

State of

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**Drunk Driving
Fatalities in America**

2008

THE
CENTURY COUNCIL

DISTILLERS FIGHTING DRUNK DRIVING & UNDERAGE DRINKING

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DISTILLERS FIGHTING DRUNK DRIVING & UNDERAGE DRINKING

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Overview

For almost two decades, The Century Council, a national, independent not-for-profit organization, has been a leader in the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking and promoting responsible decision making regarding beverage alcohol. Founded in 1991 and funded by distillers – Bacardi U.S.A., Inc., Beam Global Spirits and Wine, Inc., Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Inc., DIAGEO, Hood River Distillers, Inc., Pernod Ricard USA, and Sidney Frank Importing Co., Inc. – The Century Council develops and implements innovative programs and public awareness campaigns and promotes action through strategic partnerships toward reaching these important goals. An independent Advisory Board of distinguished leaders in business, government, education, law enforcement, medicine, and other relevant disciplines assists the Council and its members in its efforts.

Since The Century Council's inception, our funding companies have promoted the Council's mission by investing nearly \$200 million dollars in programs, research and initiatives to fight drunk driving and underage drinking – two of society's top safety concerns. During this period of time we have seen alcohol-impaired driving fatalities decline 26% nationally, and among the nation's youth the decline has been even more significant, decreasing 48% among those under 21. While the Council cannot claim sole responsibility for these significant reductions, The Century Council has likely played a role in reaching these historic low levels.

Despite this progress, more work remains to be done. The average BAC level recorded among drinking drivers in fatal crashes remains at .16, twice the legal limit. In 2008, hardcore drunk drivers, those who had a BAC level of .15 or higher, accounted for seven out of ten alcohol-impaired fatal crash on our roadways.

The Century Council continues to operate on the philosophy that collective action has a greater impact than individual efforts, and works to involve all sectors of the community including law enforcement, judges, public officials, educators, insurers, health care professionals, government agencies, and advocacy organizations, in this important fight to advance policies and programs to help eliminate drunk driving. Since the launch of the National Hardcore Drunk Driving Project in 1997, the Council has been spotlighting the hardcore drunk driving problem and has highlighted research, strategies, and programs for the swift identification, certain punishment, and effective treatment of these deadly offenders. As part of the project The Century Council will continue its partnership with the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) and expand upon the successful *Hardcore Drunk Driving Prosecutorial Guide* with the development of a training module for Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors to educate and enable prosecutors to more effectively prosecute hardcore drunk drivers. Additionally, The Century Council is working with judges, prosecutors, and probation and parole officials from across the country asking Congress to expand the use of DWI courts and criminal justice trainings to improve DWI adjudication efforts. A copy of our Joint SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization Recommendations is available on our website.

These statistics and initiatives highlight The Century Council's leadership role in the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking. To find out more about The Century Council's programs and initiatives to fight drunk driving and underage drinking, or for copies of our latest research, please visit our website at www.centurycouncil.org.



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Terminology

ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED FATALITY

Drivers in all 50 states and D.C. are considered to be alcohol-impaired if their blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is .08 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher. Any fatality occurring in a crash involving at least one driver, or motorcycle operator, with a BAC of .08 or higher is considered to be an alcohol-impaired driving fatality. The term alcohol-impaired does not indicate that a crash or a fatality was the result of alcohol impairment. In producing national and state alcohol-impaired statistics, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates the extent of alcohol involvement when alcohol test results are unknown.

ALCOHOL-INVOLVED FATALITY

Alcohol-involved fatalities are those where at least one driver, or motorcycle operator, has a positive BAC of .01 or higher. In producing national and state alcohol-involved statistics, NHTSA estimates the extent of alcohol involvement when alcohol test results are unknown.

BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC)

BAC is measured in grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood. A BAC of .01 indicates .01 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood. As of July 2004, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation establishing a driver with a BAC of .08 to be legally intoxicated. Additionally, 42 states and the District of Columbia have laws and penalties for those who drive with elevated or "high" BAC levels.

HARDCORE DRUNK DRIVERS

Hardcore drunk drivers, those who drive with a high BAC of .15 or above, do so repeatedly, as demonstrated by having more than one drunk driving arrest, and are highly resistant to changing their behavior despite previous sanctions, treatment, or education efforts.

RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION

The rate of alcohol-impaired fatalities per 100,000 population is the number of alcohol-impaired fatalities for every 100,000 persons in the population being measured. For example, an alcohol-impaired fatality rate of 3.9 per 100,000 population nationally means that for every 100,000 people in the nation, there were approximately four alcohol-impaired fatalities.

Foreword

The Century Council is pleased to present its annual *State of Drunk Driving Fatalities in America, 2008* summary. This synopsis includes tables and graphs summarizing trend data and the latest available statistics on alcohol-impaired fatal driving crashes in the U.S. and detailed state-by-state. The report also highlights hardcore drunk driver statistics and the impact they have on our nation's roadways according to data collected by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

In 2008, there were nearly six million police-reported traffic crashes, which includes 37,261 people who were killed on our nation's roadways. Last year 11,773 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher, down ten percent from 13,041 reported in 2007, and down 44% from a high of 21,113 recorded in 1982. Overall, 43 states and the District of Columbia experienced a decrease in the number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities in 2008. Similarly, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population declined 57% in the U.S. and in most states over the past ten years.

Since record keeping began in 1982, NHTSA estimates indicate alcohol-impaired driving fatalities have declined 71% among those under 21. In 2008, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities among those under 21 also decreased nationally and in 38 states and the District of Columbia. Specifically the number of drunk driving fatalities among those under 21 dropped 19% from 1,872 fatalities in 2007 to 1,510 in 2008. Likewise, under 21 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population declined 75% since 1982 and 23% over the past year.

The 2008 fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and the alcohol-impaired driving fatality rate per 100 million VMT reached the lowest levels ever recorded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (1.27 and 0.40, respectively.) Notwithstanding these significant decreases, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities continued to account for 32% of the total traffic fatalities in 2008 – an average of one fatality every 45 minutes.

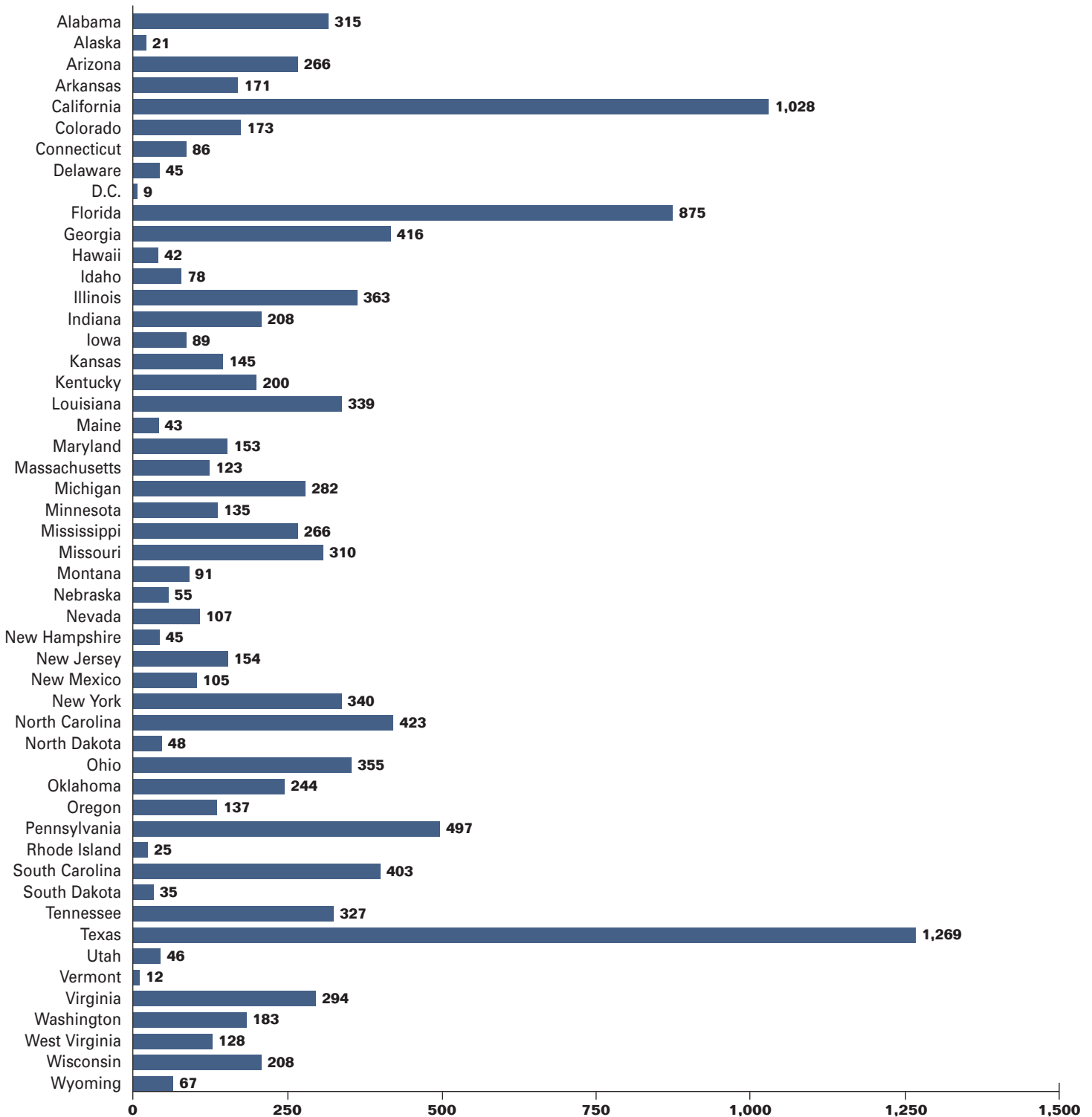
Despite the progress made in terms of drunk driving laws, occupant, vehicle, and road improvements, the impact of the hardcore drunk driver has not changed significantly over the past decade. This dangerous segment of the driving population, the hardcore drunk driver – those who drive with a high BAC (.15 or above), do so repeatedly as demonstrated by having more than one drunk driving arrest, and are highly resistant to changing their behavior despite previous sanctions, treatment, or education efforts – continue to account for a disproportionate share of the alcohol-impaired driving fatalities on our nation's roadways. Twelve years after The Century Council launched the *National Hardcore Drunk Driving Project*, the proportion of alcohol-impaired fatalities involving a driver with a BAC level of .15 or higher remains relatively unchanged, accounting for 68% of the drunk driving fatalities in 2008. Drivers with a BAC level of .15 or higher in fatal crashes were nine times more likely to have a prior DWI conviction than non-drinking drivers. Further, 44% of drivers with a prior DWI conviction in the past three years involved in a fatal crash had a BAC level of .15 or higher.

These statistics and others in this report are all positive indicators of the progress being made to reduce and ultimately eliminate drunk driving. The Century Council will continue to provide resources to assist law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, legislators, state and federal government agencies, treatment professionals, and advocacy groups in this important and life-saving effort.

The information presented in this report is drawn from several databases maintained by government agencies, including the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) of NHTSA, which compiles crash data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), and the U.S. Census Bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce. This report reflects data from 1982 to the present utilizing NHTSA's *multiple imputation* method for estimating missing information about BAC levels for persons involved in fatal crashes, thus allowing for improved reporting of alcohol involvement statistics at any BAC level. The U.S. Census Bureau publishes state resident population estimates which were used in this report.

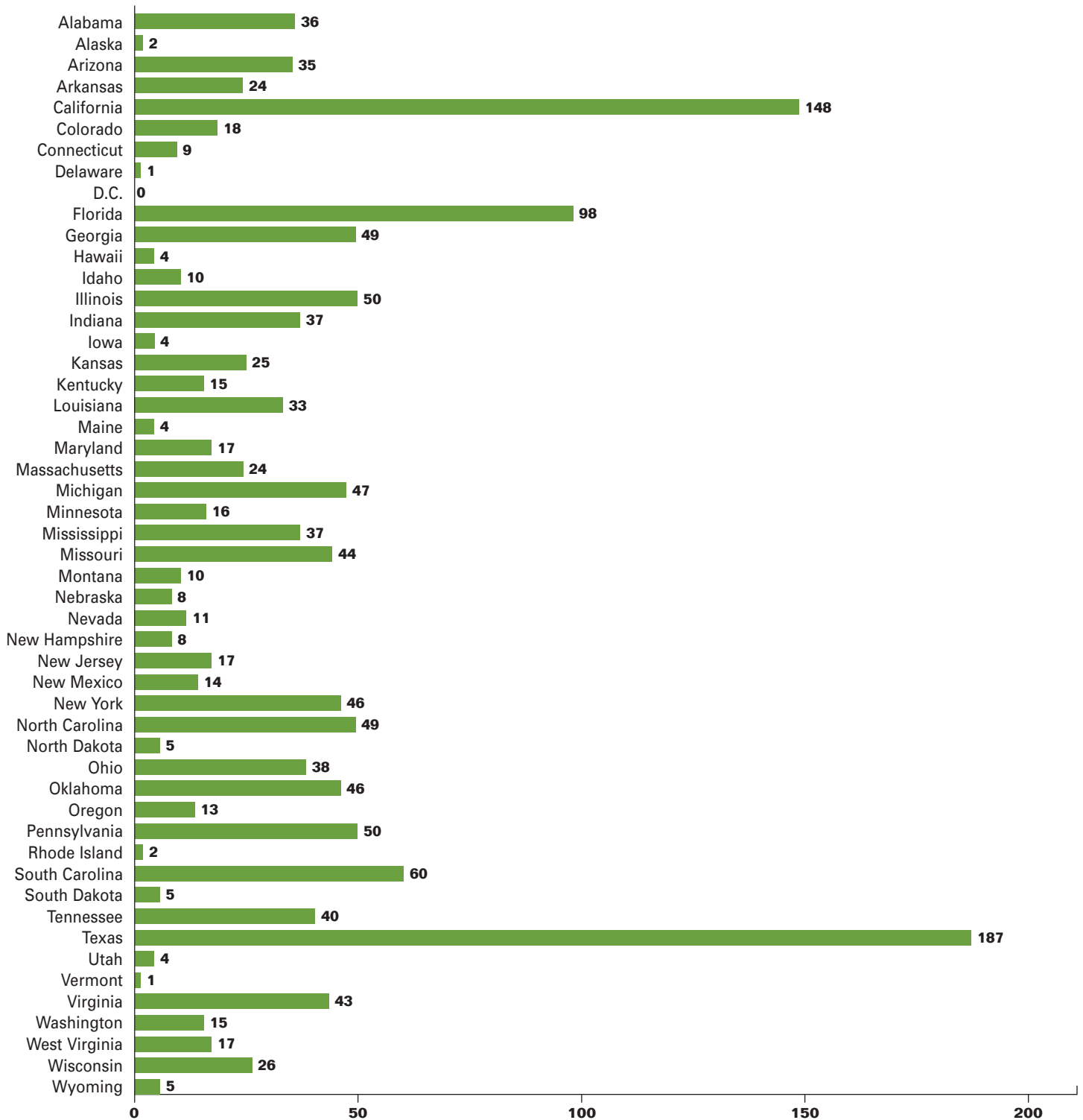
2008 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities

U.S. TOTAL: 11,773



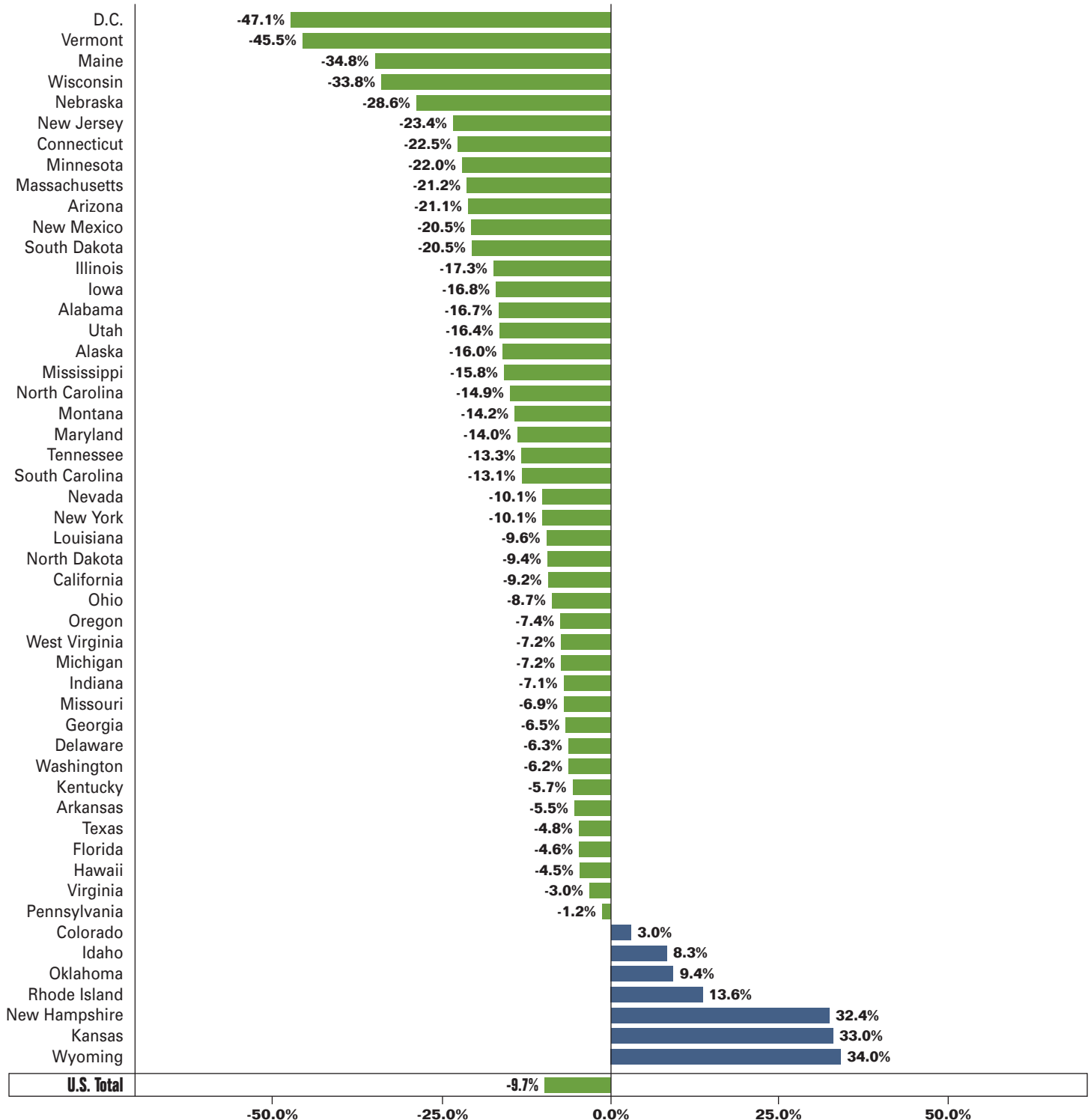
2008 Under 21 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities

U.S. TOTAL: 1,510



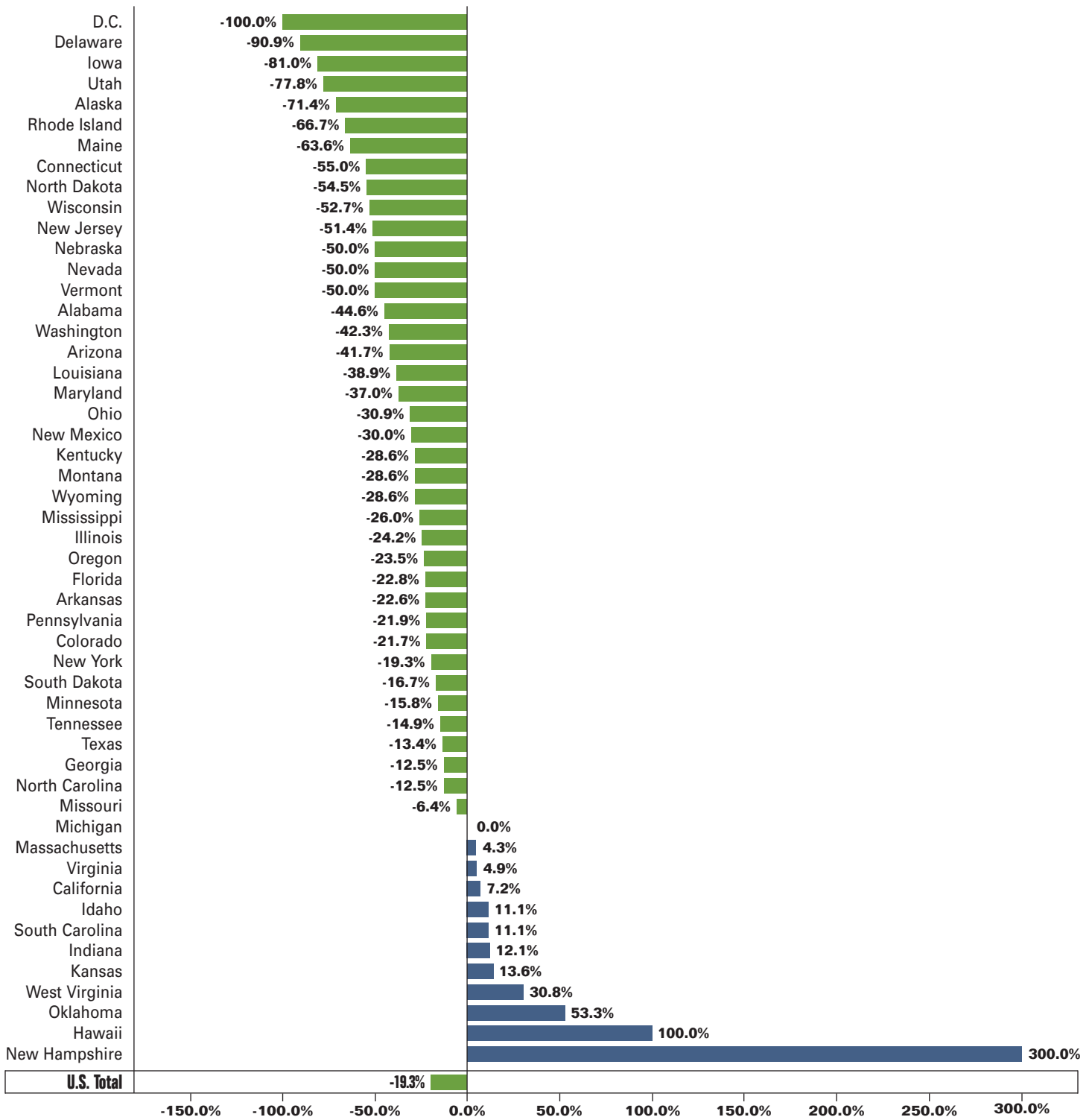
From 2007 to 2008, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities declined nationally and in 43 states and D.C.

PERCENT CHANGE IN ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES FROM 2007 TO 2008 BY STATE RANK



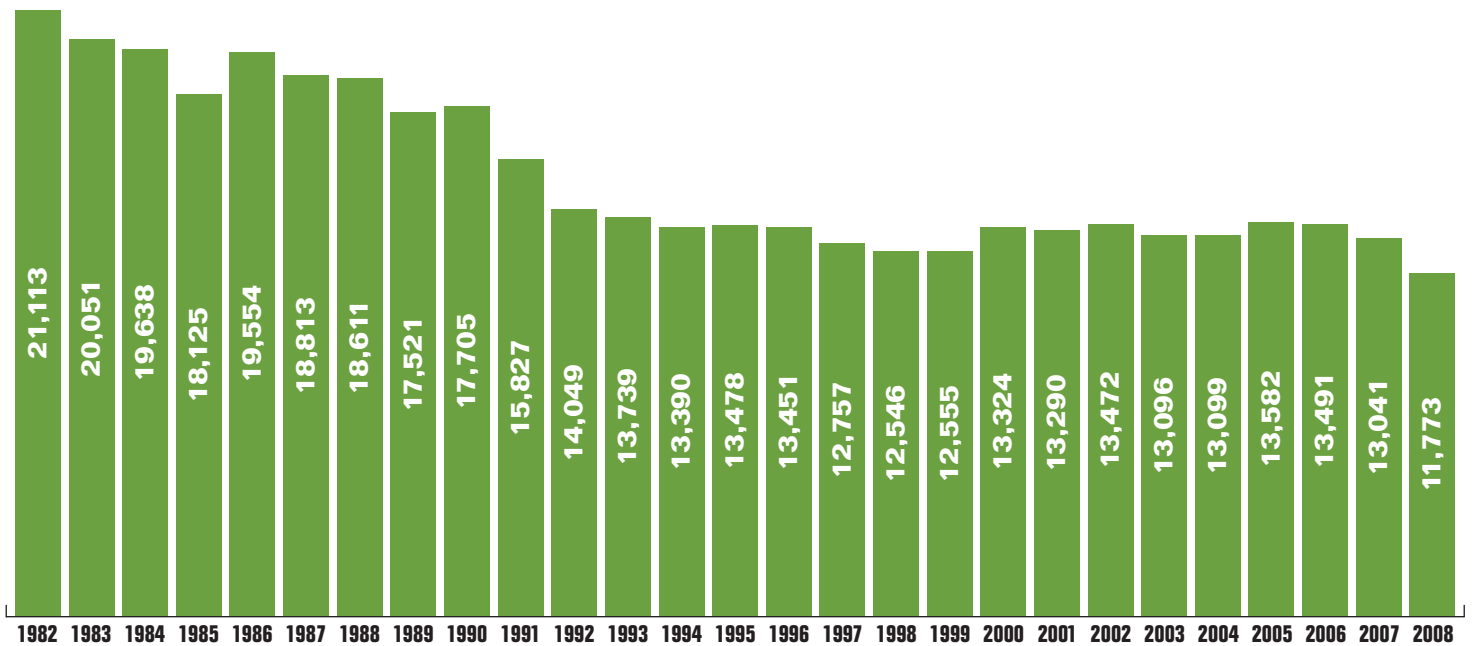
Between 2007 and 2008, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities among those under 21 decreased nationally and in 38 states and D.C.

PERCENT CHANGE IN UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES FROM 2007 TO 2008 BY STATE RANK



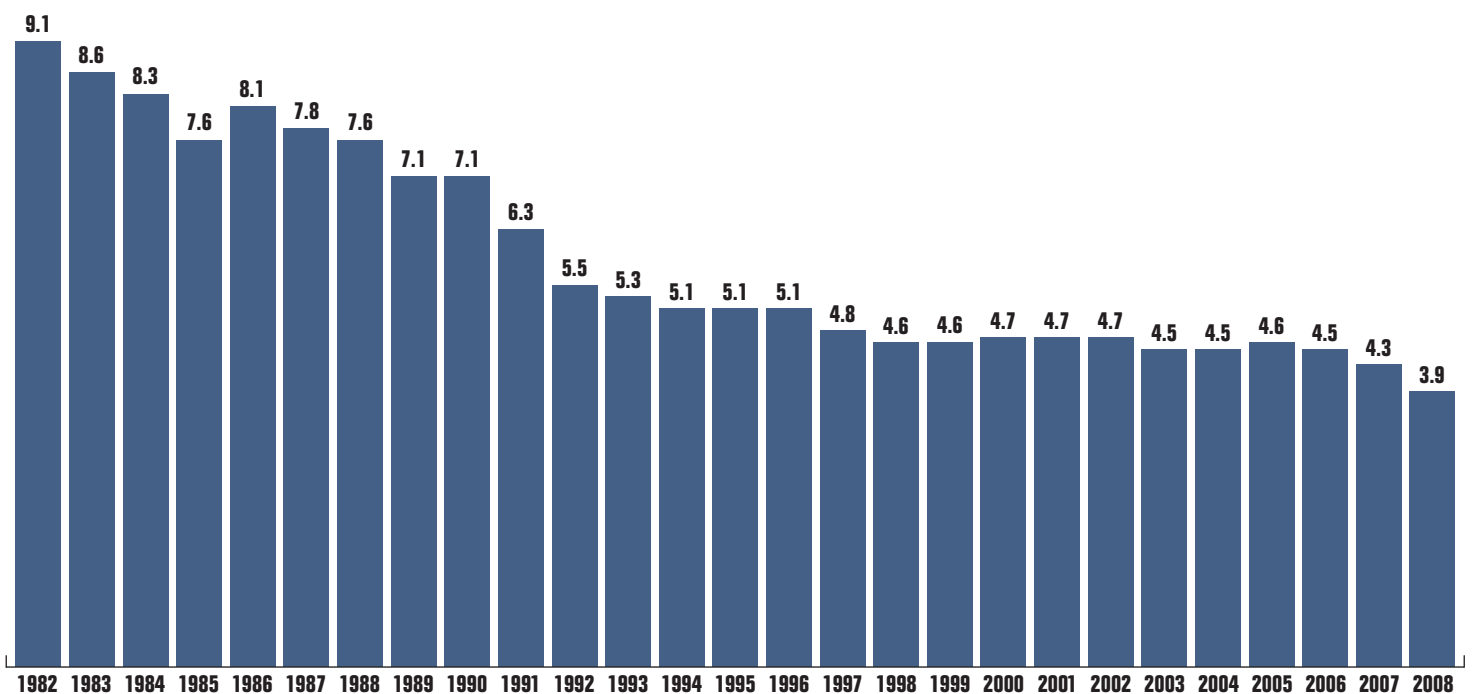
Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities from 1982-2008

ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES HAVE DECLINED 44% FROM 1982 TO 2008.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS

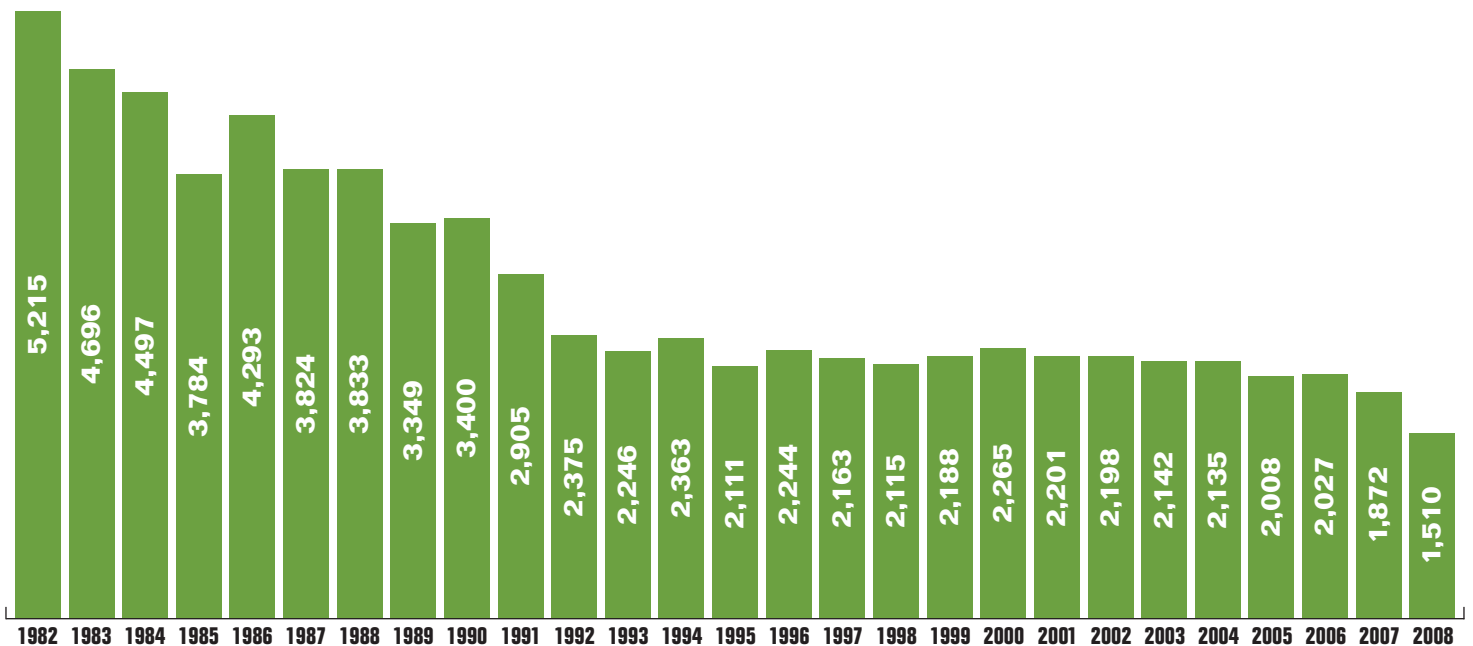
ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES PER 100,000 POPULATION HAVE DECREASED 57% SINCE 1982.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS and U.S. Census Bureau

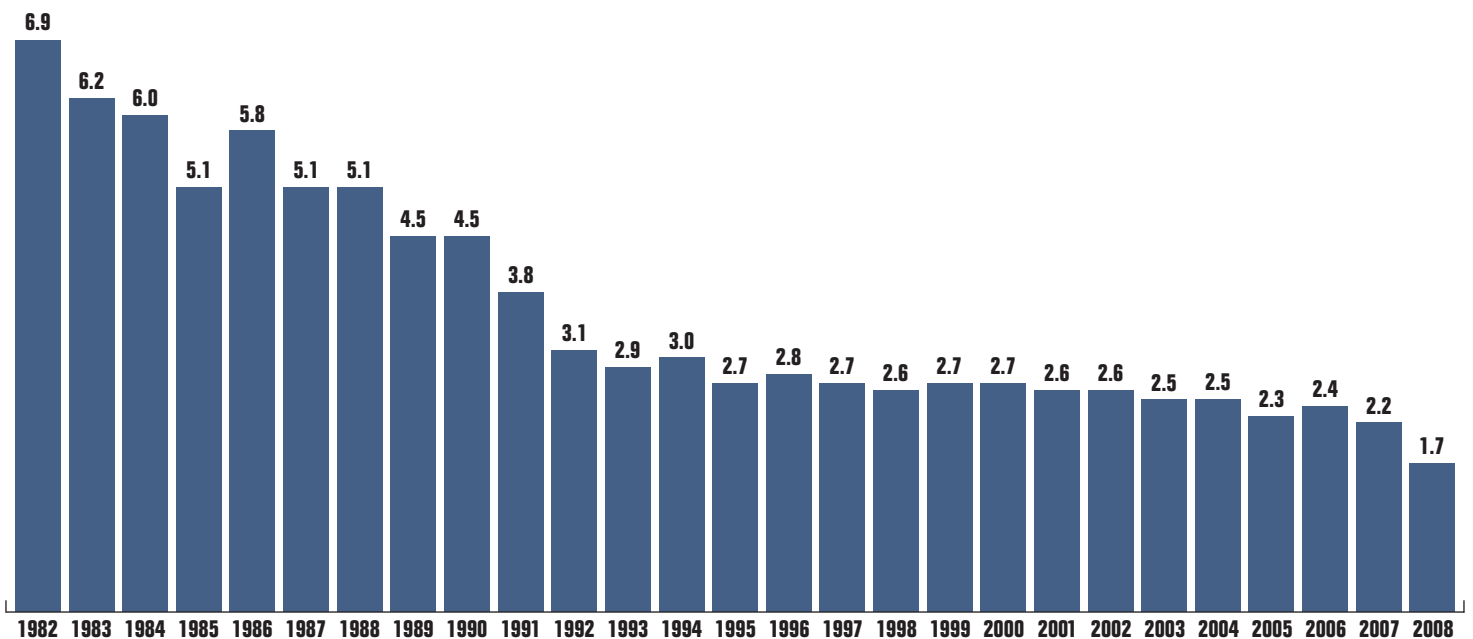
Under 21 Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities from 1982-2008

UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES HAVE DECLINED 71% FROM 1982 TO 2008.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS

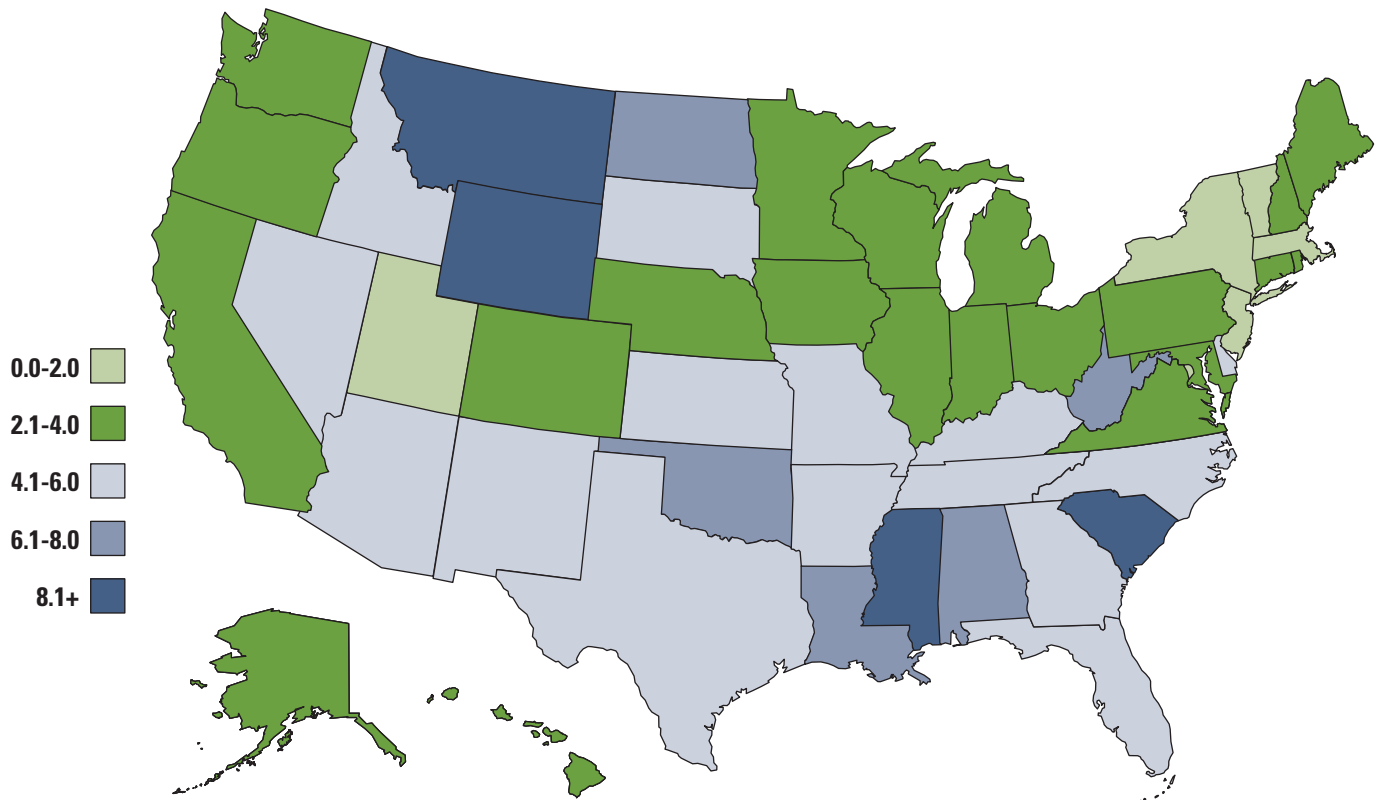
AMONG THOSE UNDER 21, ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITIES PER 100,000 POPULATION DECREASED 75% SINCE 1982.



Data Source: NHTSA/FARS and U.S. Census Bureau

In 25 states and D.C., alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population were at or below the national average of 3.9 deaths per 100,000 population.

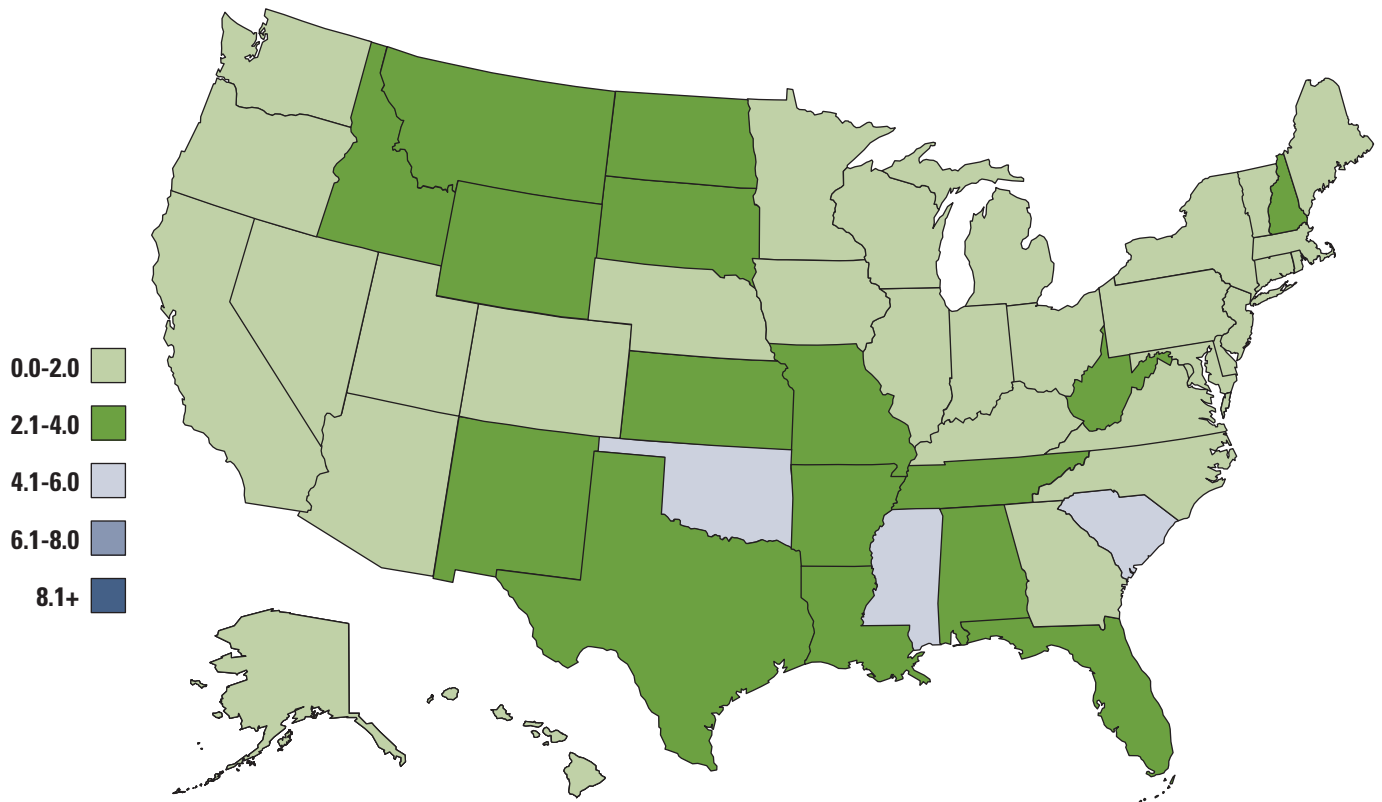
2008 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES BY STATE



Alabama	6.8	Illinois	2.8	Montana	9.4	Rhode Island	2.4
Alaska	3.1	Indiana	3.3	Nebraska	3.1	South Carolina	9.0
Arizona	4.1	Iowa	3.0	Nevada	4.1	South Dakota	4.4
Arkansas	6.0	Kansas	5.2	New Hampshire	3.4	Tennessee	5.3
California	2.8	Kentucky	4.7	New Jersey	1.8	Texas	5.2
Colorado	3.5	Louisiana	7.7	New Mexico	5.3	Utah	1.7
Connecticut	2.5	Maine	3.3	New York	1.7	Vermont	1.9
Delaware	5.2	Maryland	2.7	North Carolina	4.6	Virginia	3.8
D.C.	1.5	Massachusetts	1.9	North Dakota	7.5	Washington	2.8
Florida	4.8	Michigan	2.8	Ohio	3.1	West Virginia	7.1
Georgia	4.3	Minnesota	2.6	Oklahoma	6.7	Wisconsin	3.7
Hawaii	3.3	Mississippi	9.1	Oregon	3.6	Wyoming	12.6
Idaho	5.1	Missouri	5.2	Pennsylvania	4.0	U.S. Total	3.9

In 27 states and D.C., under 21 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population were at or below the national average of 1.7 deaths per 100,000 population.

2008 UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES BY STATE

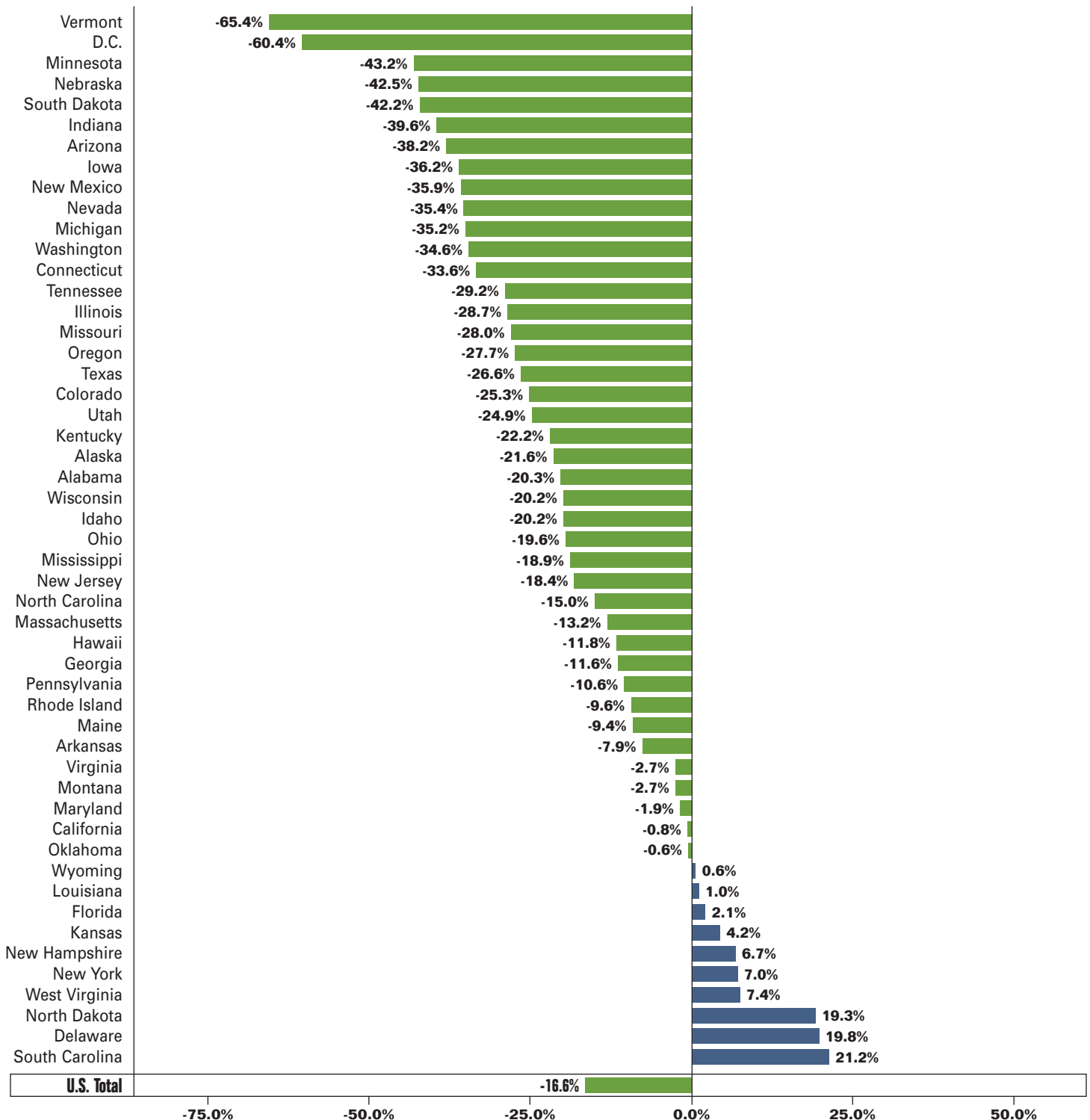


Alabama	2.7	Illinois	1.3	Montana	3.9	Rhode Island	0.7
Alaska	1.0	Indiana	2.0	Nebraska	1.5	South Carolina	4.8
Arizona	1.8	Iowa	0.5	Nevada	1.5	South Dakota	2.1
Arkansas	2.9	Kansas	3.0	New Hampshire	2.3	Tennessee	2.3
California	1.3	Kentucky	1.3	New Jersey	0.7	Texas	2.4
Colorado	1.3	Louisiana	2.5	New Mexico	2.4	Utah	0.4
Connecticut	0.9	Maine	1.2	New York	0.9	Vermont	0.6
Delaware	0.4	Maryland	1.1	North Carolina	1.9	Virginia	2.0
D.C.	0.0	Massachusetts	1.4	North Dakota	2.8	Washington	0.8
Florida	2.1	Michigan	1.7	Ohio	1.2	West Virginia	3.7
Georgia	1.7	Minnesota	1.1	Oklahoma	4.3	Wisconsin	1.7
Hawaii	1.2	Mississippi	4.1	Oregon	1.3	Wyoming	3.3
Idaho	2.1	Missouri	2.6	Pennsylvania	1.5	U.S. Total	1.7

Data Source: NHTSA/FARS and U.S. Census Bureau

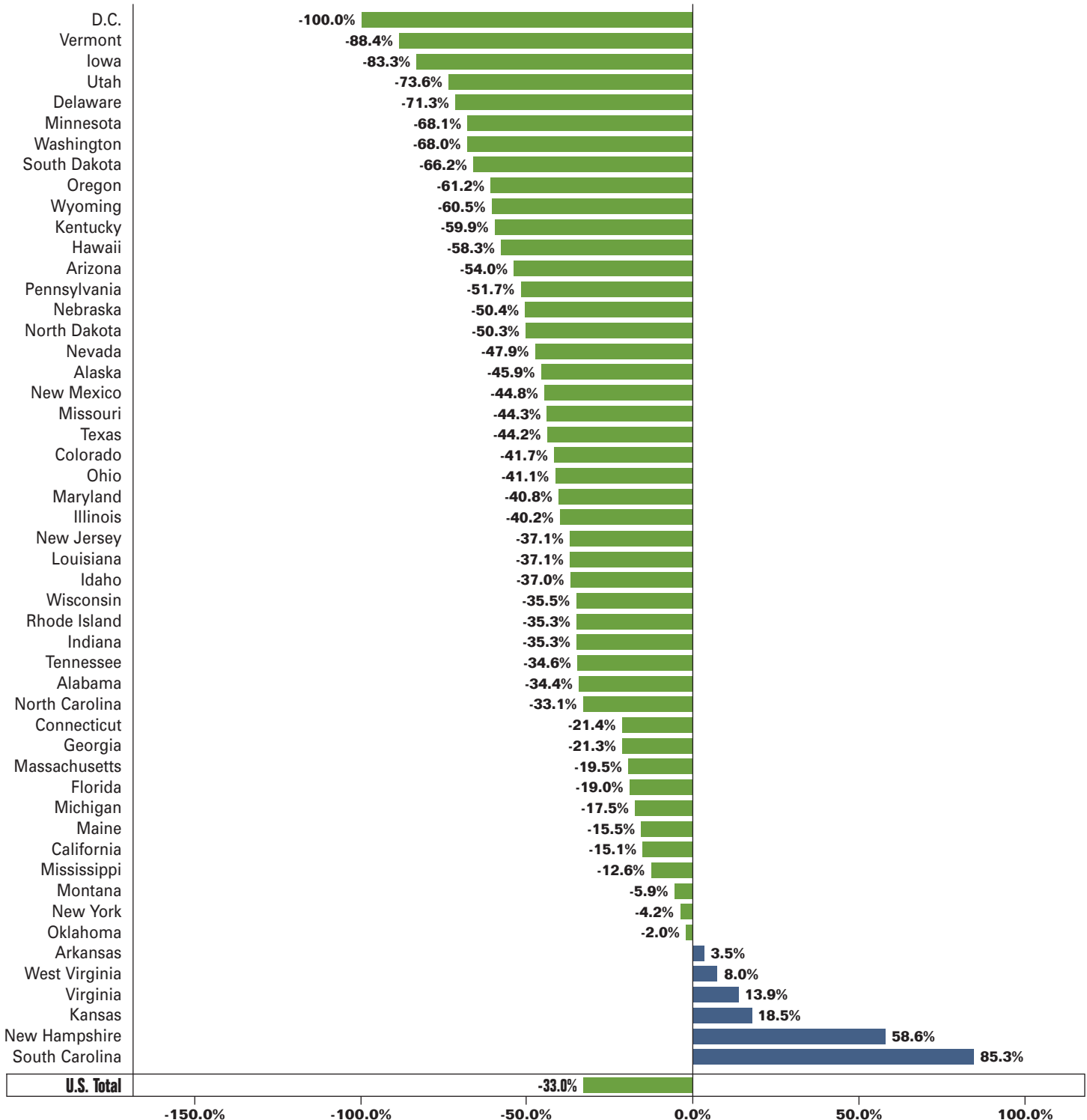
Between 1998 and 2008 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population decreased in all but 10 states.

PERCENT CHANGE IN ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES FROM 1998 TO 2008 BY STATE RANK



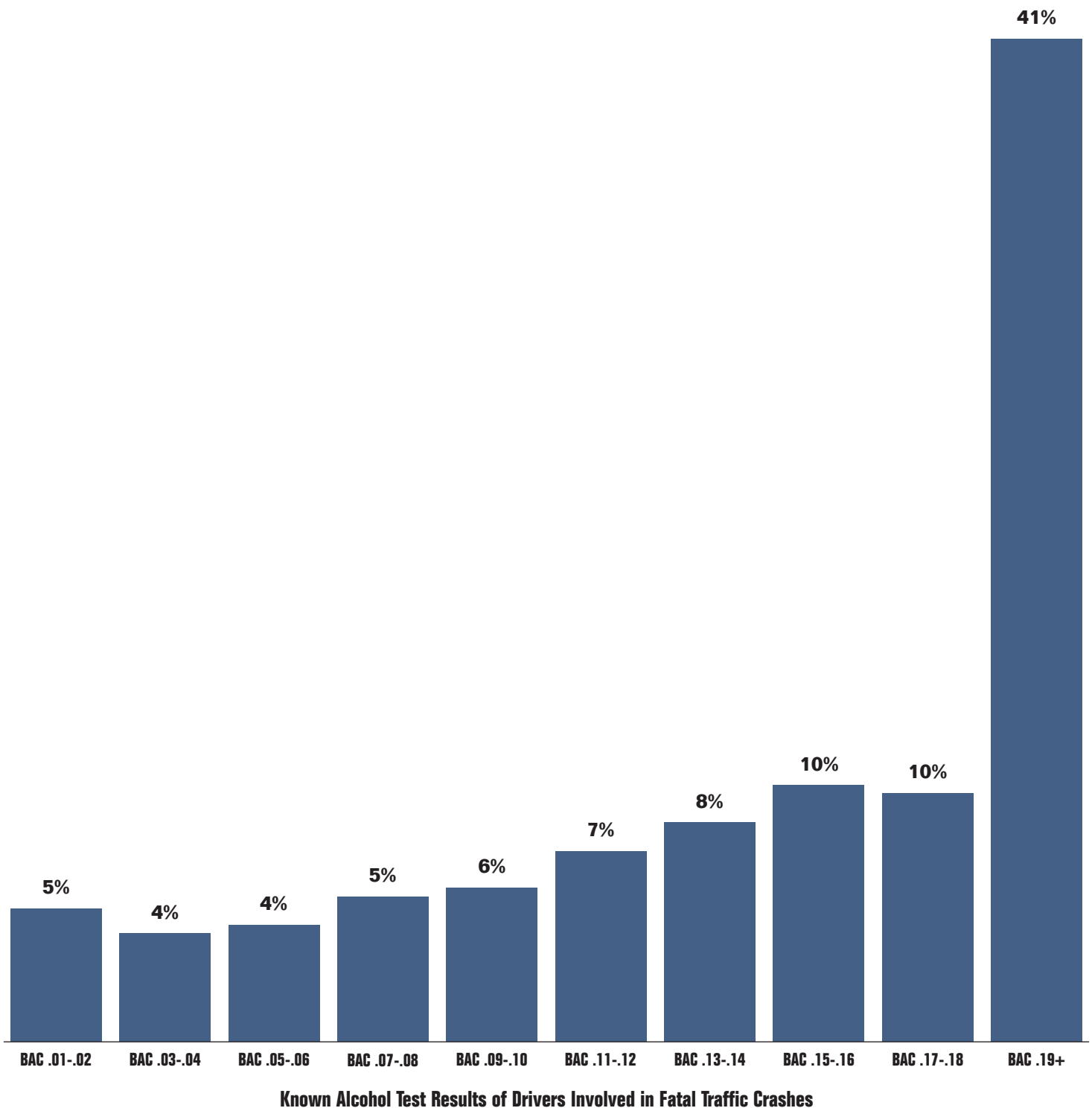
With the exception of 6 states, under 21 alcohol-impaired driving fatalities per 100,000 population declined between 1998 and 2008.

PERCENT CHANGE IN UNDER 21 ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING FATALITY RATES FROM 1998 TO 2008 BY STATE RANK



In 2008, 61% of the alcohol-involved driving fatalities involved high BAC drivers.

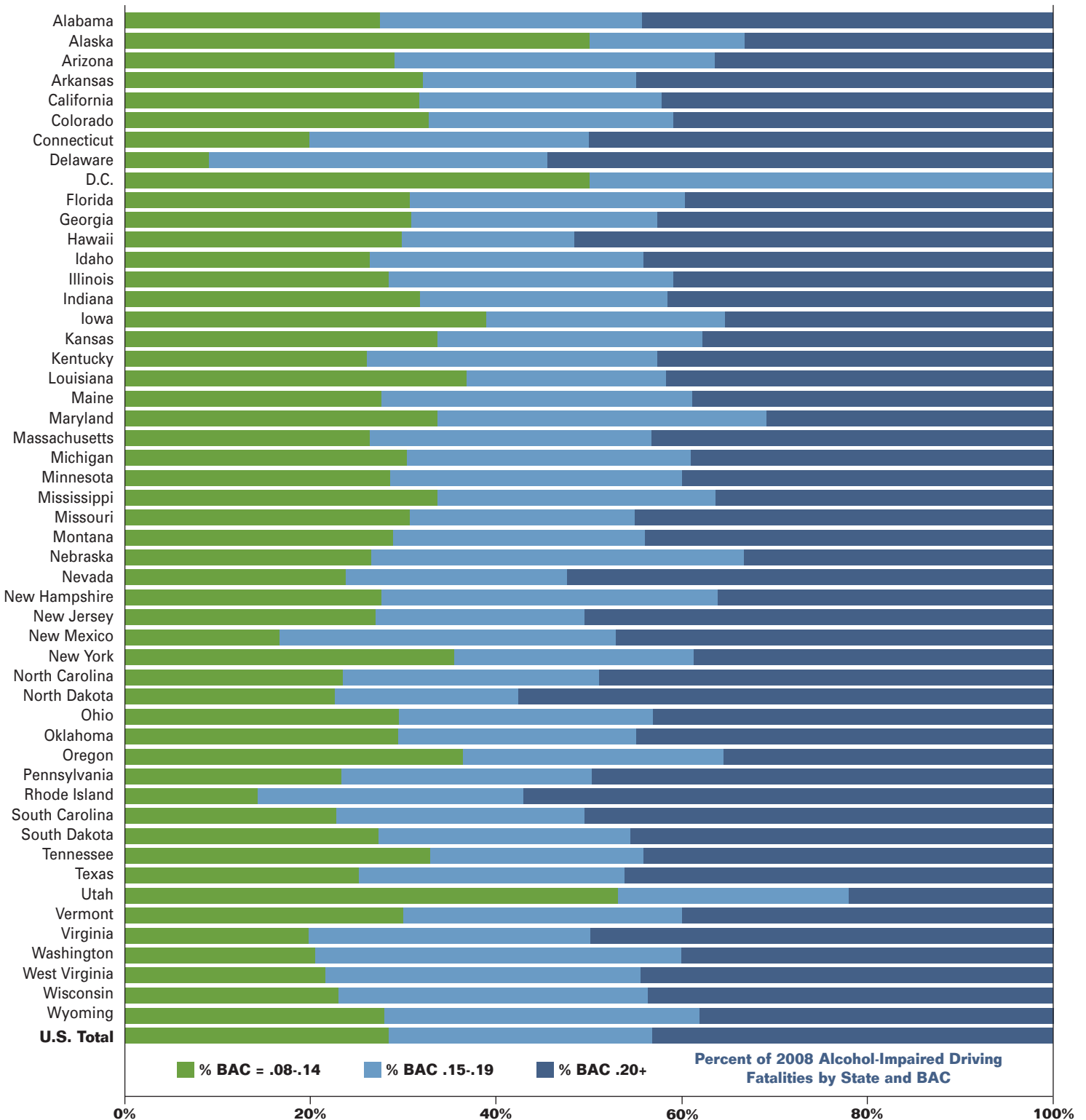
PERCENT OF 2008 DRIVERS IN ALCOHOL-INVOLVED DRIVING FATALITIES BY BAC TEST RESULT



*Data Source: NHTSA/FARS ARF of Known Drivers
Total may not equal the sum of categories due to rounding.*

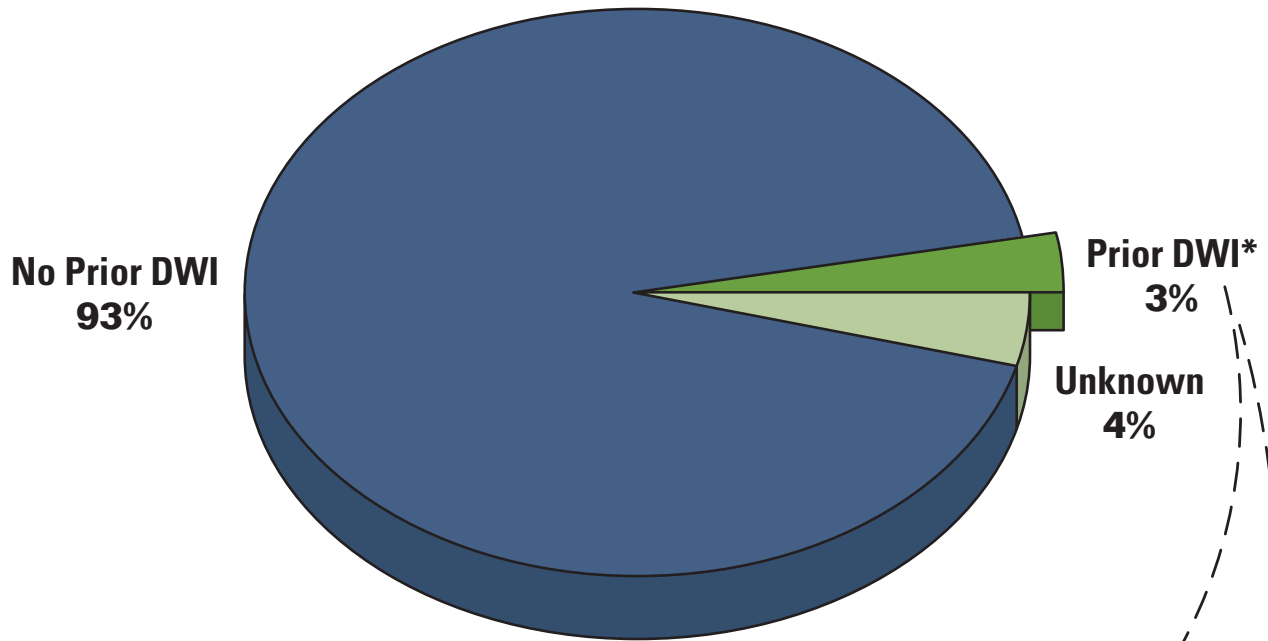
Hardcore drunk drivers accounted for a disproportionate share of the drunk driving fatalities in the U.S.

IN 2008, HIGH BAC DRIVERS WERE INVOLVED IN 72% OF THE ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED FATAL CRASHES.

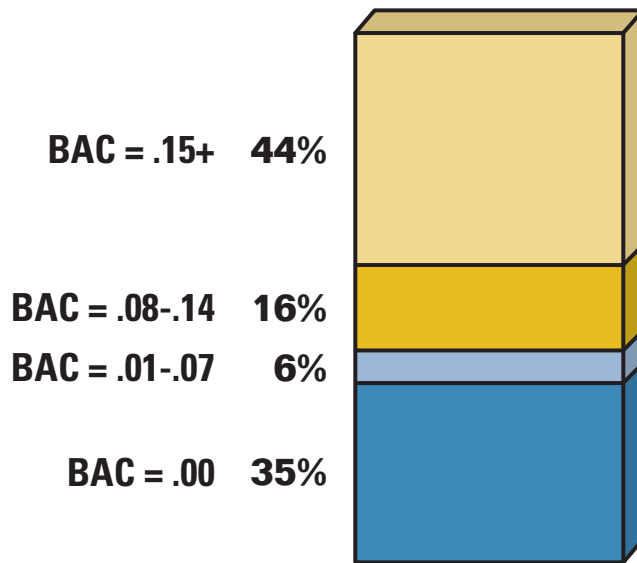


Data Source: NHTSA/FARS - 2008 ARF

Nearly half of drivers involved in fatal crashes with a prior DWI* also had a high BAC level at the time of the crash.



Drivers involved in fatal crashes



Repeat offenders by BAC level

Data Source: NHTSA/FARS
*Prior convictions only for events occurring within 3 years from date of crash.
Total may not equal the sum of categories due to rounding.

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