

## **CHAPTER IX.**

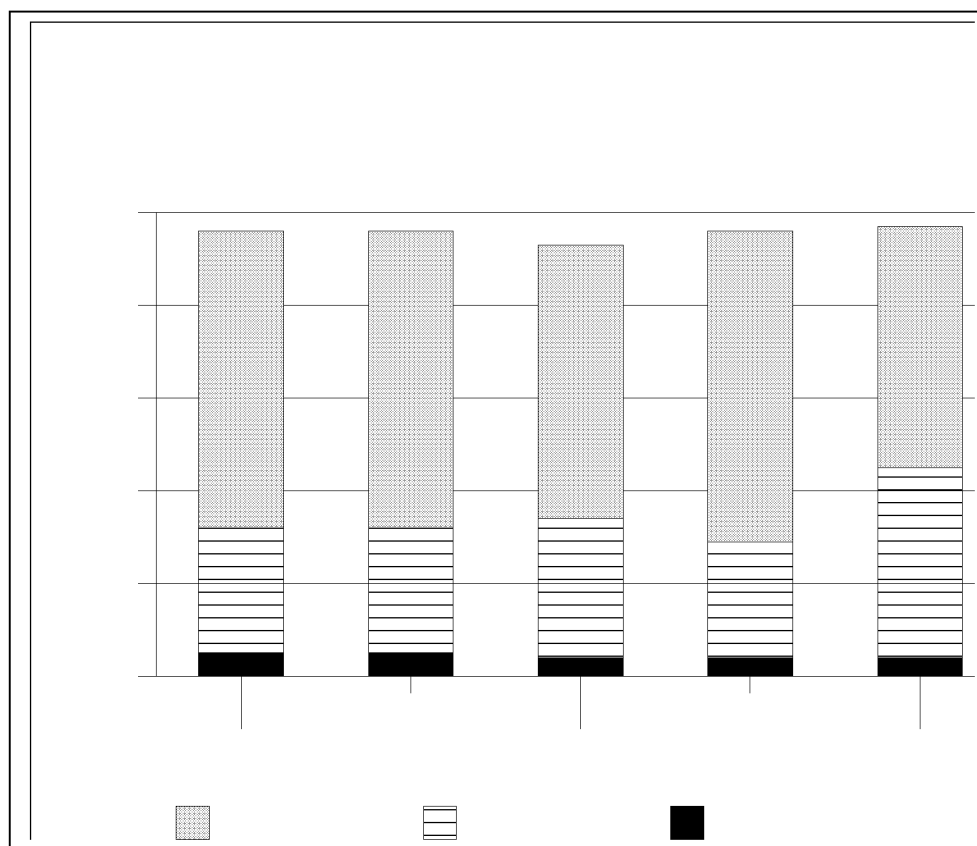
# **ATTITUDES ABOUT ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS**



## ENFORCEMENT OF SPEEDING LAWS

Perceptions about police enforcement of speeding laws differ somewhat by the type of roads used as a frame of reference. The majority of drivers feel that the current level of enforcement is about right on all types of roads — 64% of interstate highways in both rural and urban areas, 59% of other non-interstate roads in rural areas, 67% of other non-interstate roads in urban areas, and 52% of residential or neighborhood streets. Only a small proportion feel that there is too much enforcement on these types of roads (4%-5%). By contrast, a substantially larger proportion feel there is too little enforcement of speeding laws in residential or neighborhood roads (41%) than interstate or other non-interstate roads (25%-30%).

FIGURE 9-1



Qx: *In your area do you think that the amount of police enforcement of speeding laws on [type of road] is too much, too little or about right?*

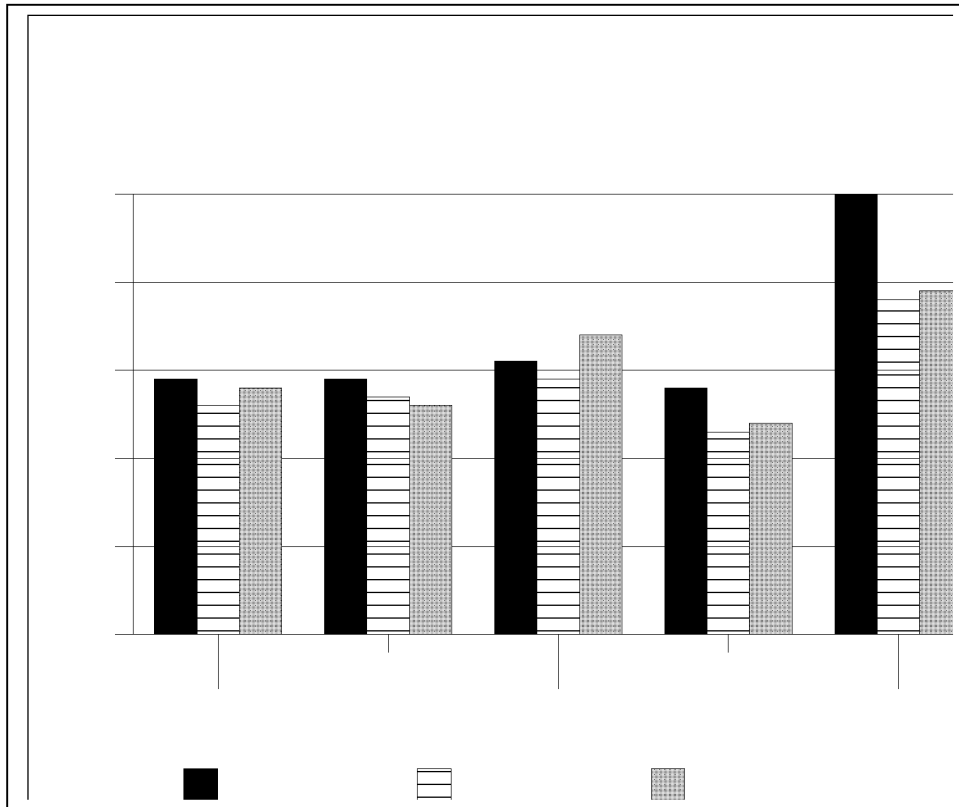
Base: *Total population of drivers.*

Unweighted

N=1,511

When comparing the type of area in which the respondent resides, the proportion of drivers who feel that there is too little enforcement of speeding laws is similar on interstate and other non-interstate roads. Drivers who live in urban, suburban or rural areas differ by 5% or less in their opinion that there is too little enforcement of speeding laws. However, urban drivers (50%) are more likely than suburban (38%) or rural drivers (39%) to feel there is too little enforcement on residential or neighborhood streets.

FIGURE 9-2



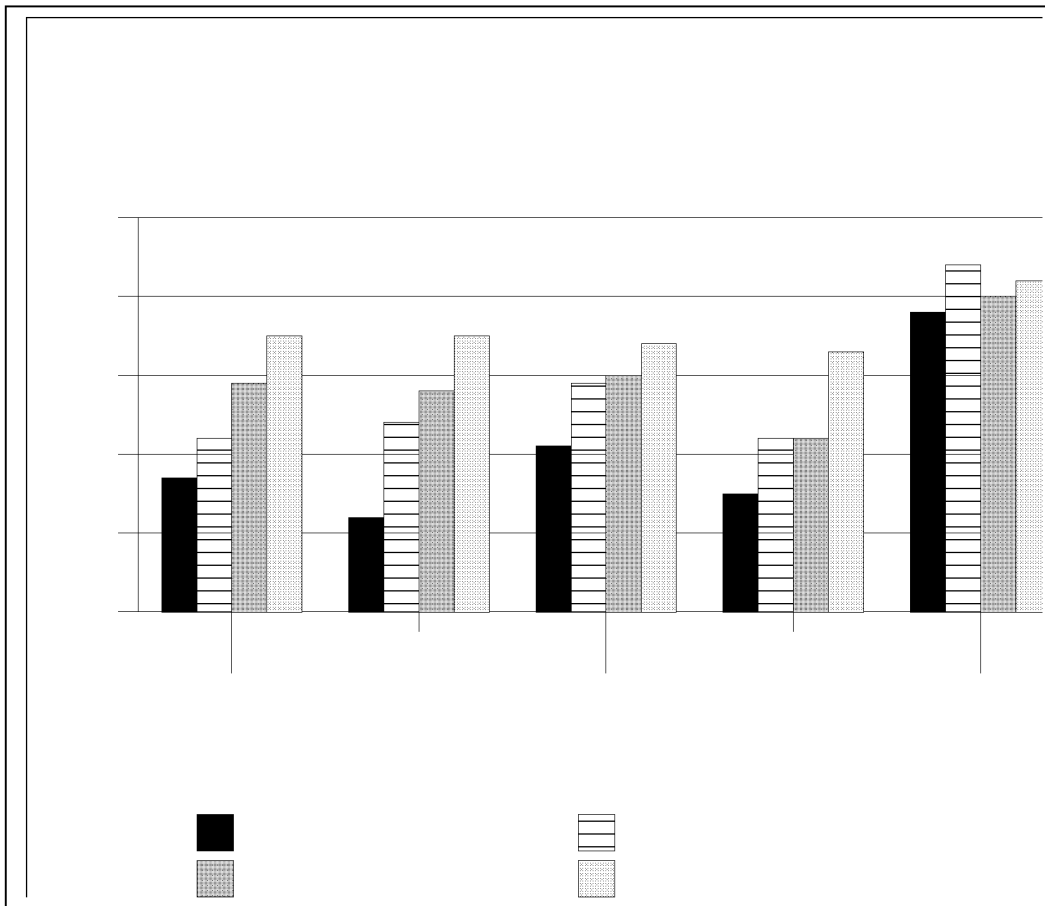
Qx: *In your area do you think that the amount of police enforcement of speeding laws on [type of road] is too much, too little or about right?*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

*Unweighted N=1,511*

The perception that there is too little enforcement of speeding laws on interstates and other non-interstate roads is directly affected by the driver's enjoyment of the feeling of speed. Drivers who strongly or somewhat agree that they enjoy the feeling of speed are less likely than others to say there is too little enforcement. However, perception that there is too little enforcement on residential or neighborhood roads is high regardless of enjoying the feeling of speed.

FIGURE 9-3



Qx: *In your area do you think that the amount of police enforcement of speeding laws on [type of road] is too much, too little or about right?*

Qx: *I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I enjoy the feeling of speed."*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

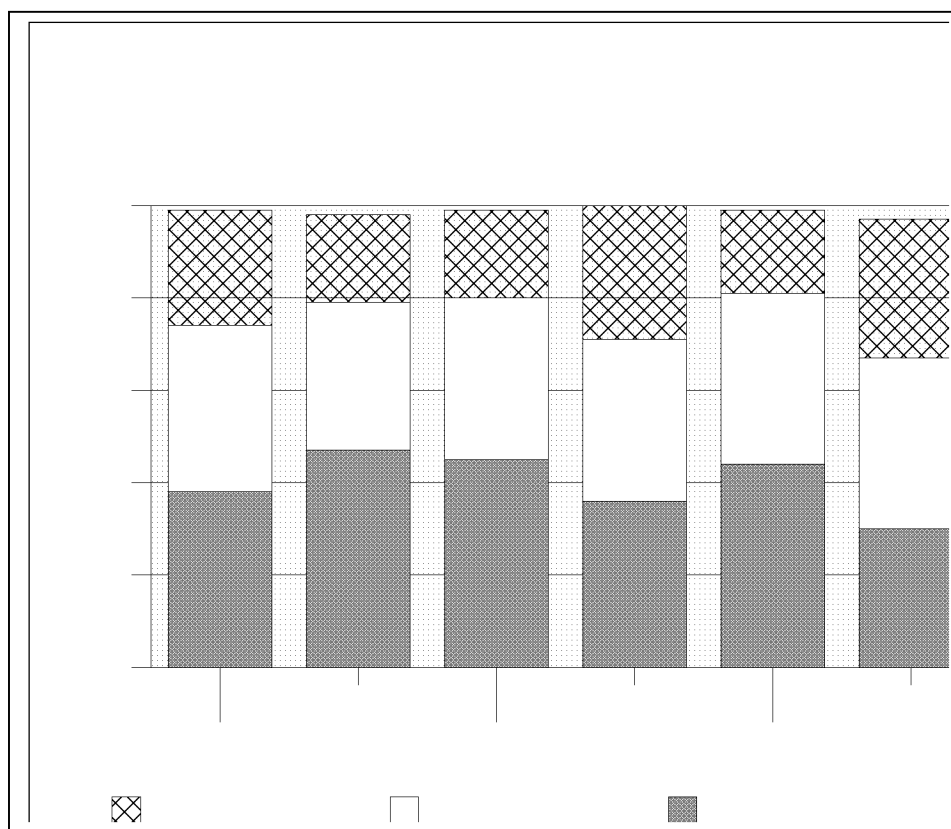
*Unweighted N=1,511*

## POLICE PRESENCE AND TOLERANCE FOR OFFENDERS

Three-quarters of drivers see police once a week or more when driving. Almost four in 10 (38%) said they see police every day or nearly every day when they drive. More than one-third (36%) said they see police weekly. The remaining quarter see police once a week or less.

Police are seen at least weekly by eight in 10 drivers who most often drive on urban interstates (80%), rural interstates (79%), and other urban non-interstate roads (81%). However, seven in 10 drivers who most often travel residential streets (67%) and rural non-interstate roads (71%) see police at least weekly.

FIGURE 9-4



Qx. How often do you see police when you are traveling on [primary road type]?

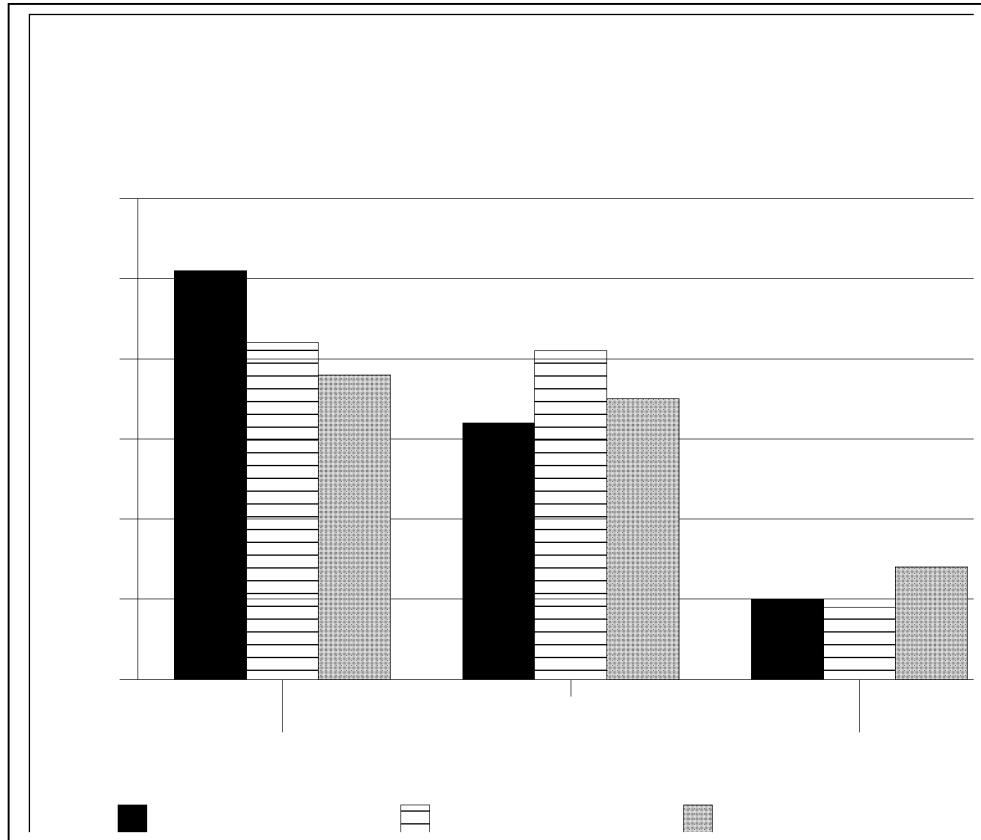
Base: Have driven at speeds considered unsafe.

Unweighted N=1,933

Figure 6-5 (page 88) reported how fast over the speed limit drivers felt they could drive before police would give them a speeding ticket. Figure 9-5 reports this information by how often drivers see police. Drivers who see police nearly every day (51%) are more likely to say that police would give them a ticket even for going less than 10 miles per hour over the speed limit than drivers who see police weekly (42%) or less than weekly (10%). Conversely, drivers who see police less than weekly (14%) are slightly more

likely than those who see police weekly (12%) or almost every day (10%) to say they could go 15 or more miles per hour over the limit before police would give them a ticket.

FIGURE 9-5



Qx: *In your opinion, how much over the speed limit can you go on this road before police will normally give you a speeding ticket (if they see you)?*

Qx: *How often do you see police when you are traveling on [primary road type]?*

Base: *Have driven at speeds considered unsafe.*

Unweighted N=1,933

## SPEEDING AND POLICE ACTION

Drivers set a limit where speeding becomes unacceptable and deserves police intervention. Only one-third (35%) said that police should always ticket drivers going 10 miles an hour over the posted limit on a highway with traffic lights. However, when asked how often police should ticket drivers going 20 miles an hour over the speed limit on the same type of road, 80% said “always.”

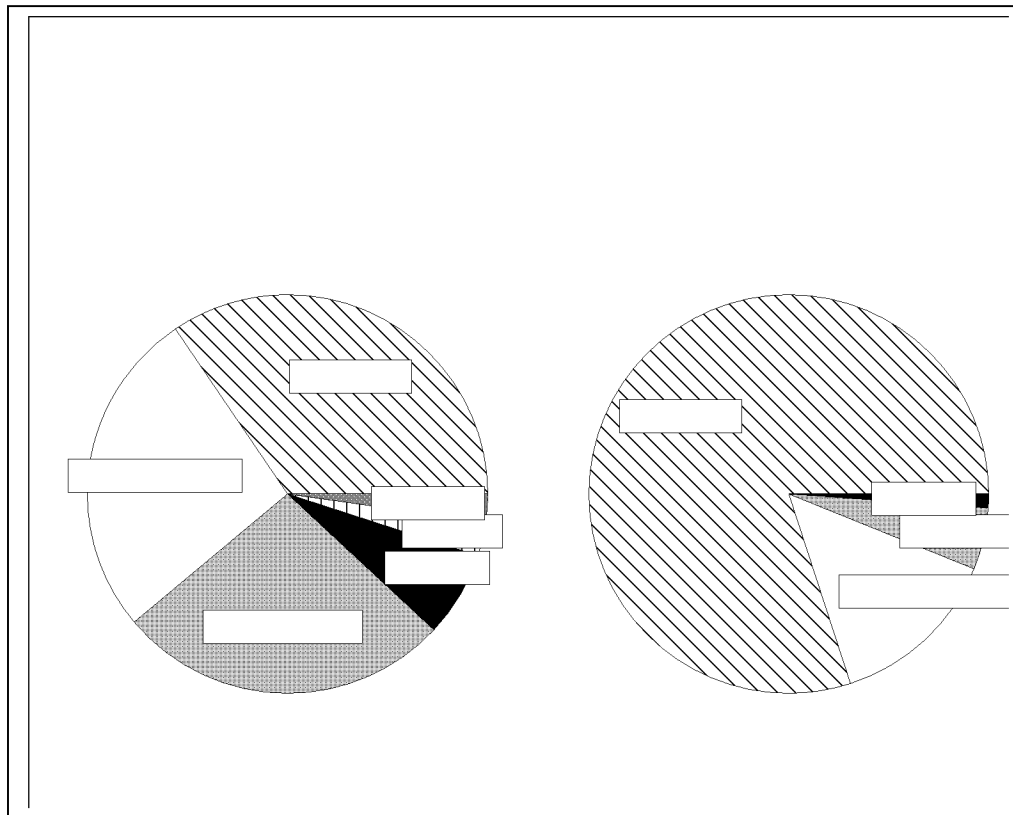


FIGURE 9-6 Qx: How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are going [10 miles per hour/20 miles per hour] over the posted speed limit on a highway with traffic lights?

Base: Total population of drivers.

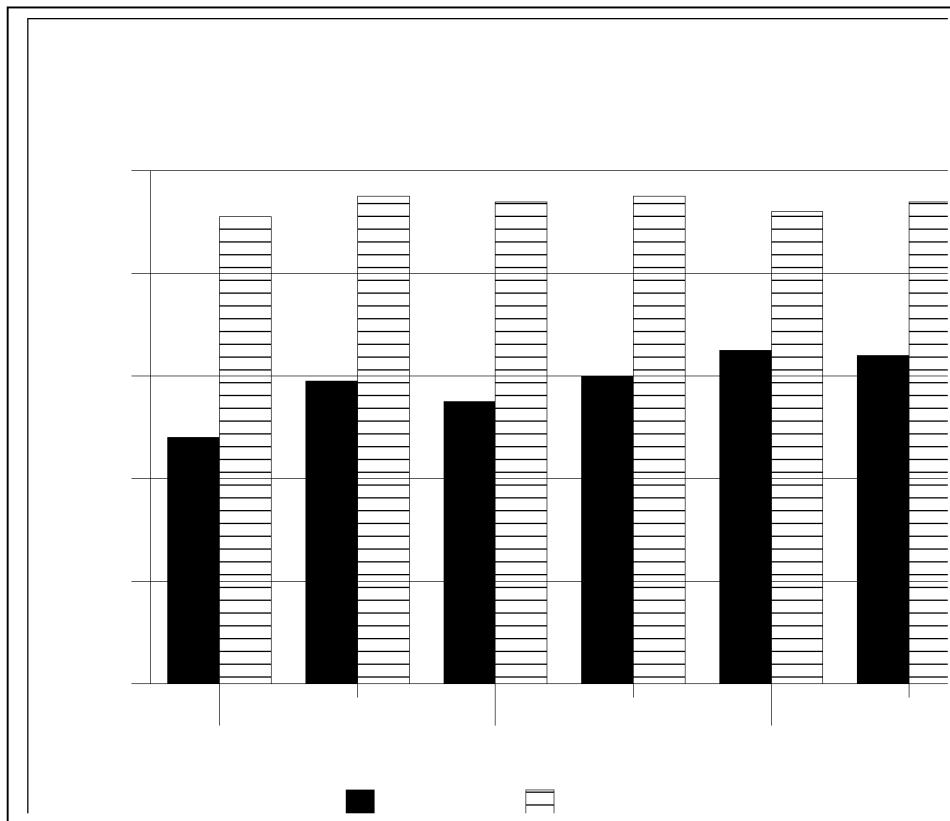
Unweighted

N=3,000



Drivers who have not received any traffic/driving citations in the past five years (64%) are more likely to say that police should ticket drivers who are going 10 miles an hour over the limit always or most of the time as compared to drivers who received tickets or warnings (48%-60% with citations). Only drivers who have been arrested for DUI/DWI are as likely as those without citations to feel police should always or sometimes give tickets for going 10 miles an hour over the speed limit on a highway with traffic lights.

However, when asked about drivers going 20 miles an hour over the posted limit on a highway with traffic lights, the vast majority of drivers feel police should always or sometimes give a ticket, regardless of the drivers past traffic citations (91%-95%).



**FIGURE 9-7Qx:** *How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are going [10 miles per hour/20 miles per hour] over the posted speed limit on a highway with traffic lights?*

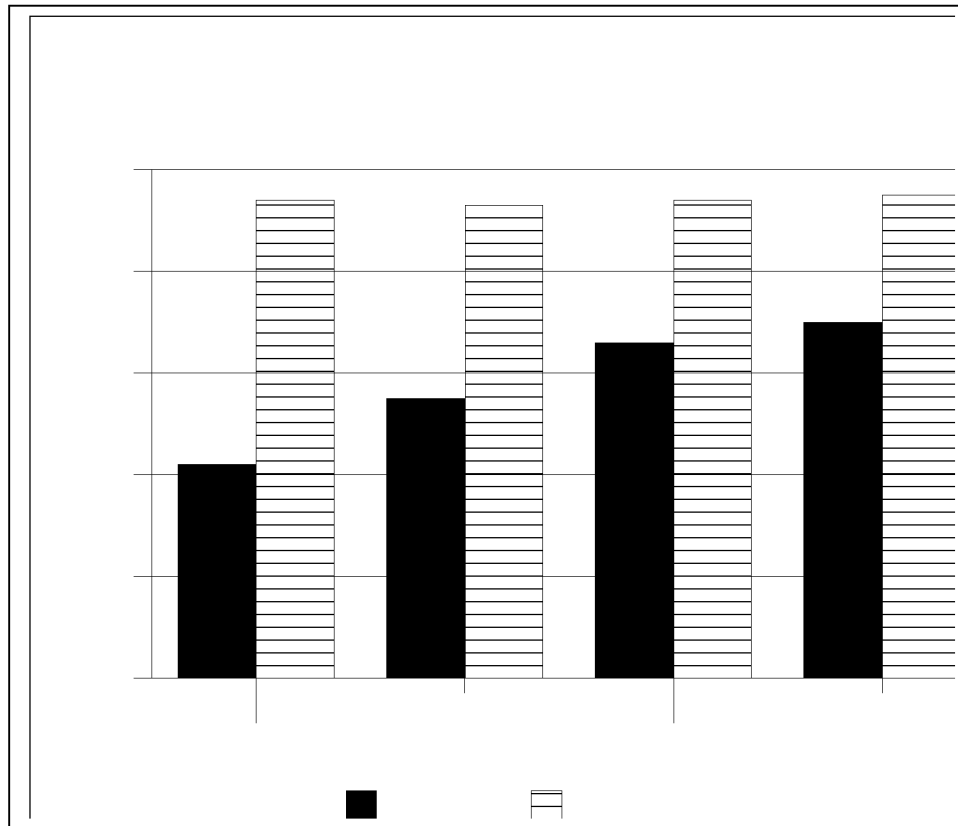
*Qx: Within the past 5 years, have you gotten a ticket for speeding, gotten a warning for speeding, gotten a ticket for any other moving violation, been convicted of DWI or DUI, or had your car insurance canceled or premiums increased as a result of claims or points?*

*Base: Total population of drivers.  
Unweighted N=3,000*

Even drivers who agree strongly with the statement, "I enjoy the feeling of speed," are nearly unanimous in the feeling that police should always or most of the time ticket drivers going 20 miles per hour over the speed limit (93%-95%).

When asked about drivers who are going 10 miles an hour over the limit, those who strongly agree (42%), "I enjoy the feeling of speed," are least likely to say that police

should always or most of the times give a ticket. Support for ticketing drivers going 10 miles per hour over the limit increases as enjoyment of speed decreases (55% of those who somewhat agree, 66% of those who somewhat disagree, and 70% of those who strongly disagree).



**FIGURE 9-8Qx:** *How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are going [10 miles per hour/20 miles per hour] over the posted speed limit on a highway with traffic lights?*

*Qx. I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement about driving: "I enjoy the feeling of speed".*

*Base: Total population of drivers.*

*Unweighted N=3,000*

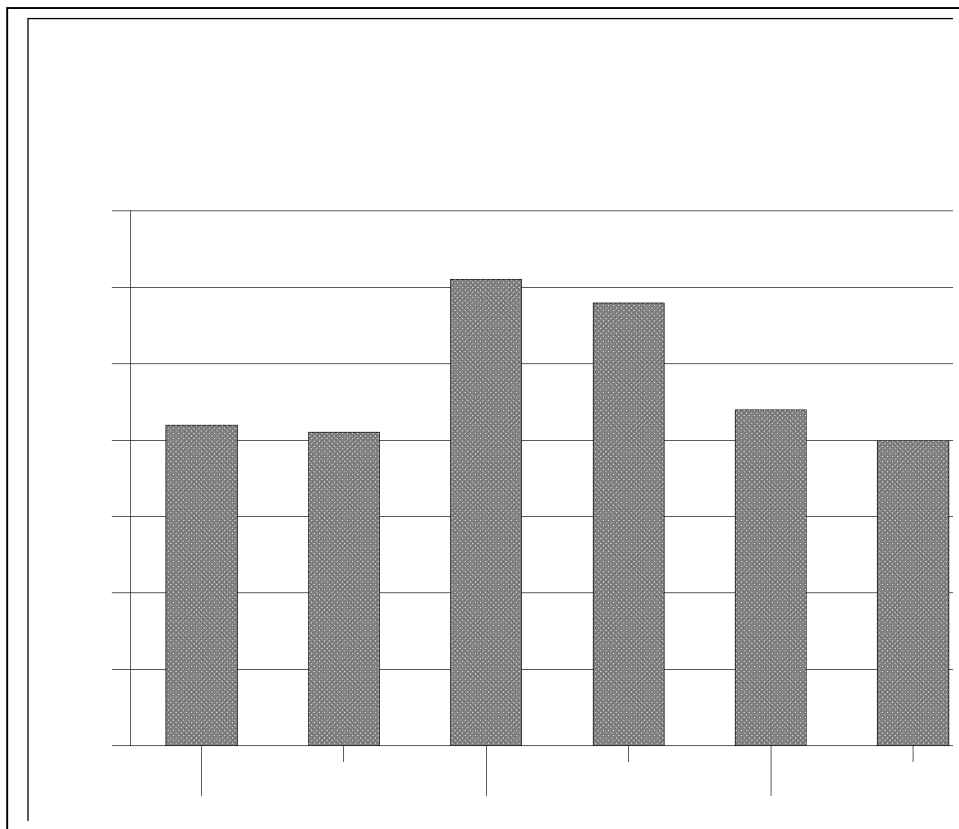
## **FREQUENCY OF ENFORCEMENT BY VIOLATION**

Drivers were asked about their beliefs concerning of police enforcement of various traffic laws. Over half of drivers said that there was too little enforcement of laws for tailgating and weaving in and out of traffic. About one in four said that enforcement was too little for running red lights (42%), failing to stop at stop signs (41%), failing to yield (44%), and speeding (40%).

Only a very small proportion said that there was too much enforcement for running red lights (3%), failing to stop at stop signs (3%), tailgating (2%), weaving in and out of traffic (2%), failing to yield (1%), and speeding (8%). About half of drivers said the level of enforcement was about right for running red lights (52%), failing to stop at stop signs

(53%), failing to yield (52%), and speeding (50%). However, only 32% said the level of enforcement was about right for tailgating and 37% said it was about right for weaving.

FIGURE 9-9



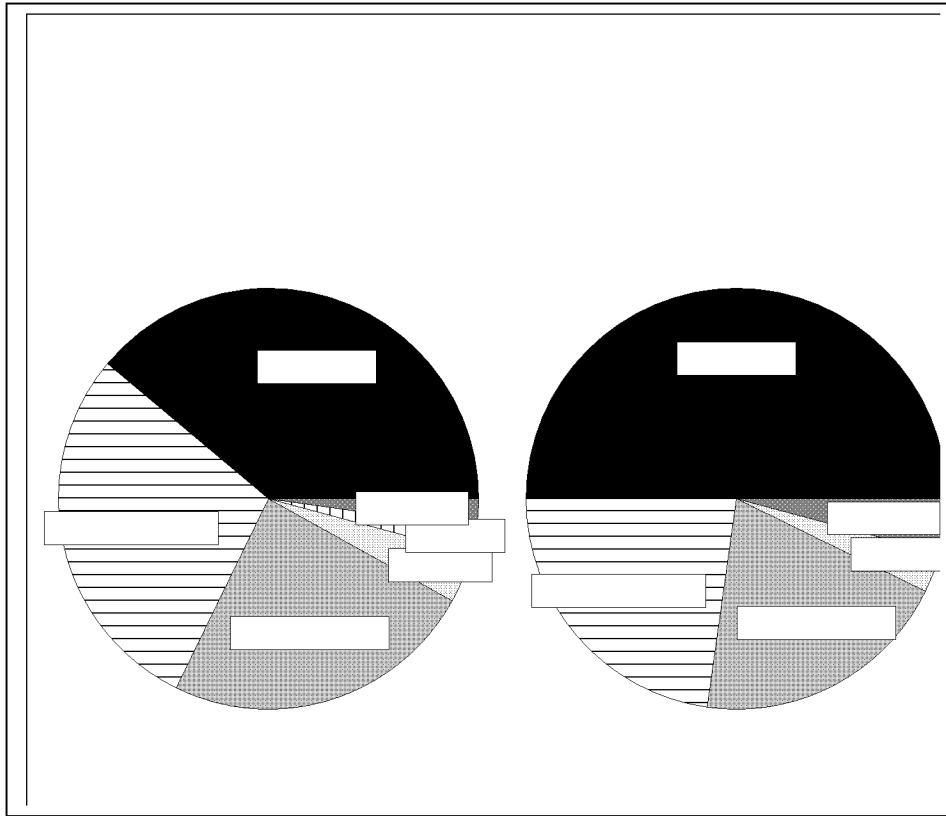
Qx: Do you think that the amount of police enforcement of traffic laws on the roads that you drive on is too much, too little, or about right for [type of violation]?

Base: Total population of drivers.

Unweighted N=1,533

When asked to think of the unsafe driving behavior they encounter most often, 39% of those who encountered an unsafe driving behavior said that police should always ticket drivers and 29% said they should ticket most of the time. However, when asked about the driving behavior they consider most dangerous, half (50%) said police should always ticket these drivers and 23% said they should ticket these drivers most of the time.

FIGURE 9-10



Qx: How often do you think police should ticket drivers who are [most often encountered unsafe behavior/most dangerous unsafe behavior]?

Base: Encountered unsafe driving behavior.

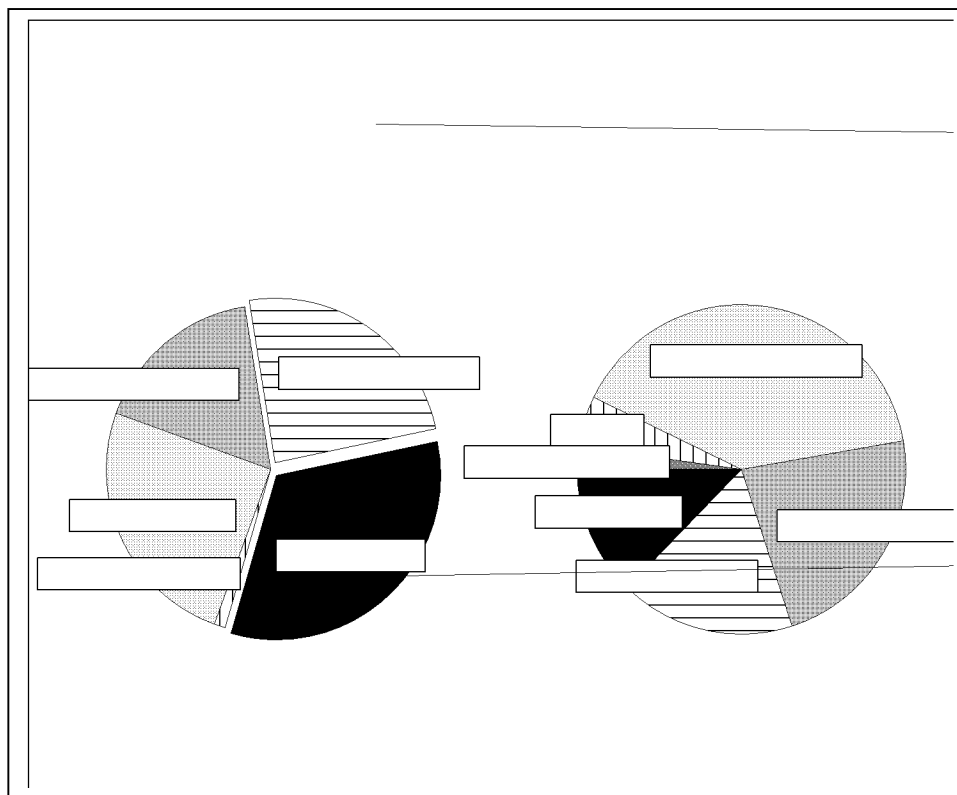
Unweighted N=2,578

## REPORTING SCHOOL BUS VIOLATIONS

If drivers saw a vehicle pass a stopped school bus that had its red lights flashing and its stop arm in full view, one-third (33%) said they would be very likely to call and report it to the police. Another quarter (24%) said they would be somewhat likely to call and report it. However, more than four out of 10 drivers say they would be unlikely to report this type of traffic safety violation.

Three in 10 drivers (30%) who are likely to report a school bus violation said they would use their cell phone (17%) or car phone (13%). Another quarter (23%) would stop at a pay phone to report the violation. Four in 10 drivers (40%) would call when they get to their destination.

FIGURE 9-11



Qx: *If you saw a vehicle pass a stopped school bus that has its red lights flashing and its stop arm in full view, how likely would you be to call and report it to the police?*

Qx: *How would you report it?*

Base: *Total population of drivers.*

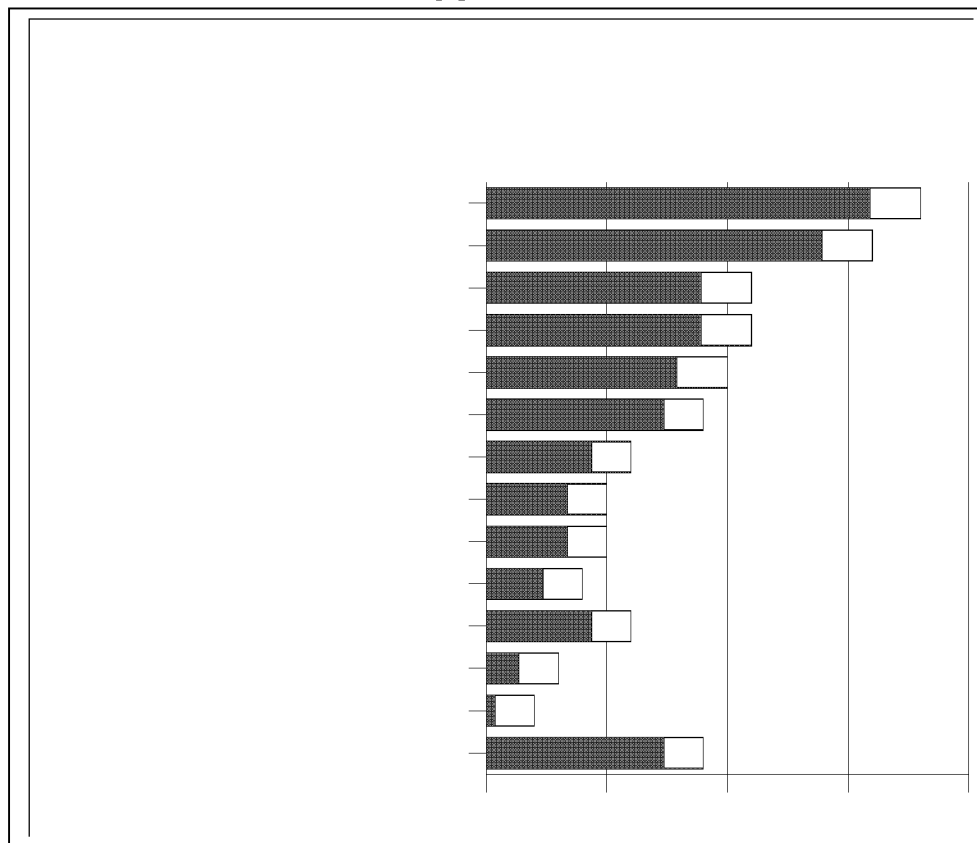
*Unweighted N=2,956*

Drivers who said they would be very unlikely to report school bus driving violations most often said that it was just too much trouble (18%), they don't want to get involved (11%), or it takes too much time (5%).

Access to a phone was mentioned by 15% of those very unlikely to report a violation. One in 10 said that it was the bus driver's responsibility to report violators (10%). One in 10 said they would be very unlikely to report it because the police wouldn't do anything about it (9%).

Possible misreporting was also a concern, with 11% saying they might not see the license number, 6% saying that they might not recall the license number, 5% saying they are unprepared (without pencil or paper) to report it.

FIGURE 9-12



Qx: Why would you be unlikely to report it?  
Base: Very unlikely to report vehicle passing a stopped school bus.  
Unweighted N=1,261

## **SUMMARY**

A majority of drivers felt police enforcement was about right for all road types. However, one driver in four felt there was too little police enforcement on most roads. For residential roads, two in five drivers felt there was too little enforcement. Even those who said they “enjoy the feeling of speed” felt more enforcement was needed on residential roads. Over half of all drivers felt that tailgating and weaving in and out of traffic needed more enforcement. At the same time, a majority of drivers felt that enforcement was about right for running red lights, running stop signs and failing to yield. Over one-third of all drivers said they would not report a vehicle passing a stopped school bus, the majority of whom said it would be too much trouble.

