

# Transportation Equity Caucus

The Transportation Equity Caucus is a diverse coalition of organizations promoting policies that ensure access, mobility, and opportunity for all. Moving forward together, we are charting a new course for our nation through transportation investments that ensure that everyone can participate and prosper.

Transportation is an imperative part of life. It is the connector for people's work, medical care, worship, recreation, and essentials for life. We believe that transportation is a part of the nationwide focus on ending the harm and killing of Black bodies by law enforcement. In that work we have concerns with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) 23 USC 402 and 23 USC 405 programs.

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Two-thirds of the budget for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), approximately \$600 million, is related to Highway Safety Grants codified in 23 USC 402 and 23 USC 405.

**Highway Traffic Safety Grant programs fund policing.** 23 USC 402 requires "sustained enforcement of statutes addressing impaired driving, occupant protection, and driving in excess of posted speed limits." In Illinois, the state's FY 2019 [Annual Report](#) said that federal funding paid for at least 144,181 patrol hours as part of the state's Sustained Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP).

**Traffic Enforcement is the most common form of police-initiated contact and disproportionately affects Black people.** A [2018 report](#) by the Department of Justice found that "being a driver in a traffic stop was the most common form of police-initiated contact" and that "Blacks were more likely to be pulled over in traffic stops than whites and [Latinos]."

**Many citations and arrests occur outside of NHTSA priority areas.** In Arizona, the state's FY 2019 [Annual Report](#) provided citation statistics related to a DUI task force that show a 2% DUI arrest rate per contact and more than 600,000 citations for reasons other than a DUI (Table 3.6 in Report).

**Required reporting does not adequately capture who is funded.** Every state must submit an annual [Highway Safety Plan and an Annual Report](#), but reporting focuses on performance targets not program spending. [Performance measures](#) for activities are limited to citations and arrests (A-1, A-2, and A-3).

**We do not know the racial effects of these programs.** Data on the demographics of federally funded traffic enforcement are not required. \$7.5 million is available each year through the Section 1906 [Racial Profiling Prohibition Grant](#). Despite [states](#) "increasingly enacting laws prohibiting racial and ethnic profiling and requiring the collection, publication, and analysis of traffic stop and demographic data," Section 1906 is underutilized, with fewer than \$3 million in funds distributed each year since FY 2017.

**We do not know whether these programs have led to police violence.** There is no required data collection on use of force as part of these programs.

**We do not know how much funding goes to police vs. other eligible entities.** No aggregate reporting of types of recipients is required in annual reports. Being responsive to demands for reallocation of resources would be improved by knowing the allocation of funding to different types of recipients.

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