

Spotlight on  
Highway Safety



**GHS**<sup>®</sup>

Governors Highway Safety Association

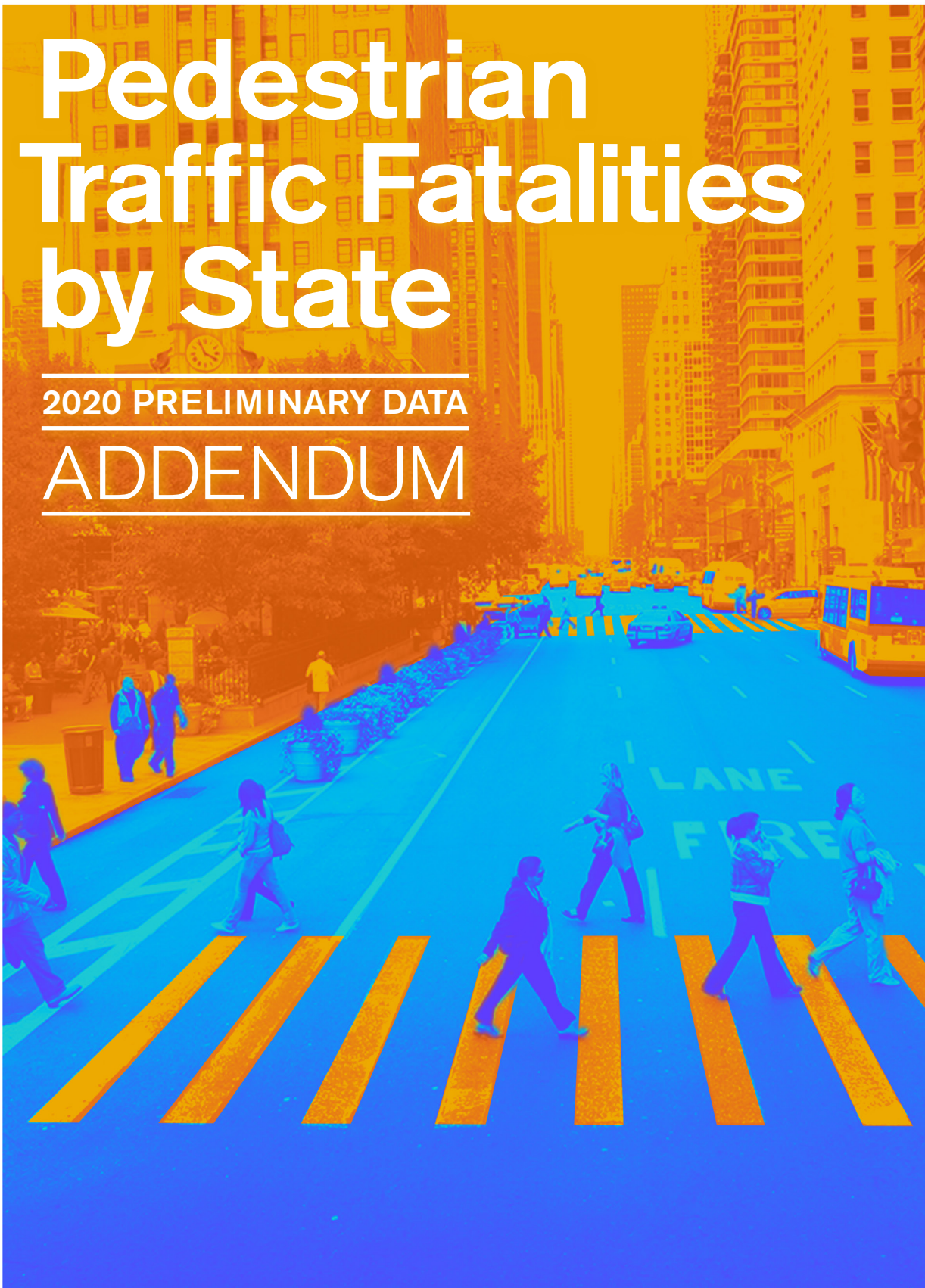
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# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

2020 PRELIMINARY DATA

ADDENDUM



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# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

2020 PRELIMINARY DATA ADDENDUM



## INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year, the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) released a Spotlight on Highway Safety report, [Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State: 2020 Preliminary Data](#), that examined pedestrian fatality data for the first six months of 2020. Using the same methods as in prior pedestrian fatality studies, State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs) – which are tasked with addressing speeding, impaired driving and other behavioral safety issues that contribute to traffic crashes – were asked to provide preliminary counts of pedestrian deaths that occurred from January through June. These numbers provided an early look at 2020 projections many months before data are available from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). The SHSO data used for the Pedestrian Spotlight analysis were preliminary and, in some cases, incomplete. All 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) provided information. When the data were combined, the number of pedestrian fatalities for the first six months of 2020 was projected to be essentially unchanged from the same period in 2019. Based on the preliminary data, 27 states had increases in pedestrian fatalities, 20 states and D.C. had decreases, and three states had no change. As a follow-up to the Pedestrian Spotlight report, this addendum provides additional data analysis for the remaining six months (July-December) of 2020.

# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State





## 2020 PRELIMINARY DATA ADDENDUM

### METHODOLOGY

For this addendum to the Pedestrian Spotlight report, SHSOs were asked to provide preliminary counts of pedestrian deaths that occurred during the second half of 2020, to supplement the data SHSOs previously provided for the first half of 2020. All 50 states and D.C. provided information.

Nationwide, these raw preliminary data indicated that essentially the same number pedestrian fatalities occurred in 2020 (6,410) as in 2019 (6,412). The preliminary data were, however, adjusted using historic differences between preliminary counts of pedestrian fatalities reported by SHSOs and final data provided by SHSOs, approximately one year later. These mathematical adjustments were made on a state-by-state basis. For all states combined, the adjustments increased the preliminary number of pedestrian deaths from 6,410 to a projected number of 6,721, a 4.8% increase for 2020 compared to the number of deaths reported by SHSOs for 2019.

Because of differences between SHSO-reported data and FARS data, this addendum does not make direct comparisons between the two sources. The number of pedestrian fatalities reported by SHSOs are generally higher than the number reported by FARS (about 2% higher nationwide). This occurs because some SHSOs:

-  Include deaths that occur more than 30 days after the crash. FARS counts only traffic fatalities that occur within 30 days of the crash.
-  Count people on e-scooters, skateboards and other personal conveyances as pedestrians. FARS classifies these fatalities separately from pedestrians.
-  Include pedestrian deaths that did not involve a motor vehicle, such as a pedestrian struck by a bicycle. FARS only includes fatal crashes that involve a motor vehicle.
-  Include deaths that occur on non-public roads such as parking lots. FARS only includes fatal crashes that occur on public roadways.

### FINDINGS

For all 50 states and D.C. combined, the number of pedestrian fatalities for January-December 2020 is projected to be 6,721, compared to 6,412 in 2019 (Table 1). **This is a projected increase of 4.8%, or 309 additional pedestrian deaths in 2020 compared with 2019.** Table 2 shows the same data as Table 1 but is sorted by the percent change from 2019 to 2020. Based on the adjusted preliminary data, 31 states and D.C. had increases in pedestrian fatalities, while 19 states had decreases. These data are then sorted by number of fatalities in each state (from highest to lowest) in Table 3.



# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

2020 PRELIMINARY DATA ADDENDUM

**Table 1**

## Pedestrian Fatalities by State, Jan-Dec 2019 & 2020

Sources: State Highway Safety Offices and GHSA data analysis

Sorted by State

State	Jan-Dec 2019	Jan-Dec 2020 (Projected)	Change from 2019 to 2020	
			#	%
Alabama	114	96	-18	-16%
Alaska	6	13	7	116%
Arizona	220	225	5	2%
Arkansas	61	91	30	49%
California	1,020	1,026	6	1%
Colorado	76	92	16	21%
Connecticut	53	65	12	23%
Delaware	32	17	-15	-47%
District of Columbia	9	13	4	44%
Florida	745	729	-16	-2%
Georgia	239	273	34	14%
Hawaii	37	20	-17	-46%
Idaho	14	12	-2	-14%
Illinois	171	155	-16	-9%
Indiana	75	103	28	37%
Iowa	22	27	5	23%
Kansas	18	49	31	172%
Kentucky	77	82	5	6%
Louisiana	122	136	14	11%
Maine	17	9	-8	-47%
Maryland	125	147	22	18%
Massachusetts	76	53	-23	-30%
Michigan	149	177	28	19%
Minnesota	50	47	-3	-6%
Mississippi	67	104	37	55%
Missouri	111	124	13	12%
Montana	17	18	1	6%
Nebraska	20	17	-3	-15%
Nevada	69	88	19	27%
New Hampshire	10	16	6	60%
New Jersey	175	191	16	9%
New Mexico	83	84	1	1%
New York	286	235	-51	-18%
North Carolina	236	263	27	11%
North Dakota	5	8	3	60%
Ohio	128	154	26	20%
Oklahoma	88	80	-8	-9%
Oregon	85	80	-5	-6%
Pennsylvania	154	145	-9	-6%
Rhode Island	8	18	10	125%
South Carolina	164	180	16	10%
South Dakota	8	14	6	75%
Tennessee	148	172	24	16%
Texas	661	723	62	9%
Utah	38	34	-4	-10%
Vermont	3	8	5	167%
Virginia	124	114	-10	-8%
Washington	101	110	9	9%
West Virginia	32	22	-10	-31%
Wisconsin	53	52	-1	-2%
Wyoming	10	8	-2	-20%
Total	6,412	6,721	309	4.8%

# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

2020 PRELIMINARY DATA ADDENDUM

Sorted by Percentage Change

Table 2

## Pedestrian Fatalities by State, Jan-Dec 2019 & 2020

Sources: State Highway Safety Offices and GHSA data analysis

State	Jan-Dec 2019	Jan-Dec 2020 (Projected)	Change from 2019 to 2020	
			#	%
Kansas	18	49	31	172%
Vermont	3	8	5	167%
Rhode Island	8	18	10	125%
Alaska	6	13	7	116%
South Dakota	8	14	6	75%
New Hampshire	10	16	6	60%
North Dakota	5	8	3	60%
Mississippi	67	104	37	55%
Arkansas	61	91	30	49%
District of Columbia	9	13	4	44%
Indiana	75	103	28	37%
Nevada	69	88	19	27%
Connecticut	53	65	12	23%
Iowa	22	27	5	23%
Colorado	76	92	16	21%
Ohio	128	154	26	20%
Michigan	149	177	28	19%
Maryland	125	147	22	18%
Tennessee	148	172	24	16%
Georgia	239	273	34	14%
Missouri	111	124	13	12%
Louisiana	122	136	14	11%
North Carolina	236	263	27	11%
South Carolina	164	180	16	10%
New Jersey	175	191	16	9%
Texas	661	723	62	9%
Washington	101	110	9	9%
Kentucky	77	82	5	6%
Montana	17	18	1	6%
Arizona	220	225	5	2%
California	1,020	1,026	6	1%
New Mexico	83	84	1	1%
Florida	745	729	-16	-2%
Wisconsin	53	52	-1	-2%
Minnesota	50	47	-3	-6%
Oregon	85	80	-5	-6%
Pennsylvania	154	145	-9	-6%
Virginia	124	114	-10	-8%
Illinois	171	155	-16	-9%
Oklahoma	88	80	-8	-9%
Utah	38	34	-4	-10%
Idaho	14	12	-2	-14%
Nebraska	20	17	-3	-15%
Alabama	114	96	-18	-16%
New York	286	235	-51	-18%
Wyoming	10	8	-2	-20%
Massachusetts	76	53	-23	-30%
West Virginia	32	22	-10	-31%
Hawaii	37	20	-17	-46%
Delaware	32	17	-15	-47%
Maine	17	9	-8	-47%
Total	6,412	6,721	309	4.8%

Percentage Change Up

Percentage Change Down

# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

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**Table 3**

## Pedestrian Fatalities by State, Jan-Dec 2020

*Source: State Highway  
Safety Offices and  
GHSA data analysis*

Sorted by Number of Fatalities

State	Jan-Dec 2020 (Projected)
California	1,026
Florida	729
Texas	723
Georgia	273
North Carolina	263
New York	235
Arizona	225
New Jersey	191
South Carolina	180
Michigan	177
Tennessee	172
Illinois	155
Ohio	154
Maryland	147
Pennsylvania	145
Louisiana	136
Missouri	124
Virginia	114
Washington	110
Mississippi	104
Indiana	103
Alabama	96
Colorado	92
Arkansas	91
Nevada	88
New Mexico	84
Kentucky	82
Oklahoma	80
Oregon	80
Connecticut	65
Massachusetts	53
Wisconsin	52
Kansas	49
Minnesota	47
Utah	34
Iowa	27
West Virginia	22
Hawaii	20
Montana	18
Rhode Island	18
Delaware	17
Nebraska	17
New Hampshire	16
South Dakota	14
Alaska	13
District of Columbia	13
Idaho	12
Maine	9
North Dakota	8
Vermont	8
Wyoming	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,721</b>

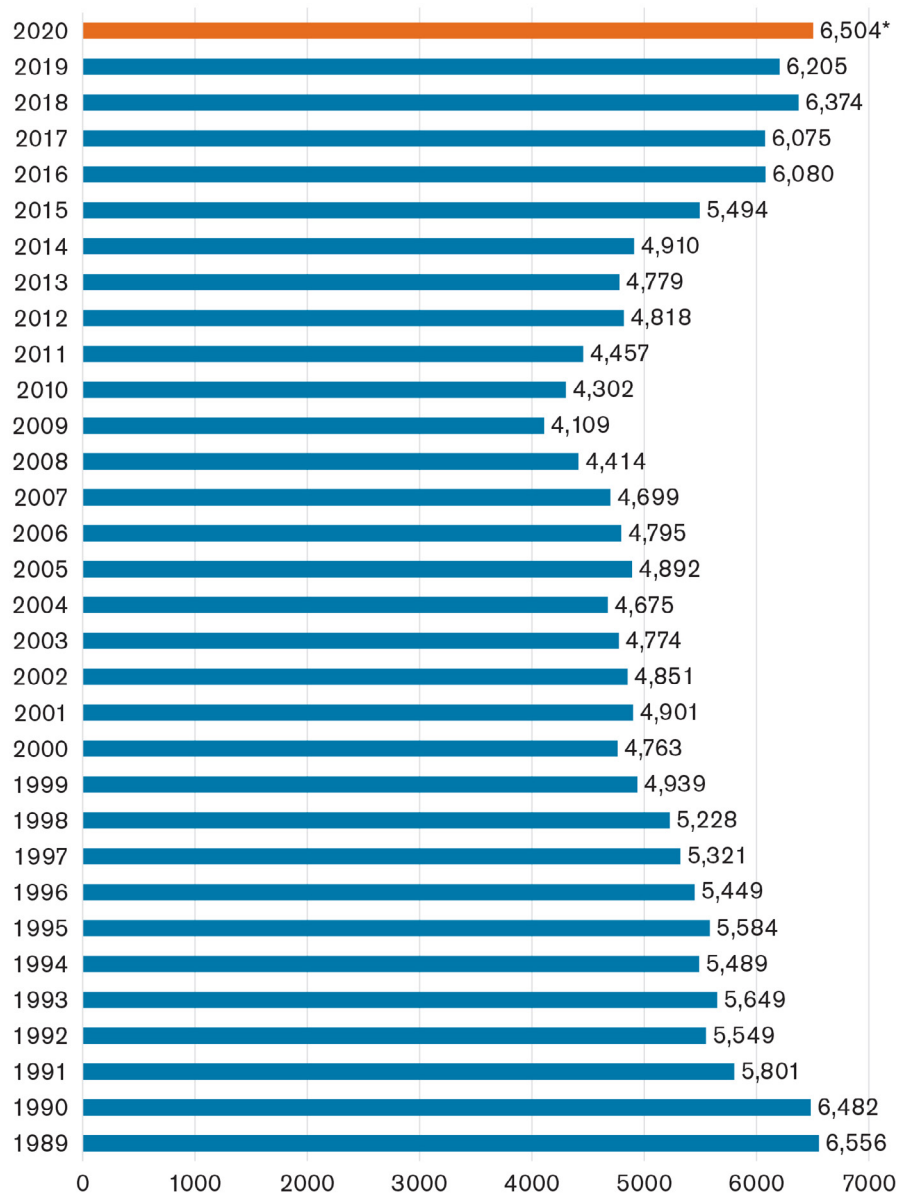
# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

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As previously noted, direct comparisons between SHSO data and FARS data were not made due to differences in these two sources. If, however, the projected 4.8% increase in the number of SHSO-reported pedestrian fatalities is applied to 2019 FARS (Release 1) data, the number of pedestrian fatalities in FARS for 2020 is projected to be 6,504:  $6,205 \times 1.0481 = 6,504$

**If this projection proves accurate, the number of pedestrian fatalities for 2020 would be the largest number of pedestrian deaths reported in FARS since 1989. This is shown in Figure 1.**

**Figure 1** Number of Annual Pedestrian Fatalities, U.S. 1989-2020



\* Projected Sources: FARS and GHSA analysis of SHSO data

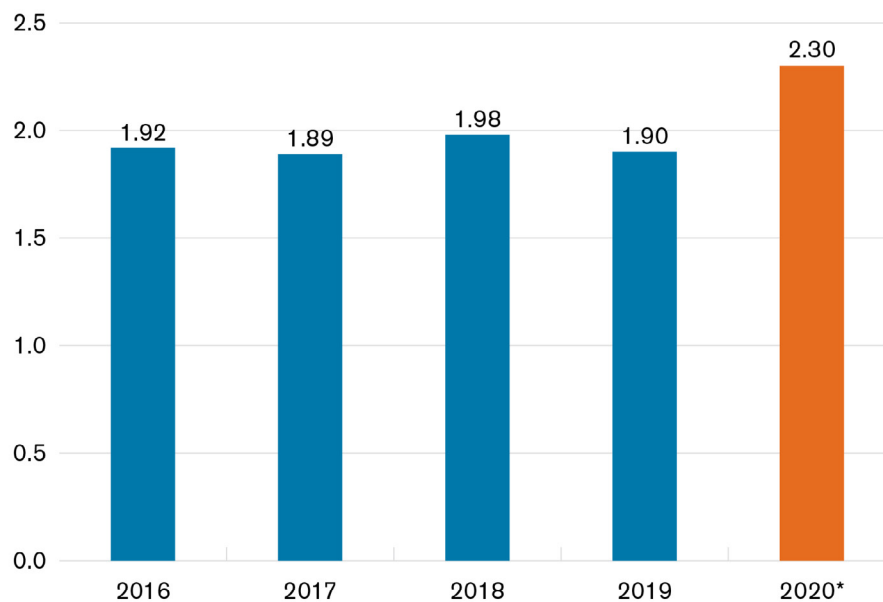


# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

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The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reported that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) declined 13.2% in the U.S. in 2020.<sup>1</sup> This large reduction is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. **The pedestrian fatality rate of 2.30 per one billion VMT in 2020 represents a 21% increase over the 1.90 rate in 2019.** This increase is the result of the reported 13.2% reduction in VMT for 2020 compared with 2019 combined with a 4.8% projected increase in pedestrian deaths. The projected fatality rate for 2020 also exceeds the fatality rates for preceding years (Figure 2).

**Figure 2** U.S. Pedestrian Fatality Rate per One Billion VMT



\* Projected Sources: FARS, FHWA, and GHSA analysis of SHSO data

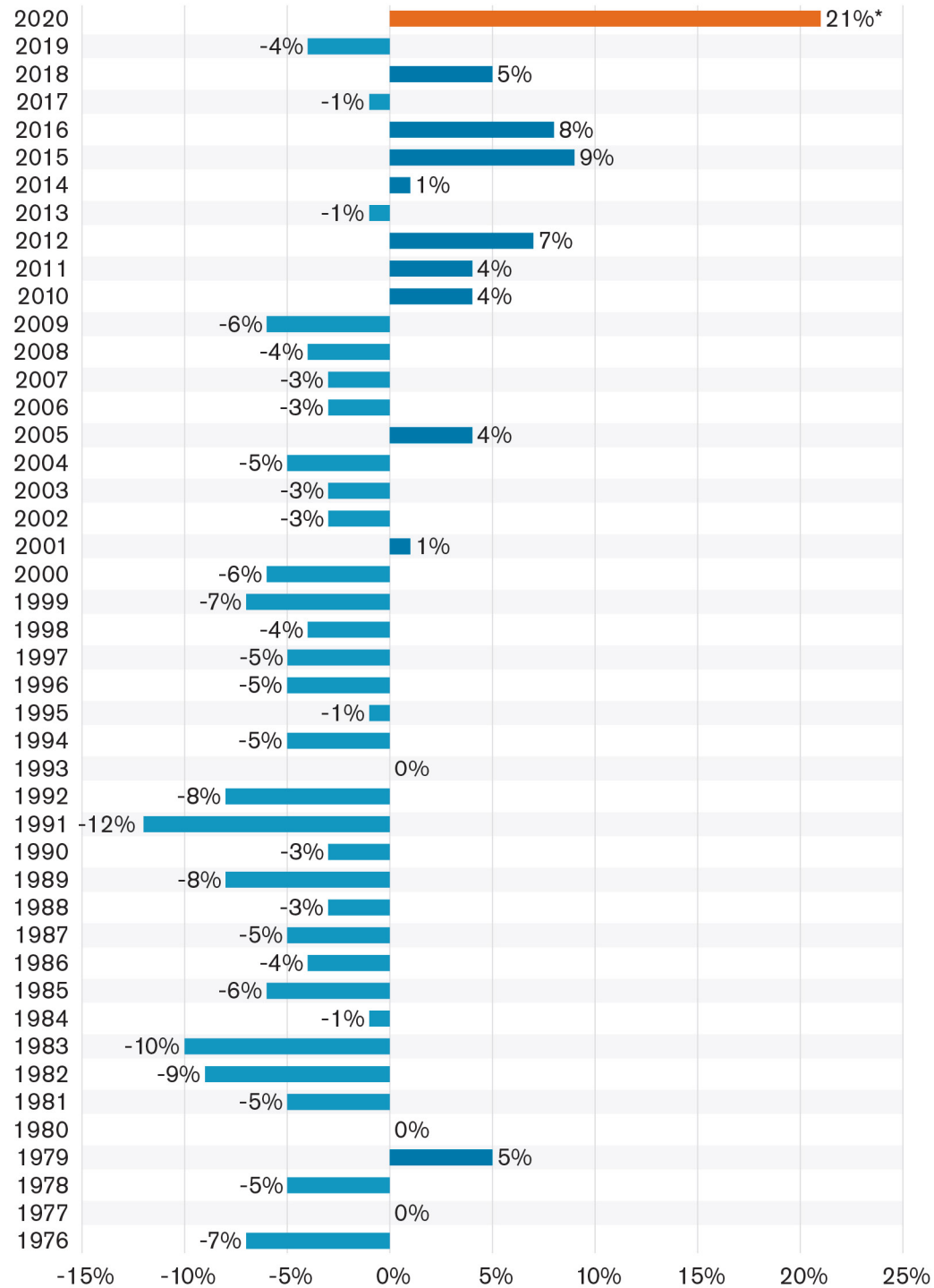
**As shown in Figure 3, a 21% increase in the pedestrian fatality rate would be the largest year-over-year increase ever recorded since FARS was established in 1975.**

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/travel\\_monitoring/tvt.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/travel_monitoring/tvt.cfm)

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**Figure 3** Annual Percent Change in Pedestrian Fatality Rate Per One Billion VMT, 1976-2020



\* Projected

# Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

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### DISCUSSION

The projected increase in pedestrian fatalities in 2020 continues a decade-long pattern of rising pedestrian deaths. As reported in GHSA's Spotlight on Highway Safety, [Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State: 2020 Preliminary Data](#), the number of U.S. pedestrian fatalities increased by 46% during the 10-year period 2010-2019. The projected 21% increase in the pedestrian fatality rate in 2020 is both disturbing and surprising given the reduction in VMT in 2020.

It should be noted that adjustments to preliminary SHSO data that resulted in projected increases in pedestrian fatalities in 2020 are based on historic underreporting associated with preliminary (and in some cases incomplete) data. There is no guarantee the preliminary 2020 data provided by SHSOs will follow the same historic pattern of underreporting.

In addition, computations of pedestrian fatality rates per VMT do not take into account pedestrian exposure data. It is possible (but not established) that activity by people on foot increased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and if so, could have contributed to the increase in projected pedestrian fatalities. There is, however, no national system of estimating the level of pedestrian activity that is analogous to VMT for motor vehicles.

SHSOs and their engineering, education, enforcement and emergency medical services partners are using evidence-based and innovative countermeasures to improve safety for all road users as discussed in GHSA's [Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State: 2020 Preliminary Data](#). Projected increases in both the number of pedestrian fatalities and the fatality rate in 2020 reinforce the need to allocate more resources to aggressively implement evidence-based engineering, equitable enforcement, education and EMS [countermeasures](#).