texting while driving behavior is essential to determine if more interventions, like stricter enforcement or expanded campaigns, are necessary. The project directly supports Florida’s Target Zero initiative, which prioritizes the elimination of traffic fatalities and severe injuries. Identifying jurisdictions or road types with weaker impacts allows FDOT to direct enforcement efforts and educational campaigns more strategically.</p>	
Implementability	4	<p>Citation data, crash records, and enforcement data are readily available through public safety and transportation agencies, providing a strong foundation for the study. Florida already has an operational framework for collecting and analyzing crash data (e.g., Signal</p>	

		Four Analytics), which simplifies data integration. Participation from law enforcement across jurisdictions is required for qualitative insights on enforcement challenges; this is a noted challenge. Public resistance as well as the need to collaborate with the legislature to bring about actionable changes makes implementation more challenging.
Project Benefits (Succinct, complete explanation)		
This project enables data-driven resource allocation for enforcement and education campaigns, ensuring efforts target high-risk areas. By isolating the law's impact, the study supports FDOT's Target Zero goals and strengthens policy and public awareness initiatives. Additionally, it provides a model for evaluating similar legislation in other states, reinforcing Florida's leadership in traffic safety.		
Project Benefits (Select all that apply and explain)	Quantifiable Benefits (units, dollars, etc...if applicable)	Methodology or Data Sources Used to Determine Quantifiable Benefits. If not applicable, please give justification of project benefits
○ Materials Enhancement		
○ Financial Impact		Each fatal crash avoided, or each injury prevented has significant financial impacts. Understanding where enforcement needs to be focused (from the survey and the citation-crash analyses) brings financial benefits to streamline targeted opportunities.
○ Time Savings		Reducing crashes leads to overall improvements in travel times to be realized across FL roads.
○ Lives Saved/Injuries Prevented		Avoiding crashes as well as fatalities/serious injuries due to our understanding of the effectiveness of the 2019 law directly influences campaigns like "Put it Down", which may lead to long term behavioral change.
○ Other (Explain)		

*Comments should explain and support urgency, financial benefit, and implementability scores