

Staying Focused: Ohio's Sustained Approach to Decreasing Distracted Driving

**Emily Davidson, Director
Ohio Traffic Safety Office**

Primary Hands-Free Law



Governor Mike DeWine ✓

@GovMikeDeWine



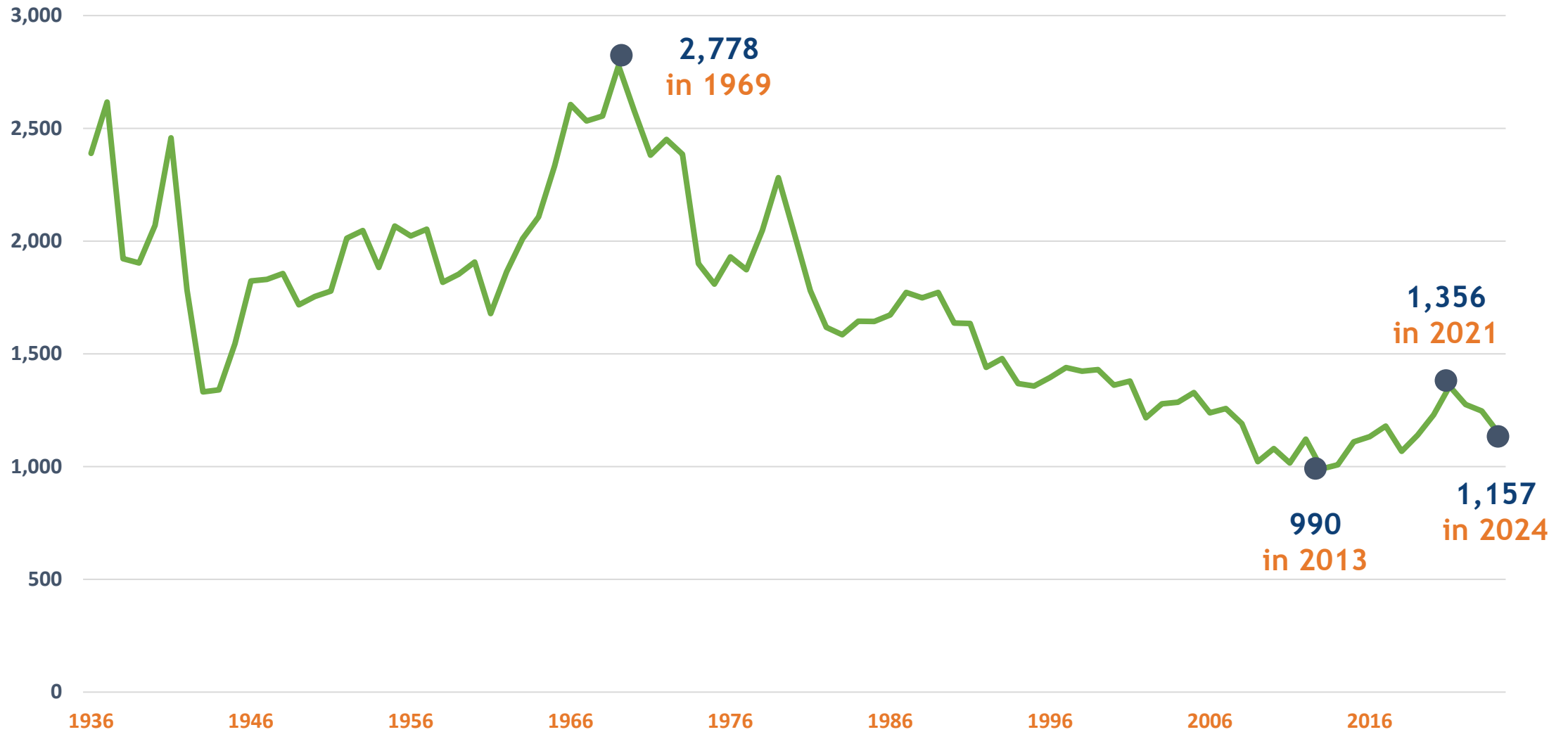
One year ago today, I signed Ohio's enhanced distracted driving law, which makes the use of a cell phone while driving a primary offense. Learn more about the law at phonesdown.ohio.gov.



A photograph of a severe car accident scene. A dark red SUV is overturned on its side on a paved road. The front of the vehicle is heavily crushed and mangled. Debris is scattered on the road surface. In the background, a red fire truck is parked, and several people are standing nearby. Other cars are parked further back. The scene is set outdoors with trees in the distance.

Traffic Deaths declined
3 years in a row

OHIO FATALITIES 1936-2024



Cell Phone Data

	OH	AL	MI	MO	Avg/Cumulative
Law start	4/4/2023	6/16/2023	6/30/2023	8/28/2023	
Days live (as of August 28, 2024)	512	439	425	366	
Average change	-10.9%	-9.3%	-14.9%	-5.1%	-10.0%
Crashes prevented	7,166	2,447	7,460	1,178	18,251
Injuries prevented	4,014	1,371	4,179	660	10,224
Fatalities prevented	33	11	34	5	83
Economic damage prevented	\$283,745,845	\$96,913,384	\$295,410,785	\$22,261,313	\$698,331,327
Drivers	8,700,000	4,061,837	7,982,471	4,275,228	25,019,536



Where do we go from here?





**Ohio Traffic
Safety Office**



**Department of
Transportation**



We can lengthen the reach of our strategies by combining funding sources and working together.



405 Grants



HSIP Funds

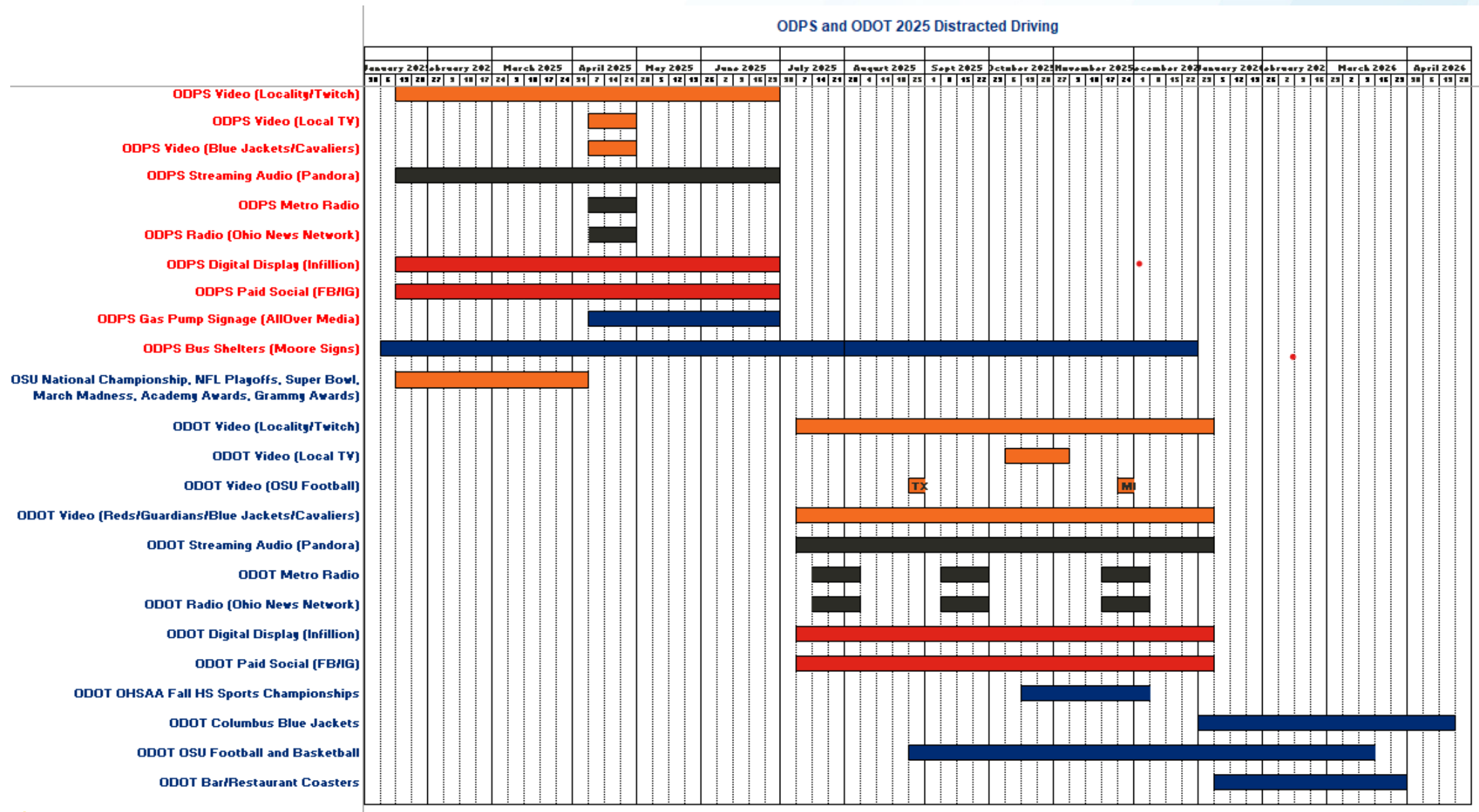


State Funds

Long-Term Plan

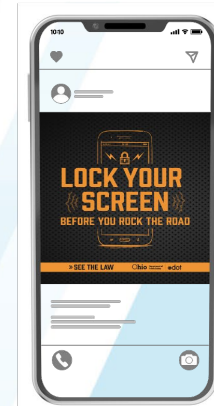


Sustained Media Coverage



Sustained Media Coverage

For more information and downloadable assets, visit:
PhonesDown.Ohio.gov



Lock Your Phone

In Ohio, it's not okay to interact with your phone screen while driving. So, lock that screen before you rock the road.

Choice Language/Images



Here

Never here


April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Ohioans can choose to use their phones in lots of places – but never behind the wheel. Phones Down It's the Law. Ohioans are counting on you to pay attention.

Phones down behind the wheel. It's the law.

Fines start at \$150

PhonesDown.Ohio.gov




It's ok to use your phone at the game

Never behind the Wheel

Ohioans can choose to use their phones in lots of places – but never behind the wheel. In Ohio, it's illegal to interact with your phone screen and electronic devices while driving. In most cases, anything more than a single touch or swipe is against the law.

If an officer sees a violation, they can pull you over.

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The background image shows two female workers in a warehouse or loading dock setting. They are both wearing grey short-sleeved shirts, high-visibility yellow safety vests, and white work gloves. One worker is on the left, looking towards the right, while the other is on the right, leaning over a large cardboard box. A white van is partially visible in the background. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor or well-lit indoor environment.

Educating Employers and Employees

**Our Driving
Concern**
an **nsc** program

Education

Enforcement Matters!

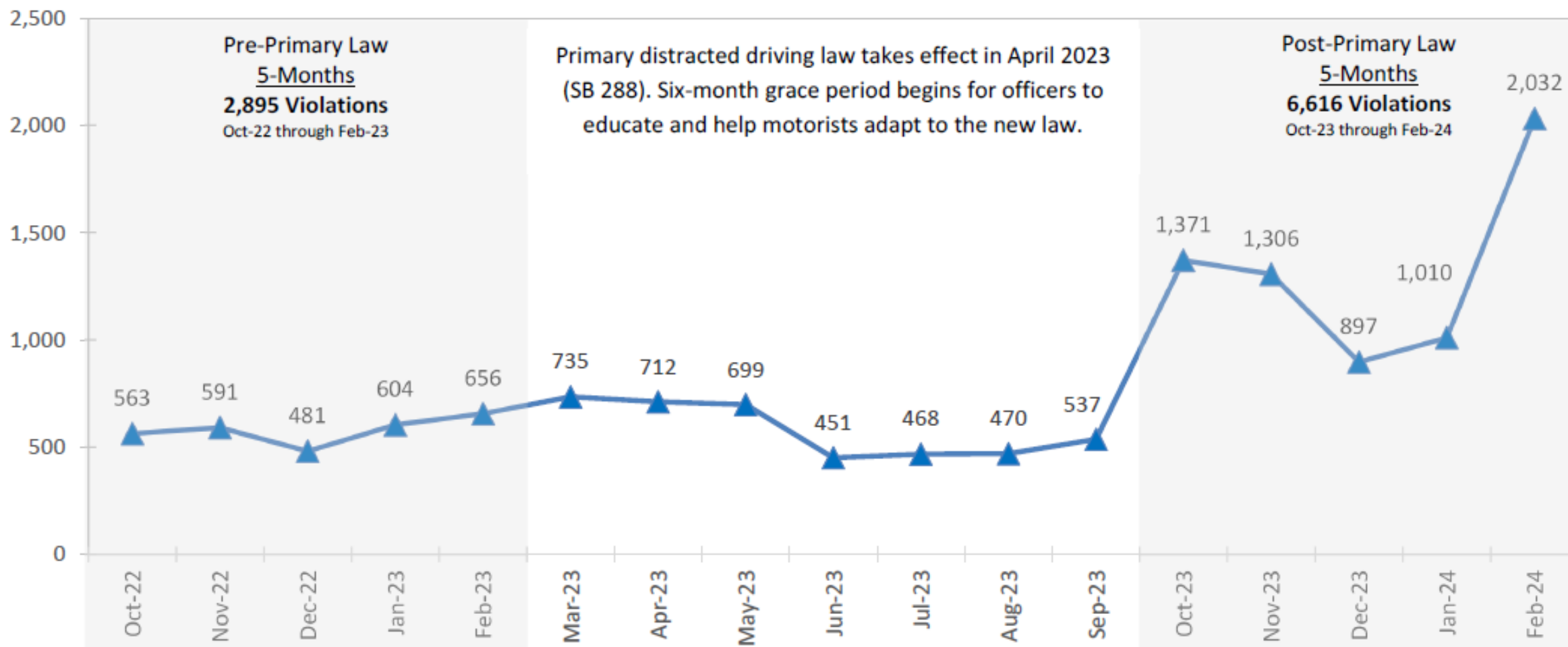
NHTSA Research Shows:

- Large scale, **high-visibility enforcement** combined with **paid/earned media** can reduce hand-held cell phone use and texting while driving.
- **The public's perception of robust enforcement** is crucial to reducing the behavior.



Citations

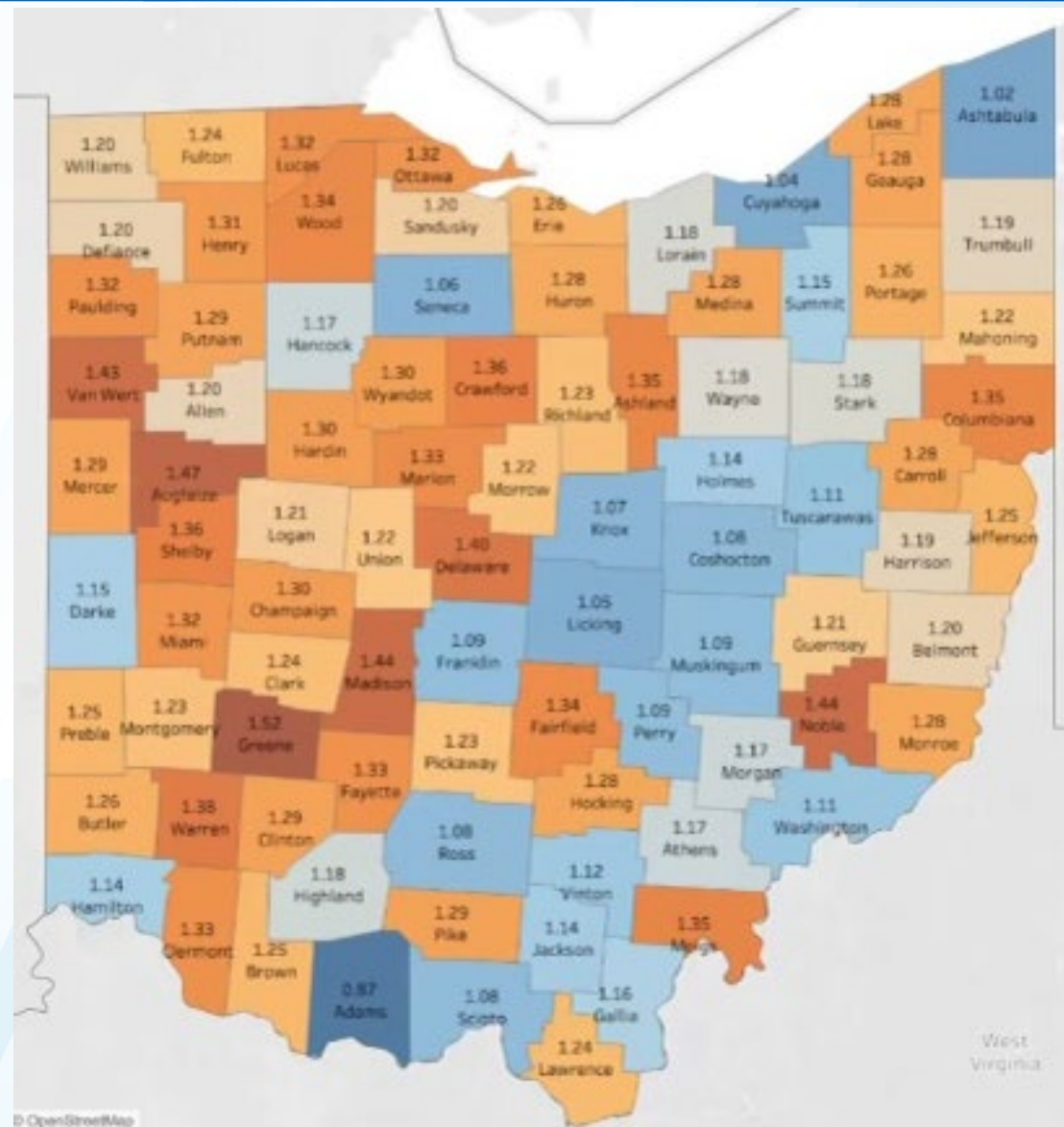
OSHP Distracted Driving Violations by Month



Source: OSHP computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. Distracted driving violations include incidents with one of the following violations: 4511.204, 4511.205, 4511.991, or 392.82A1 (federal motor carrier).

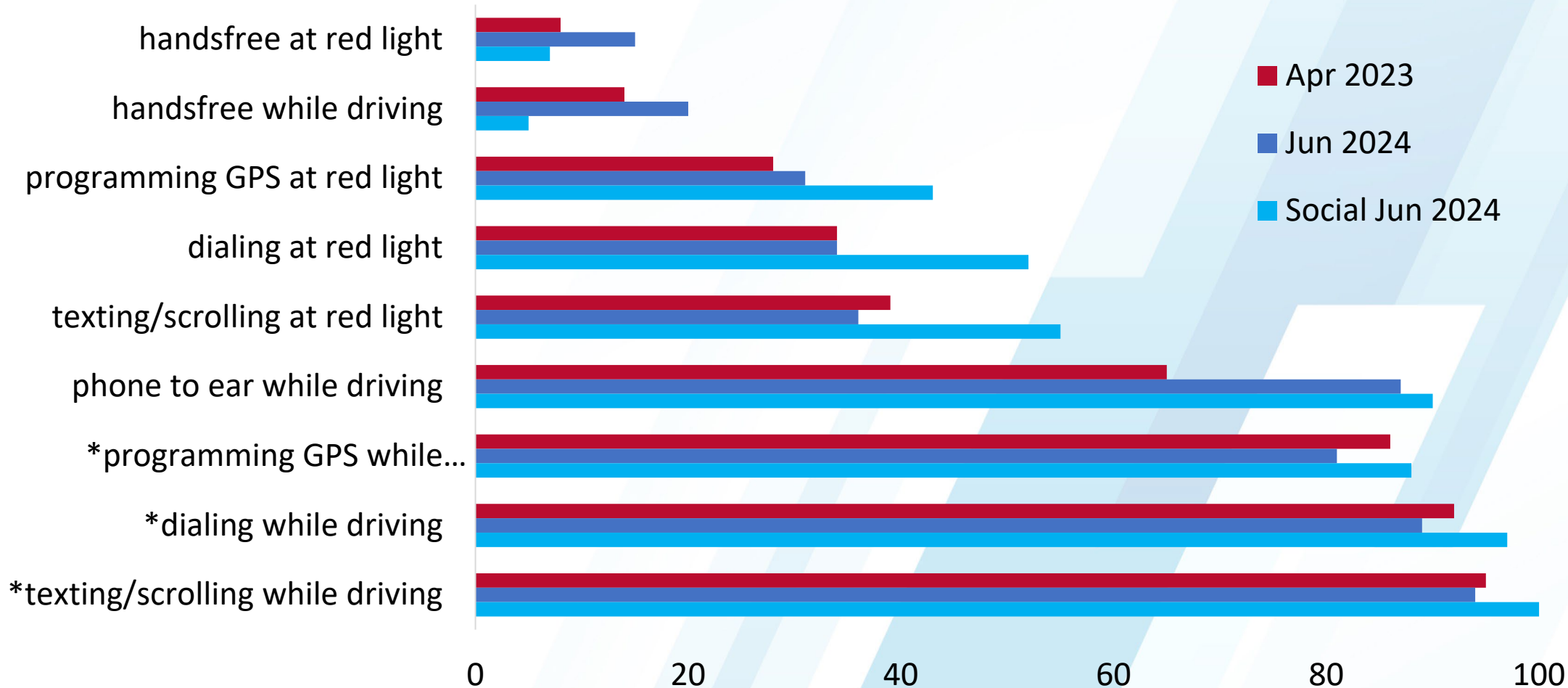
Distraction by County Heatmap

Ohio counties show considerable variation in distraction according to the heatmap below (blue below the state average, orange above) with the most populous counties (and the major cities) tending to have lower rates of distraction compared to the more rural counties.



Public Perception Survey

Ohioans knowledge of law – percent saying illegal



Our key findings

- Officers prefer primary enforcement
 - Large minorities would prefer stricter or simpler law (handsfree)
- Most officers have made at least one stop under the new law
- Officers want funding and training

Recommendations

- Encouraging enforcement is likely to increase stops
- Additional funding and training for officers likely to be utilized might also increase stops
- Public and courts may benefit from **education**

Next steps

- Focus groups with selected officers to identify best practices and specific resources
- Identify areas with high prevalence to monitor once resources are deployed
- Continue messaging campaigns

Takeaways

Work with strategically with partners to expand your campaign and increase distracted driving reductions.

