



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

**DOT HS 807 149
Final Report**

September 1988

Examination of Media Coverage of Increasing the Speed Limit to 65 mph

1. Report No. DOT HS 807 149		2. Government Accession No.		3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle Examination of Media Coverage of Increasing the Speed Limit to 65 mph				5. Report Date September 1, 1988	
				6. Performing Organization Code NRD-42	
7. Author(s) Walcoff, C., Hallman, M., Monahan, S.				8. Performing Organization Report No.	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Walcoff and Associates, Inc. 635 Slaters Lane, Suite 102 Alexandria, VA 22314				10. Work Unit No. (TRAI5)	
				11. Contract or Grant No. DTNH 22-88-P-07393	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 400 Seventh Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20590				13. Type of Report and Period Covered Final Report	
				14. Sponsoring Agency Code	
15. Supplementary Notes					
16. Abstract <p>Heightened newspaper and television coverage of the proposed 65 mph limit may have encouraged increased travel speeds which in turn could have produced an increase in fatalities prior to passage of the national legislation. To pursue this further, NHTSA awarded a contract to Carol Walcoff & Associates, Inc. to examine media coverage of the speed limit issue in 1987 as it related to the passage of state and national laws for increasing the speed limit.</p> <p>The study included seven states that raised their speed limit in 1987 (Texas, California, Washington, New Mexico, Michigan, Florida, Utah) and one that did not (Pennsylvania). Radio, television, and newspapers were reviewed. Investigation revealed that radio data for 1987 were inaccessible, television data were limited, and newspaper data were easily accessible. Newspaper and television coverage were selected for the study.</p> <p>In the eight states studied, newspaper coverage of a possible speed limit increase was minimal in January 1987 but rose dramatically during February and March, the two month period immediately prior to the passage of the national law. The issue frequently received front page attention. Opinion pieces generally favored a speed limit increase. Individual states appeared to repeat the national pattern of increased coverage in the month before their law was passed. These findings are consistent with the assumption that high media coverage of a potential speed limit increase could have contributed to higher speeds and increased fatalities prior to the actual change in the legal speed limit.</p>					
17. Key Words 65 mph speed limit, media evaluation, newspaper analysis			18. Distribution Statement Document is available to the U.S. public through the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161		
19. Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified		20. Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified		21. No. of Pages	22. Price



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

CONTRACTOR	CONTRACT NUMBER
Walcoff & Associates, Inc.	DTNH 22-88-P-07393
REPORT TITLE	REPORT DATE
Examination of Media Coverage of Increasing the Speed Limit to 65 mph	September 1, 1988
REPORT AUTHOR(S)	
Walcoff, C; Hallman, M; Monahan, S.	

This report documents a study comparing media coverage in specific states which did and did not raise the speed limit to 65 miles per hour in 1987. This effort represents an initial phase of a larger study being conducted by NHTSA to investigate the impact of media coverage and the apparent overall impact of raising the speed limit on highway safety.

The study offers an assessment of the data availability and accessibility of information regarding the speed limit change from media sources in selected study states, development of a statement of study hypothesis and design, collection and analysis of data, and formulation of study findings. Assessment of data availability and accessibility revealed limitations associated with quantity and quality of source material. These limitations guided the selection of study states and definition of study sample size.

Seven states that raised the speed limit and one state that did not raise the speed limit during 1987 were included in the study. Media sources within these states were selected based upon the location of population centers, and the availability and accessibility of information from these sources. Newspaper and television news programs were reviewed and information gathered from these sources was analyzed with regard to content and format of presentation. This analysis revealed several points regarding media coverage of the 65 mph speed limit issue.

Whether the state did or did not adopt the speed limit change, media coverage on all states was comparable in terms of amount and distribution of types of coverage. The major differences were noted in the pro or con emphasis of the opinion pieces. For those states where the speed limit was changed, proportionately more pro opinions were stated, with a larger proportion being "for" for the change. The media coverage for the state that did not adopt the speed limit evidenced less stated opinions; and of those opinions that were stated, a greater proportion were "against" the change in speed limit. All states' primary focus of stories was on legislation; and secondarily on state statistics on highway fatalities.

(Continue on additional pages)

"PREPARED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION UNDER CONTRACT NO. DTNH 22-88-P-07393 THE OPINIONS, FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 APPROACH	5
2.1 STUDY DESIGN	5
2.2 ACCESSING THE MEDIA MARKETS	6
2.3 DATA COLLECTION	8
2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF NEWSPAPER AND TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE	8
2.5 VERIFICATION PROCESS	14
3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS--NEWSPAPER COVERAGE	16
3.1 ANALYSIS BY IMPLEMENTATION OF 65 MPH SPEED LIMIT	16
3.1.1 Location of Stories in Newspapers	16
3.1.2 Type of Stories	17
3.1.3 Length of Stories	19
3.1.4 Focus of Stories	22
3.2 ANALYSIS BY HIGH AND LOW PROPORTIONS OF RURAL INTERSTATE HIGHWAY MILES	22
3.2.1 Location of articles	24
3.2.2 Type of Articles	24
3.2.3 Length of Articles	27
3.2.4 Focus of Articles	27
3.3 ANALYSIS BY MONTH	29
3.3.1 Location of Stories	29
3.3.2 Type of Story	29
3.3.3 Length of Stories	32
3.3.4 Focus of Stories	32
3.4 ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FOCUS PAIRINGS	34

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

4.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS--TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE 37

4.1 LENGTH OF STORIES 37

4.2 FOCUS OF STORIES 38

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 - Newspaper Coding Guide 9

Exhibit 2 - Television News Coding Guide 10

Exhibit 3 - Location of Articles in Newspapers:
States with 55 mph vs. 65 mph Speed Limit 18

Exhibit 4 - Types of Newspaper Articles:
States with 55 mph vs. 65 mph Speed Limit 20

Exhibit 5 - Length of Newspaper Articles:
States with 55 mph vs. 65 mph Speed Limit 21

Exhibit 6 - Primary Focus of Newspaper Articles by State,
Before and After Implementation 23

Exhibit 7 - Locations of Articles in Newspapers:
High vs. Low Rural Interstate Highway Miles 25

Exhibit 8 - Types of Newspaper Articles:
High vs. Low Rural Interstate Highway Miles 26

Exhibit 9 - Length of Newspaper Articles:
High vs. Low Rural Interstate Highway Miles 28

Exhibit 10 - Articles Appearing on the Front Page of Newspapers 30

Exhibit 11 - Total Number of News Stories in Newspapers 31

Exhibit 12 - Average Length in Paragraphs of Newspaper Stories 33

Exhibit 13 - Primary and Secondary Focus Pairing
for Newspaper Articles 36

Exhibit 14 - Average Length of Television
News Stories by State 38

Exhibit 15 - Primary and Secondary Focuses of
Television News Stories 39

APPENDIX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents a study comparing media coverage in specific States which did and did not raise the speed limit to 65 miles per hour in 1987. The study was conducted by Walcoff & Associates, under contract with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), U.S. Department of Transportation, from June through August 1988. This effort represents an initial phase of a larger study being conducted by NHTSA to investigate the impact of media coverage and the apparent overall impact of raising the speed limit on highway safety.

Walcoff's study offers an assessment of the data availability and accessibility of information regarding the speed limit change from media sources in selected study States, development of a statement of study hypothesis and design, collection and analysis of data, and formulation of study findings. Assessment of data availability and accessibility revealed limitations associated with quantity and quality of source material. These limitations guided the selection of study States and definition of study sample size.

Seven States that raised the speed limit and one State that did not raise the speed limit during 1987 were included in the study. Media sources within these States were selected based upon the location of population centers, and the availability and accessibility of information from these sources. Newspaper and television news programs were reviewed and information gathered from these sources was analyzed with regard to content and format of presentation. This analysis revealed several points regarding media coverage of the 65 mph speed limit issue.

Whether the State did or did not adopt the speed limit change, media coverage on all States was comparable in terms of amount and distribution of types of coverage. The major differences were noted in the pro or con emphasis of the opinion pieces. For those States where the speed limit was changed, proportionately more pro opinions were stated, with a larger

proportion being "for" the change. The media coverage for the State that did not adopt the speed limit evidenced less stated opinions; and of those opinions that were stated, a greater proportion were "against" the change in speed limit. All States' primary focus of stories was on legislation; and secondarily on State statistics on highway fatalities.

Of those States that changed the speed limit, it was noted that:

- States with high rural interstate miles often presented speed limit stories as a local issue, whereas States with low rural interstate highways addressed them more often as a National issue.
- In those States with the highest proportions of rural interstate highway miles, the newspapers analyzed carried only news stories, no opinion pieces.
- Television coverage of the speed limit change issue, unlike newspaper coverage, indicated greater emphasis on the impact of change on law enforcement rather than the driving public.

The information obtained from this study will be used to assist NHTSA in formulation of a profile of impacts related to increasing speed limits to 65 mph nationwide. This report presents Walcoff's study approach, methods of analysis, and summary of findings. Details of individual State media coverage analyses are appended to this volume.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In an effort to conserve fuel, highway speed limits were reduced to 55 mph in all States by March of 1974. During that year, traffic fatalities dropped to 46,402 from the 55,511 fatalities recorded during the previous year. Most studies give credit to lower speed limits for the decrease in fatalities although it is recognized that other variables (such as reduced travel due to oil shortages) must be considered when analyzing this issue.

Now that interest in the energy crisis has waned, Congress has enacted legislation allowing the States to raise the speed limit on their rural interstate highways to 65 mph. Thirty-seven States have raised their speed limits thus far. Surveys of those States have shown a number of interesting shifts in highway fatalities. For example, there has been an increase in highway fatalities in some States and a decrease in others. Fatalities have also increased on some roads which were not affected by the speed limit change. Fatality figures for 1986 and 1987 indicate that fatalities began to increase even before legislation raising the speed limit was enacted.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has been charged with conducting a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the increased speed limit on highway safety. NHTSA's analysis is intended to provide Congress with adequate, meaningful data enabling them to determine the effects of raising the speed limit on traffic safety. The purpose of this study is to examine media coverage of the speed limit issue, both in States which raised their speed limits and in those which did not raise their speed limits. It is anticipated that this information will help clarify the relationship between travel speeds and public debate about the speed limit in the media.

Walcoff & Associates has examined coverage of the speed limit change issue by the major newspapers and television stations in eight States identified by NHTSA. The *September 1988 Report to Congress* will incorporate

this information concerning the effects of raising the speed limit on rural, interstate highways.

2.0 APPROACH

2.1 STUDY DESIGN

Given the hypothesis that media coverage of the speed limit issue affected the increase in highway speeds, Walcoff & Associates designed a study to determine the amount of media coverage, the type of media coverage, and the focus of the coverage of this issue in States which did and did not implement the 65 mph speed limit law.

This study was designed in the following manner:

- Via telephone survey, States were identified which could provide samples of media coverage on this issue within the time period of the study.
- Candidate States were compared to data relating to traffic speed and crashes available for those States. States which had sufficient data in both categories were selected for the study. Seven of the selected States implemented the 65 mph speed limit law in 1987, one did not.
- The type of media coverage to be included in the study was determined by examining the availability of radio, television, and newspaper stories. Individual stations and newspapers were contacted, as well as clearinghouses and media search companies to determine the accessibility of sample stories. Investigation revealed that radio data was inaccessible, there was limited availability of television data, and that newspaper data was easily accessible during the study period. Newspaper and television coverage were selected for the study.
- To determine which media markets were to be researched, Walcoff & Associates consulted the *Newspaper and Television SRDS* (Standard Rates & Data Service) to identify the major consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSA's) in each State. From the SRDS cities which were the most densely populated were identified. Newspapers with the highest

circulations in each city and the television stations which broadcast in those areas were also identified. Since individual States ultimately decided whether to implement the 65 mph speed limit, State capitals were included in media markets to ensure coverage of each State's legislative process.

- A coding sheet was developed to guide researchers in reviewing newspaper articles and television tapes. It enabled coders to identify the source of the stories, assess its prominence, measure the amount of coverage, and determine the focus of the story. A number of stories were pretested to identify likely primary and secondary focuses. A list of candidate focuses, as well as a list of candidate story characteristics, was submitted to NHTSA, who made the final selection for inclusion in the coding sheet.

2.2 ACCESSING THE MEDIA MARKETS

Once the newspapers and television stations were selected, data collection began. Each newspaper was contacted to determine if their stories were indexed on a database available to the public. If not, the paper was asked to provide copies of stories which ran in 1987 on this issue. If the paper could not provide copies, dates of stories which ran were requested. If the paper could not provide dates, the name of a library which indexed their stories was solicited. A number of databases which indexed and filed newspaper stories were accessed and copies of articles were obtained from both VUTEXT and DATATIMES.

A few newspapers were able to send copies of articles. If a paper was able to provide only dates of articles, those articles were retrieved at the Library of Congress where most major newspapers are stored on microfilm. In a couple of instances, it was necessary to contact libraries in the selected cities to obtain the dates of articles before they could be retrieved from the Library of Congress.

Analysis was subject to the availability of complete information on all articles. Some articles delivered to Walcoff & Associates did not include page numbers, newspaper section, or number of column inches. This information was also missing for some articles retrieved from microfilm at the Library of Congress.

The television stations for the three major National networks were contacted in each CMSA. Following a telephone request for duplicate tapes of news stories broadcast on this issue in 1987, a letter was written formally requesting the tapes. The letter outlined the reasons for our request and described the study being conducted by the Department of Transportation. It emphasized that the tapes would not be used for commercial or litigation purposes, and that the stations would be compensated for their services, and that the tapes would be returned to them if requested. Tapes were requested from television stations in 21 cities; they were successfully obtained from 16 stations.

Several difficulties were encountered obtaining tapes from television stations. First, several stations would not release tapes, although on-site viewing of the tapes was permitted. Study time and cost restrictions, however, prevented travel to the television stations. Several stations would not surrender tapes without a subpoena because doing so would establish a precedent of allowing the public, including law enforcement agencies, access to their tapes upon request. Stations surveyed generally did not have formal indexing/filing procedures. Unlike newspaper articles, television stories were not computer indexed, and manual or paper indexes were chronological. Stations would not provide searches of manual, chronological files for the one year study period; consequently, tapes were not obtained from those stations.

The limited number of tapes received from the stations typically did not identify the time of day during which the story was broadcast or when during the news broadcast the story was run (e.g., as the lead story, the last story, or somewhere in the middle of the broadcast).

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

The content analysis of the 560 sample newspaper articles was conducted with the aid of two coding guidelines, one for newspaper articles and one for television news stories (see Exhibits 1 and 2). Newspaper articles were identified with the name of the publication in which it appeared, its circulation, the city and State of origin, the date of the article and its page location. Newspaper articles were categorized by newspaper section location, type of article, and source of article. Finally, the primary and secondary focuses of each article were identified.

Television news stories were reviewed; each story was identified by the television station, city and State from which it originated and, where available, by the population reached in that television station's market. The length of each story was also recorded. Finally, the primary and secondary focuses of each television news story were identified.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF NEWSPAPER AND TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE

The newspaper name, city and State of publication, and circulation were drawn from the *Newspaper SRDS*.

The location of newspaper stories was divided into five categories: front page, elsewhere in the front section, local section, editorial and other. The "other" category is primarily composed of articles whose location could not be determined. When possible, the page numbers of articles were also noted.

Dates of newspaper articles were recorded. Dates were unavailable for only two of the 560 newspaper articles.

There were six types of articles: news, sidebar, editorial, letter to the editor, column (syndicated or not), and other. For the purposes of analysis, news and sidebar were combined into a single "news" category. Editorials,

ID # _____

CODING GUIDE SELECTED 1987 NEWSPAPER ARTICLES REGARDING INCREASING THE SPEED LIMIT

- 1) Name of Publication: _____
- 2) Location: a) City: _____ b) State: _____
- 3) Circulation: _____
- 4a) Date of Article: _____ b) Circle Day of Week: S M T W T F S
- 5) Title of Article: _____

- 6a) Location of Article:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Front Page
<input type="checkbox"/>	Editorial Page
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local

<input type="checkbox"/>	Business Section
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifestyle/Entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____

b) Page Number: _____

- 7) Type of Article:

<input type="checkbox"/>	News
<input type="checkbox"/>	Editorial

<input type="checkbox"/>	Column
<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter to Editor

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidebar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____

- 8) Source:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff Writer
<input type="checkbox"/>	UPI

<input type="checkbox"/>	Syndicated Writer
<input type="checkbox"/>	AP

<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____
--------------------------	--------------

- 9a) Column Inches: _____ b) Number of Paragraphs: _____

- 10) Focus on Story: Primary = P Secondary = S

- | | P | S | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | | | a) Reasons for changing the speed limit: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 - Pros (why it should be changed.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 - Cons (why it should not be changed.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 - Other: _____ |
| | | | b) How the speed limit is being changed: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 - Discussion of legislation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 - Add-on legislation (specific restrictions accompanying new speed limit laws). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 - Local instructions regarding implementation of new speed limits. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 - Changing highway signs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 - Monitoring speed limit. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 - Other: _____ |
| | | | c) Impacts of changing the speed limit: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 - Confusion resulting from new laws. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 - Fatalities, state statistics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 - Fatalities, national statistics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 - Increase in speeding. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 - Decrease in speeding. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 - Warnings from highway department. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 - Federal funding impacts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 - State-specific impacts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 - Impact on law enforcement. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10- Other: _____ |

Coding Date: _____
 Coder: _____

CODING GUIDE

SELECTED 1987 TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE REGARDING INCREASING THE SPEED LIMIT

- 1) Name of Television Station: _____
- 2) Location: City: _____ State: _____
- 3) Affiliate: ABC NBC CBS FOX Independent
- 4) Population Reached in Market: _____
- 5a) Date of Broadcast: _____ b) Circle Day of Week: S M T W T F S
c) Time of Day: _____
- 6) Title of Story: _____
- 7) Location of Story: Lead Story Mid-broadcast Last Story
- 8) Type of Story: News Feature Commentary Other: _____
- 9a) Total Time of Story: _____ b) Percentage of Broadcast Time: _____
- 10) Focus on Story: Primary = P Secondary = S

- | P | S | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | a) Reasons for changing the speed limit: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 - Pros (why it should be changed.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 - Cons (why it should not be changed.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 - Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | b) How the speed limit is being changed: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 - Discussion of legislation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 - Add-on legislation (specific restrictions accompanying new speed limit laws). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 - Local instructions regarding implementation of new speed limits. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 - Changing highway signs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 - Monitoring speed limit. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 - Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | c) Impacts of changing the speed limit: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 - Confusion resulting from new laws. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 - Fatalities, state statistics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 - Fatalities, national statistics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 - Increase in speeding. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 - Decrease in speeding. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 - Warnings from highway department. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 - Federal funding impacts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 - State-specific impacts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 - Impact on law enforcement. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10- Other: _____ |

Coding Date: _____

Coder: _____

06-15-88

letters to the editor, and columns were combined into a single "opinion" category.

Length of stories was measured in paragraphs. It was not feasible to measure length in column inches as that information was not available for articles on computerized databases and microfilm.

The primary focus of the story was defined as the central or predominant idea of a story. A secondary focus was defined as a peripheral idea of the story, or an issue mentioned only briefly. It was possible to have more than one primary or secondary focus. Section 2.5 outlines the verification process by which consistency and accuracy in the identification and coding of primary and secondary focuses of stories was assured.

Following is a list of possible focuses of news stories, and an explanation of each.

PROS

- For a news story, this indicates that reasons for changing the speed limit were reported in the story.
- For an opinion piece, this indicates that the piece supported the changing of the speed limit.

CONS

- For a news story, this indicates that people's reasons for **not** changing the speed limit were reported in the story.
- For an opinion piece, this indicates that the editorial opposed the changing of the speed limit.

OTHER

- For opinion articles, this indicates that the piece neither opposed nor supported the change in the speed limit.

DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on either National or State legislation to pass the 65 mph speed limit.

ADD-ON LEGISLATION

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on specific legislation accompanying new speed limit laws. Such legislation included mandatory seat belt laws, new fines for speeding, and laws making radar detectors illegal.

LOCAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SPEED LIMITS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on the specific elements of a State's speed limit law, such as which roads will have a 65 mph speed limit and which vehicles will be allowed to drive 65 mph.

CHANGING HIGHWAY SIGNS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on changing the highway speed limit signs to read 65 mph.

STATE ROADS TO 65

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on the movement to raise the speed limit to 65 on State roads which are built to interstate specifications. This legislation passed several months after the change to 65 mph on interstate highways.

CONFUSION RESULTING FROM NEW LAWS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was the confusion of drivers over whether the proper speed limit is 55 or 65 mph on any given stretch of road.

FATALITIES, NATIONAL STATISTICS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on National statistics regarding highway fatalities. National statistics represent aggregates of the statistics of all 50 States.

FATALITIES, STATE STATISTICS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on statistics from one or more States regarding highway fatalities.

INCREASE IN SPEEDS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was the increase in absolute speeds that accompanied the increase in the speed limit. This category encompasses both legal and illegal speeds.

DECREASE IN ILLEGAL SPEEDING

- This indicates that the focus of the story was the decrease in illegal speeding that accompanied the change in the speed limit.

FEDERAL FUNDING IMPACTS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was the impact that State speed related issues had on highway funding from the Federal government.

STATE-SPECIFIC IMPACTS

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on the ways that the change in the speed limit affected individualized States--i.e., which highways were affected.

IMPACT ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

- This indicates that the focus of the story was on how the new speed limit affected local police and State troopers in their enforcement of the law.

For the purposes of analysis, State-specific impacts and local instructions for the implementation of the new speed limit were combined into a single category, local implementation.

The television station name, city and State of airing, and market reached were identified in *Television SRDS*.

Information about date and time of broadcast, and the story's location within the broadcast was generally not available for television news stories.

The information about television news stories that was available included length of news segment and the primary and secondary focuses. Length of news segments was measured in seconds. The primary and secondary focus possibilities were identical to the newspaper focus possibilities.

2.5 VERIFICATION PROCESS

The purpose of checking the validity of a coder's work is two-fold. It verifies the accuracy of the work done, as well as guaranteeing the consistency of the coder's interpretation of the data. The validity check described here is sufficient for achieving these two goals.

The sample drawn for the validity check of the newspaper survey had a size of 30 articles, 5.4 percent of the total reviewed. The sample was randomly drawn using a random number generator. In order to ensure that errors were identified and corrected early in the coding process, the sample was stratified. For every sixty articles coded, three were randomly selected for the validity test. Since less than 600 articles comprised the final sample, the remaining articles were randomly selected from among the reviewed, coded articles in Walcoff & Associates archives.

The project manager conducted the validity check at several points during the coding process. Coder interpretations and project manager interpretations were compared to ascertain the level of agreement. Prior to the validity check, a 95 percent level of agreement was established as minimally acceptable.

The validity check indicated a 98 percent level of agreement.

3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS--NEWSPAPER COVERAGE

The analysis of 1987 media coverage of the 65 mph speed limit issue is divided into four sections. First, differences are explored between States that adopted the 65 mph speed limit and Pennsylvania, the one State included in the study which did not adopt the higher speed limit. Second, differences in media coverage between States with high and low proportions of rural, interstate highway miles are investigated. Third, the news coverage is analyzed on a month-by-month basis. Fourth, the relationships among various primary and secondary focuses of the news articles are considered.

Presented below are highlights of the analysis. Summary data for individual States are presented in the Appendix.

3.1 ANALYSIS BY IMPLEMENTATION OF 65 MPH SPEED LIMIT

In 1987, seven of the States analyzed implemented the 65 mph speed limit on their rural, interstate highways: Texas, California, Washington, New Mexico, Michigan, Florida and Utah. Pennsylvania was the only State studied that did not implement the 65 mph speed limit in 1987.

3.1.1 Location of Stories in Newspapers

In all eight States studied, the highest number of articles appeared on the front page of newspapers.

In Pennsylvania, 36 percent of all stories concerning the change in the speed limit appeared on the front page of the newspaper, while in the seven States that implemented the change, only 30 percent of the stories appeared on the front page.

In Pennsylvania, 21 percent of the stories regarding the change in speed limit appeared in the editorial section of the newspaper. In the seven States that implemented the change, only 13 percent of the stories appeared in the editorial section (see Exhibit 3).

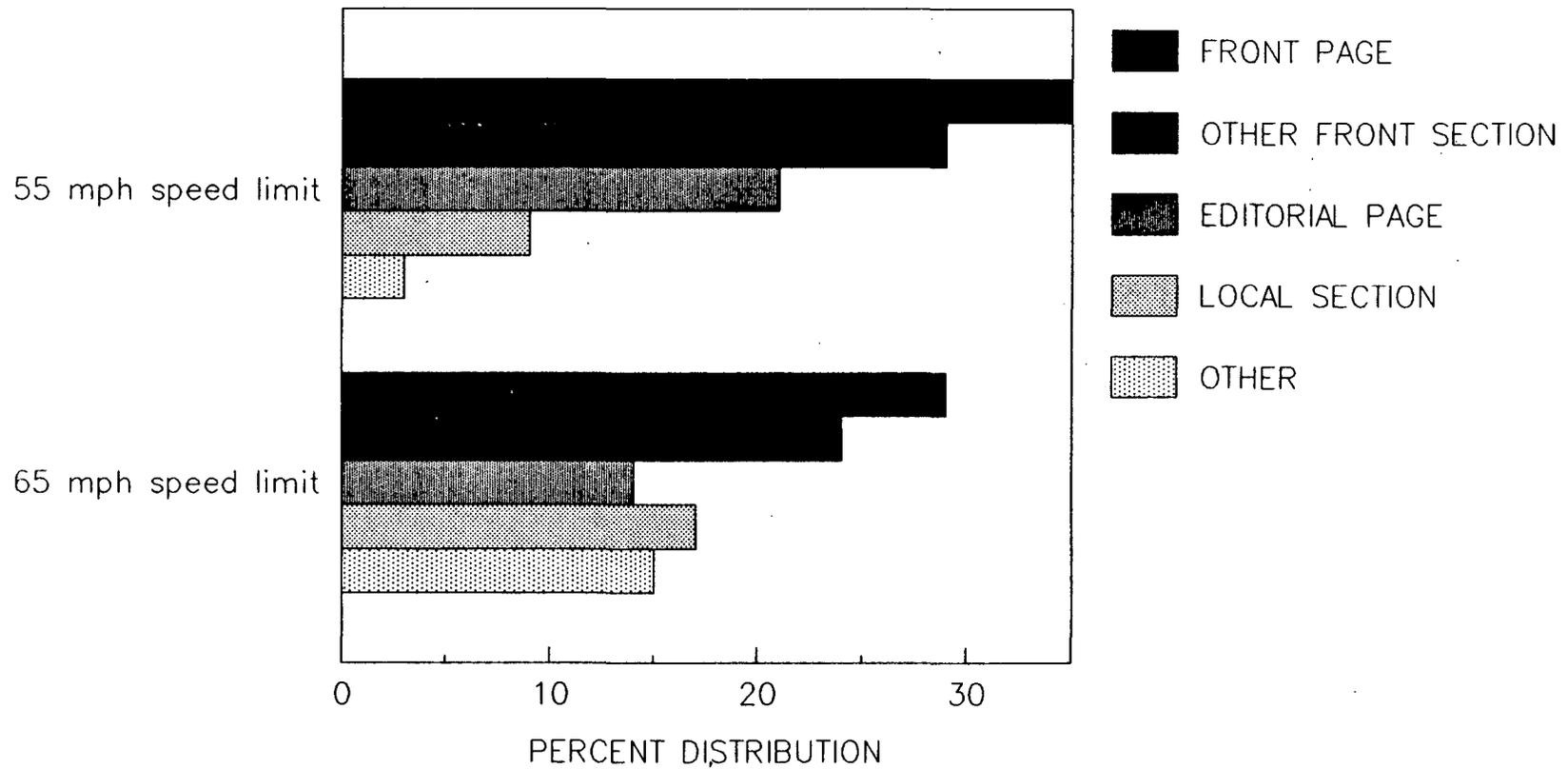
3.1.2 Type of Stories

In Pennsylvania, 77 percent of the stories published about the change in speed limit were news stories. In States that implemented the new speed limit, 82 percent of the stories were news stories.

In Pennsylvania, 23 percent of the stories published were opinion pieces, such as editorials, columns, or letters to the editor. In the seven States that implemented the change in speed limit, only 18 percent of the stories were opinion pieces. A number of opinion pieces did not express a pro or con opinion on changing the speed limit, rather they focused on peripheral issues such as add-on legislation, State fatalities, or Federal funding impacts. Of Pennsylvania's opinion pieces, only 40 percent expressed an opinion on the increase in the speed limit to 65. Of these, 33 percent favored the increase,

Exhibit 3

LOCATION OF ARTICLES IN NEWSPAPERS
States with 55 mph vs. 65 mph speed limits



and 67 percent opposed the increase. In the seven States that implemented the 65 mph speed limit, 65 percent of the opinion pieces expressed an opinion on the change in speed limit. Of these, 62 percent favored the change, while 38 percent opposed the change (see Exhibit 4).

3.1.3 Length of Stories

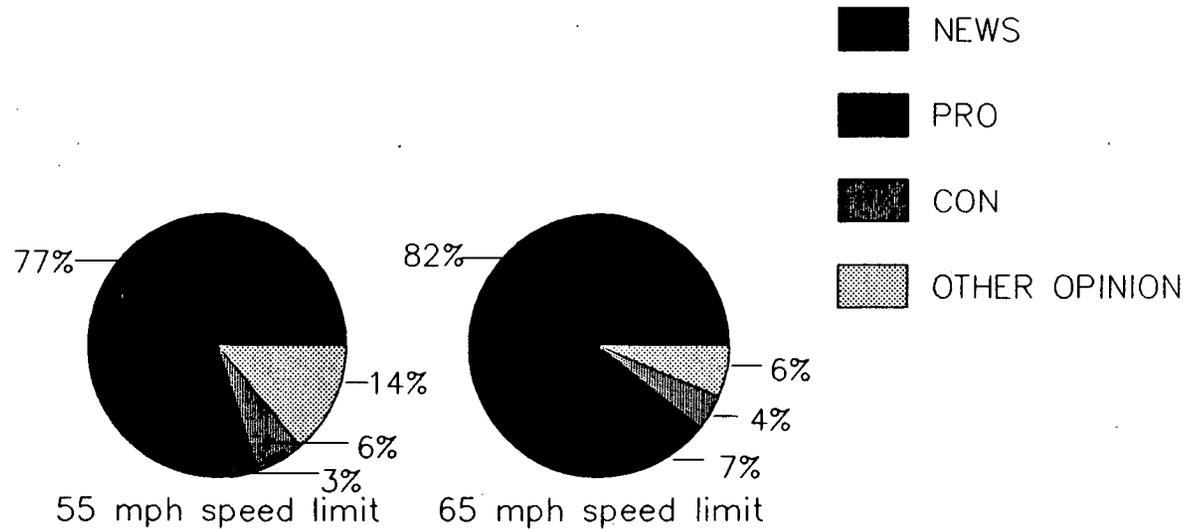
The length of articles was divided into long (more than 20 paragraphs), medium (between 11 and 20 paragraphs), and short (less than 11 paragraphs).

Pennsylvania tended to have relatively fewer short stories (10 paragraphs or less) than the seven States that implemented the 65 mph speed limit. Twenty-four percent of Pennsylvania's stories were short, as opposed to 42 percent of the stories in the seven implementing States.

The average length of stories in Pennsylvania was 14 paragraphs. The average for the other seven States combined was also 14 paragraphs. The average length of news stories in Pennsylvania, however, was 15 paragraphs, one paragraph longer than the average news story in the other seven States (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 4

TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: NEWS AND OPINION
States with 55 mph vs 65 mph Speed Limits

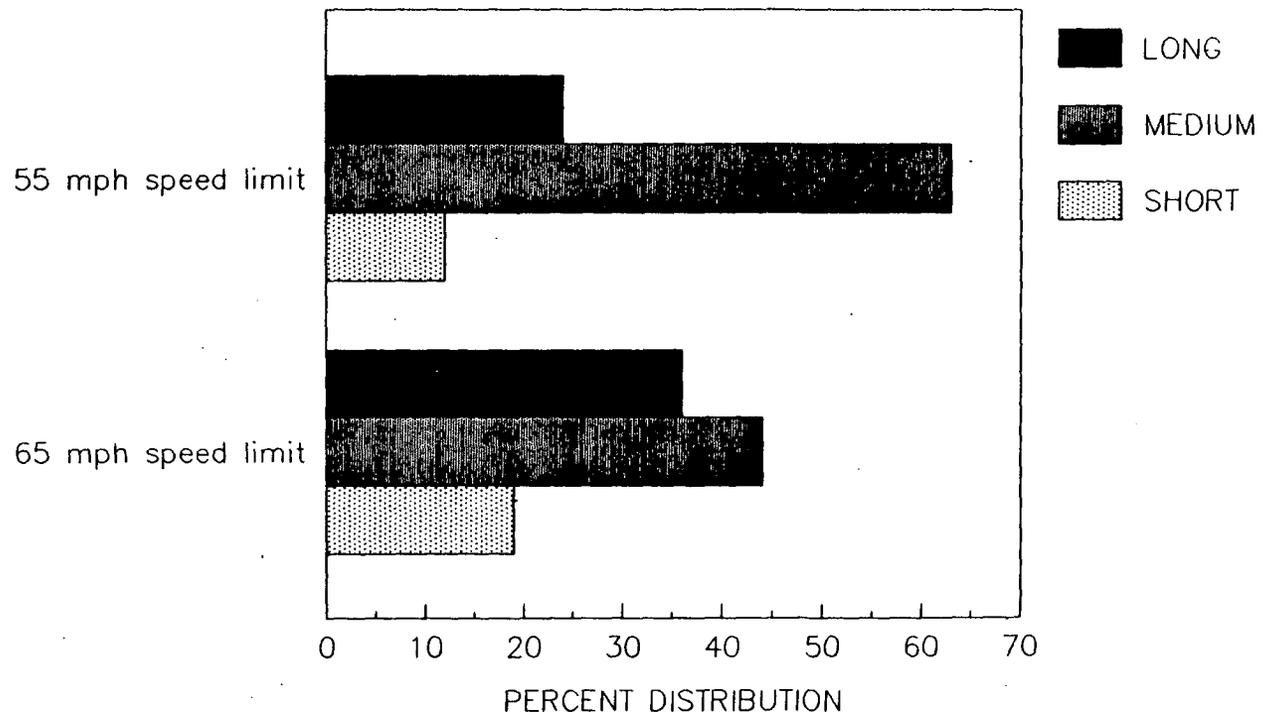


News articles are factual in nature. Opinion stories include editorials, letters to the editor and columns.

Opinion stories favored, opposed or did not express an opinion on the issue of increasing the speed limit.

Exhibit 5

LENGTH OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
States with 55 mph vs 65 mph Speed Limit



Long articles have more than 20 paragraphs, medium articles have between 11 and 20 paragraphs, and short articles have fewer than 11 paragraphs.

3.1.4 Focus of Stories

The primary focuses of stories published in Pennsylvania were legislation and reasons why the speed limit should not be changed. Since the change in speed limit was never implemented in Pennsylvania, the coverage never progressed to the point of discussing some of the predominant focuses in the other seven States, such as State statistics on highway fatalities, reasons why the speed limit should be changed, and changing the speed limits on State roads that meet or approach interstate specifications. Exhibit 6 lists the number of articles by primary focus in each State, before and after legislation was implemented.

3.2 ANALYSIS BY HIGH AND LOW PROPORTIONS OF RURAL INTERSTATE HIGHWAY MILES

The proportion of rural interstate highway miles was calculated by dividing each State's rural interstate highway miles by its total interstate highway miles. States were categorized as having a high proportion of rural interstate highway miles if more than 70 percent of its interstate highway miles were rural.

States with a low proportion of rural interstate miles included: California (59 percent), Florida (69 percent), Michigan (62 percent) and Washington (68 percent). States with a high proportion of rural interstate miles included New Mexico (91 percent), Pennsylvania (76 percent), Texas (71 percent) and Utah (85 percent).

EXHIBIT 6

PRIMARY FOCUS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES BY STATE,
BEFORE AND AFTER IMPLEMENTATION OF SPEED LIMIT LAW*

	Before Implementation of 65 mph									After Implementation of 65 mph								
	CA	FL	MI	NM	PA	TX	UT	WA	SUB TTL	CA	FL	MI	NM	PA	TX	UT	WA	SUB TTL
Pro	16	2	5	1	8	15	1	9	57	3	1	0	0	NA	2	0	0	6
Con	6	7	3	0	14	3	0	5	38	3	4	0	0	NA	0	0	1	8
Legislation	60	11	21	4	39	19	8	18	180	7	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	7
Add On																		
Legislation	2	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	12	1	2	0	0	NA	0	0	0	3
Changing Signs	3	3	1	3	0	2	0	0	12	2	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	2
65 On State Roads	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	2	1	NA	3	0	0	20
Confusion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	NA	1	0	0	6
State Fatalities	1	1	1	0	5	1	1	0	10	12	4	1	12	NA	10	1	5	45
National Fatalities	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	8	2	0	0	1	NA	3	0	0	6
Increased Speeds	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	9	2	3	0	5	NA	4	0	5	19
Illegal Speeding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	1	0	0	1
Federal Funding	1	1	5	0	1	1	0	0	9	0	6	0	0	NA	0	1	0	7
Local																		
Implementation	24	13	3	2	2	21	2	8	75	3	3	0	3	NA	2	0	1	12
Impact on Law Enforcement	3	2	5	0	1	3	2	1	17	0	5	0	8	NA	0	0	2	15

* Implementation dates for individual states were as follows: California, May 29, 1987; Florida, April 28, 1987; Michigan, November 29, 1987; New Mexico, April 3, 1987; Texas, May 9, 1987; Utah, May 22, 1987; and Washington, April 29, 1987. Pennsylvania did not implement the 65 mph speed limit in 1987.

3.2.1 Location of articles

There is not a significant difference in the proportion of articles appearing on the front page between States with high and low proportions of rural interstate highway miles. The major difference in article placement between these two groups of States was in local coverage and elsewhere in the front section. States with high rural interstate highway miles approached the story more often as a local issue, whereas States with low rural interstate highway miles addressed it more often as a National issue (see Exhibit 7).

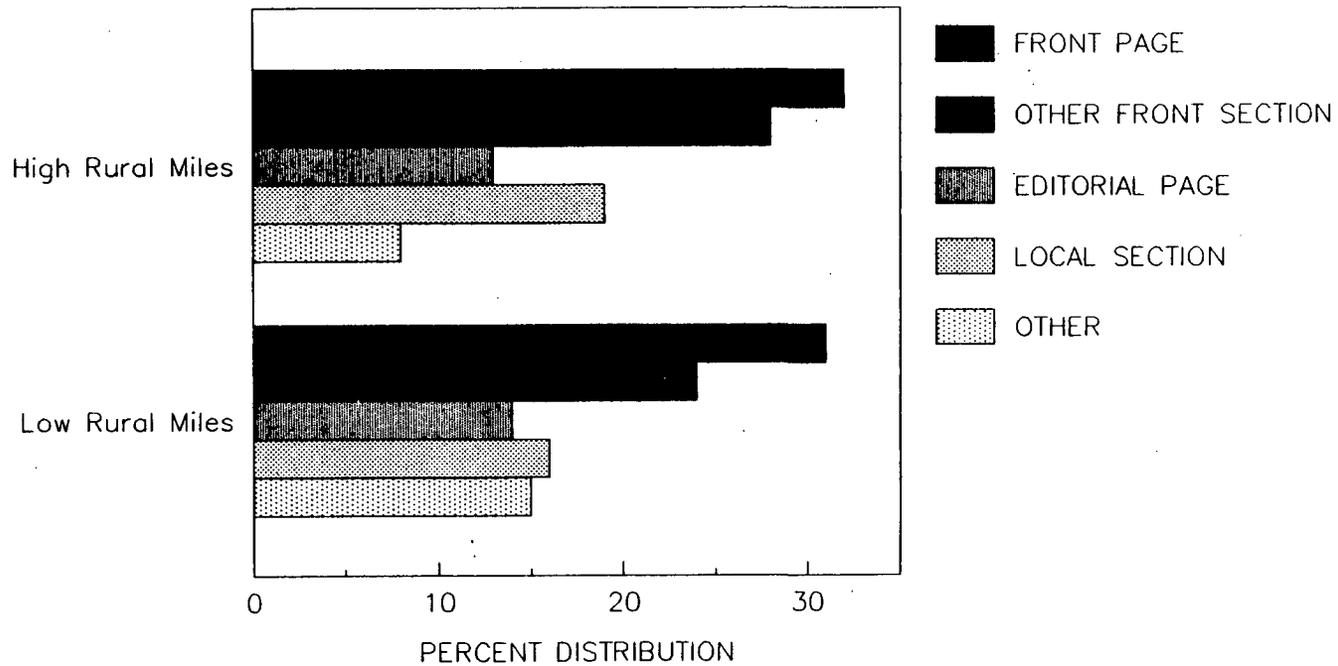
3.2.2 Type of Articles

In States with high rural interstate highway miles, 91 percent of the articles were news stories; in States with low rural interstate highway miles, 86 percent of the stories were news stories. In Utah and New Mexico, the two States with the highest proportions of rural interstate highway miles, the newspapers analyzed carried only news stories; no editorials, letters to the editor, or columns on the subject of the increase in the speed limit were published.

In States with high proportions of rural interstate highway miles, 53 percent of all opinion stories favored the increase in the speed limit, while 24 percent of opinion stories opposed it. In States with low proportions of rural interstate highway miles, 42 percent of all opinion stories favored the increase in speed limit, while 34 percent of opinion pieces opposed the change (see Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 7

LOCATION OF ARTICLES IN NEWSPAPERS High vs. Low Rural Interstate Highway Miles

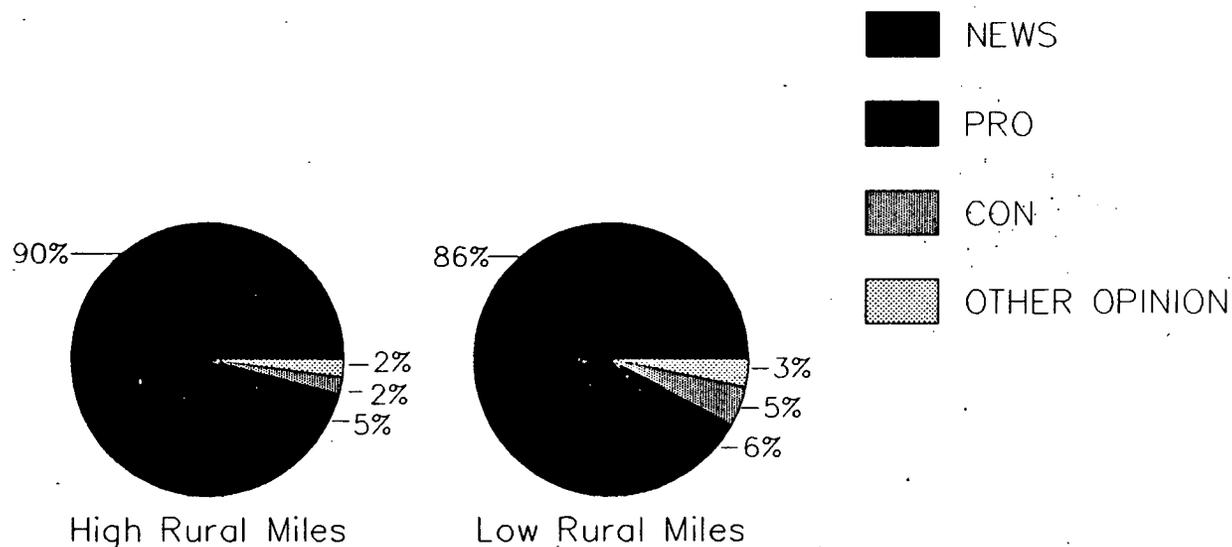


The proportion of rural interstate highway miles was calculated by dividing each State's rural interstate highway miles by its total interstate highway miles. If a State's proportion of rural highway miles was 70 percent or more, then it had a high proportion of rural highway miles.

States with high rural mileage: TX, UT, PA, NM
States with low rural mileage: CA, MI, FL, WA

Exhibit 8

TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: NEWS AND OPINION High vs. Low Rural Interstate Highway Miles



The proportion of rural interstate highway miles was calculated by dividing each State's rural interstate highway miles by its total interstate highway miles. If a State's proportion of rural highway miles was 70 percent or more, then it had a high proportion of rural highway miles.

States with high rural mileage: TX, UT, PA, NM
States with low rural mileage: CA, MI, FL, WA

News articles are factual in nature. Opinion stories include editorials, letters to the editor and columns. Opinion stories favored, opposed or did not express an opinion on the issue of increasing the speed limit.

3.2.3 Length of Articles

The length of articles was divided into long (more than 20 paragraphs), medium (between 11 and 20 paragraphs), and short (less than 11 paragraphs).

There were 11 paragraphs in the average story in States with high rural interstate highway miles; the average article length published in States with a low proportion of rural interstate highway miles was slightly lower, 12 paragraphs.

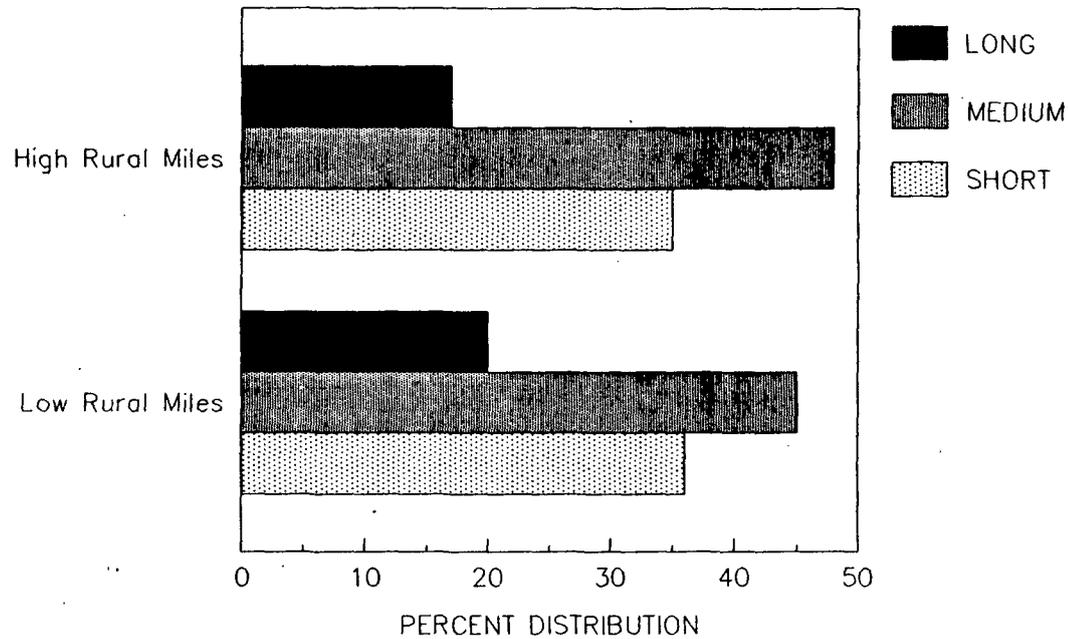
The two groups of States had roughly the same proportions of short, medium, and long stories (see Exhibit 9).

3.2.4 Focus of Articles

The predominant focus of stories in both groups of States was legislation. In States with high proportions of rural highway miles, the second most common primary focus was State statistics on highway fatalities. In States with a low proportion of rural highway miles, the second most common primary focus was local implementation of the new speed limit; in these States, State statistics on highway fatalities was the sixth most common primary focus.

Exhibit 9

LENGTH OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
High vs. Low Rural Interstate Highway Miles



- 28 -

The proportion of rural interstate highway miles was calculated by dividing each State's rural interstate highway miles by its total interstate highway miles. If a State's proportion of rural highway miles was 70 percent or more, then it had a high proportion of rural highway miles.

States with high rural mileage: TX, UT, PA, NM
States with low rural mileage: CA, MI, FL, WA

Long articles have more than 20 paragraphs, medium articles have between 11 and 20 paragraphs, and short articles have fewer than 11 paragraphs.

3.3 ANALYSIS BY MONTH

A month-by-month analysis shows definite trends in the focus of the stories as well as amount and visibility of news coverage. Six of the States analyzed implemented the 65 mph speed limit on rural interstates between April 1, 1987 and May 31, 1987. Michigan implemented the new speed limit on November 29, 1987, and Pennsylvania did not implement the 65 mph speed limit.

Sixty-three percent of all stories on the change in the speed limit appeared between February and May 1987.

3.3.1 Location of Stories

Sixty-five percent of all front page newspaper articles on the speed limit change appeared between February and May 1987. Exhibit 10 presents a list of the number of articles appearing on the front page of newspapers in each month, in each State, and before and after legislation to raise the speed limit was enacted.

3.3.2 Type of Story

In general, between 80 and 90 percent of all speed limit related articles published each month were news stories. The exceptions were July, when 69 percent of the articles were news stories, and November, when all of the articles were news stories (see Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 10

**Articles Appearing on the Front Page of Newspapers
by State and Month
and Pre and Post Intervention Date Totals**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Intervention Point		
														Date	Pres65	Post65
CA	0 (0)	8 (53)	19 (46)	12 (44)	9 (38)	1 (20)	0 (0)	1 (33)	1 (33)	1 (17)	0 (0)	0 (0)	52 (36)	5/29	48 (45)	4 (11)
FL	2 (100)	1 (33)	7 (54)	3 (19)	2 (29)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (14)	16 (25)	4/29	13 (38)	3 (10)
MI	0 (**)	0 (0)	3 (37)	0 (0)	1 (20)	5 (50)	2 (33)	0 (0)	1 (11)	5 (24)	2 (40)	3 (50)	22 (26)	11/29	18 (23)	4 (57)
NM	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (33)	3 (75)	2 (40)	2 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (22)	0 (0)	0 (**)	0 (0)	11 (32)	4/03	5 (63)	6 (23)
PA	0 (**)	2 (29)	9 (43)	9 (43)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (50)	0 (**)	1 (50)	1 (50)	0 (**)	1 (25)	24 (37)	NA	NA NA	NA NA
TX	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (22)	8 (44)	10 (37)	1 (33)	0 (**)	0 (0)	1 (50)	0 (0)	2 (33)	1 (25)	27 (30)	5/09	19 (31)	8 (29)
UT	1 (100)	1 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (**)	0 (0)	0 (**)	0 (0)	0 (**)	0 (**)	0 (**)	2 (13)	5/22	2 (17)	0 (0)
WA	0 (0)	5 (46)	4 (50)	7 (54)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (14)	0 (**)	1 (25)	0 (**)	0 (0)	0 (0)	18 (35)	4/29	16 (49)	2 (11)
TOTAL	3 (38)	18 (35)	47 (41)	42 (39)	24 (32)	9 (29)	4 (17)	1 (8)	7 (21)	7 (21)	4 (19)	6 (15)	172 (31)			

% of
Year's
Total

2% 10 27 24 14 5 2 1 4 4 2 3 98%*

Sample size equals 172.

* Percentages do not total one hundred due to rounding.
** No articles were analyzed in that State for that month.

EXHIBIT 11

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEWS STORIES*
IN NEWSPAPERS
BY STATE AND BY MONTH

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
CA	1	15	34	24	19	4	3	2	3	5	3	10	123
FL	2	1	11	12	4	2	1	2	2	1	6	6	50
MI	0	5	8	5	5	9	3	3	6	18	5	5	72
NM	1	1	3	4	5	2	2	2	9	2	0	3	34
PA	0	5	18	15	2	4	1	0	1	2	0	2	50
TX	1	6	16	15	24	2	0	1	2	1	6	4	78
UT	1	2	2	4	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	15
WA	1	8	8	11	1	3	5	0	4	0	1	2	44
Total	7	43	100	90	63	26	16	10	29	29	21	32	466
% of Year's Total	2	9	21	19	14	6	3	2	6	6	5	7	100%

Sample size equals 466.

* News stories are factual in nature; editorials, columns and letters to the editor are excluded.

3.3.3 Length of Stories

Articles published early in 1987 were frequently longer than articles published later in the year.

Sixty-six percent of the year's total coverage, measured in paragraphs, was published between February and May 1987 (see Exhibit 12).

3.3.4 Focus of Stories

There is a definite relationship between time of the year and predominant primary focus of the articles. Early in the year, between February and May 1987, the primary focus centered on the legislative process of changing the speed limit. As the States began to implement the change, the focus shifted to local implementation of the change and State highway fatalities statistics.

Another predominant, primary focus that emerged in the latter part of 1987 was the movement to change the speed limits on State roads that meet or approach interstate highway specifications.

EXHIBIT 12

AVERAGE LENGTH IN PARAGRAPHS OF NEWSPAPER STORIES,
BY STATE AND MONTH,
AND PRE AND POST INTERVENTION DATE TOTALS

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	State Intervention Point			
													Mean	Date	Pre65	Post65
CA	8	13	13	12	11	10	9	7	12	9	23	11	12	5/29	12	11
FL	7	19	17	14	16	13	16	11	10	4	12	8	13	4/28	15	12
MI	**	18	17	19	18	12	11	14	13	15	11	11	14	11/29	15	10
NM	20	19	15	16	11	17	5	8	14	17	**	14	14	4/03	17	13
PA	**	13	12	16	10	7	26	**	7	12	**	8	13	NA	NA	NA
TX	7	7	14	16	13	12	**	8	18	15	12	13	13	5/09	13	14
UT	11	9	29	9	20	**	17	**	9	**	**	**	14	5/22	15	12
WA	6	15	13	8	12	5	16	**	10	**	11	17	12	4/29	11	12

Overall

Average	9	13	14	14	13	11	14	10	12	14	13	11
---------	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

% of

year's coverage*	1%	9	22	23	13	5	5	2	5	7	4	6
------------------	----	---	----	----	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Sample size equals 550.

* Percentages total more than one hundred due to rounding.

** No articles were analyzed for that month in that State.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FOCUS PAIRINGS

The most predominant primary focuses were legislation, reasons favoring the speed limit change, reasons opposing the speed limit change, local implementation, and State highway fatalities statistics.

Reasons for supporting or opposing the change in speed limit were the secondary focuses most frequently paired with the primary focus of legislation. National highway fatalities statistics, local implementation, and impacts on law enforcement were also frequently paired as secondary focuses to the primary focus of legislation.

National highway fatalities statistics, increase in speeds, and impact on law enforcement were the most common secondary focuses when pro and con speed limit change are the primary focuses. There is no significant difference in the secondary focuses associated with the primary focuses of pro and con the speed limit change.

Pro and con the change in speed limit, legislation, local instructions on implementing the change in speed limit, and the impact on law enforcement were all secondary focuses frequently associated with the primary focus of local implementation.

Increase in speeds was the secondary focus most frequently associated with the primary focus of State highway fatalities statistics.

Exhibit 13 details the primary and secondary focus pairing for the newspaper articles analyzed.

Exhibit 13

Pairings of Primary and Secondary Focuses
for Newspaper Articles

PRIMARY FOCUS	SECONDARY FOCUS													
	Pro	Con	Legislation	Add-on legislation	Local implementation	Changing signs	65 on state roads	Confusion	State fatalities	National fatalities	Increase in speeds	Decrease in speeding	Federal funds	Law enforcement
Pro	0	5	18	5	0	4	1	1	6	16	13	2	1	14
Con	1	0	13	2	0	5	2	1	5	10	18	1	0	11
Legislation	49	55	0	24	9	47	1	0	11	35	8	2	12	32
Add-on legislation	0	3	9	0	3	4	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	5
Local implementation	21	28	30	4	16	29	0	11	2	11	9	1	7	22
Changing signs	1	2	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	0	2
65 on state roads	2	2	5	0	2	8	0	1	5	0	2	0	2	1
Confusion	2	1	4	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	3
State fatalities	0	4	0	1	1	2	5	1	0	1	11	1	1	7
National fatalities	0	1	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	3
Increase in speeds	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	6	2	1	0	1	0	9
Decrease in speeding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal funds	2	2	4	4	1	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	4
Law enforcement	0	1	7	4	4	8	0	7	2	2	7	0	1	0

Categories of primary and secondary focuses are defined in Section 2.2.4.

4.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS--TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE

Television news stories from the following six States were analyzed: California, Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah. No stories were available from New Mexico and Washington.

The data gathered from the news tapes allowed two types of analyses. First, the length of the stories was analyzed. Second, the primary and secondary focuses of the stories were analyzed. Incomplete information on the actual broadcast characteristics of the stories, such as time of day of the broadcast and location within the broadcast, limited the scope of the analysis of the news tapes.

Fifty-six television news stories were analyzed.

4.1 LENGTH OF STORIES

The overall average length of the stories was 1 minute and 37 seconds (1:37). The longest stories aired in Pennsylvania (2:02), Florida (1:52), and Texas (1:52). The shortest stories aired in Utah (1:11). For a complete breakdown of the length of story by State, see Exhibit 14.

EXHIBIT 14

AVERAGE LENGTH OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES BY STATE

<u>State</u>	<u>Average Length of Television News Story (in minutes)</u>
California	1:37
Florida	1:52
Michigan	1:31
New Mexico	*
Pennsylvania	2:02
Texas	1:52
Utah	1:11
Washington	*

* No tapes of stories were received from this State.

4.2 FOCUS OF STORIES

The most predominant primary focuses of the television news stories were legislation, pro, and impact on law enforcement. The most predominant secondary focuses of television news stories were pro, legislation, local implementation, impact on law enforcement, and con (see Exhibit 15).

The main difference between the television and newspaper coverage of the change in speed limit appeared to be the greater emphasis in the television media on the impact on law enforcement. This focus was very frequently an organizing tool for television new stories.

Exhibit 15 details the frequencies of primary and secondary focuses for television news stories.

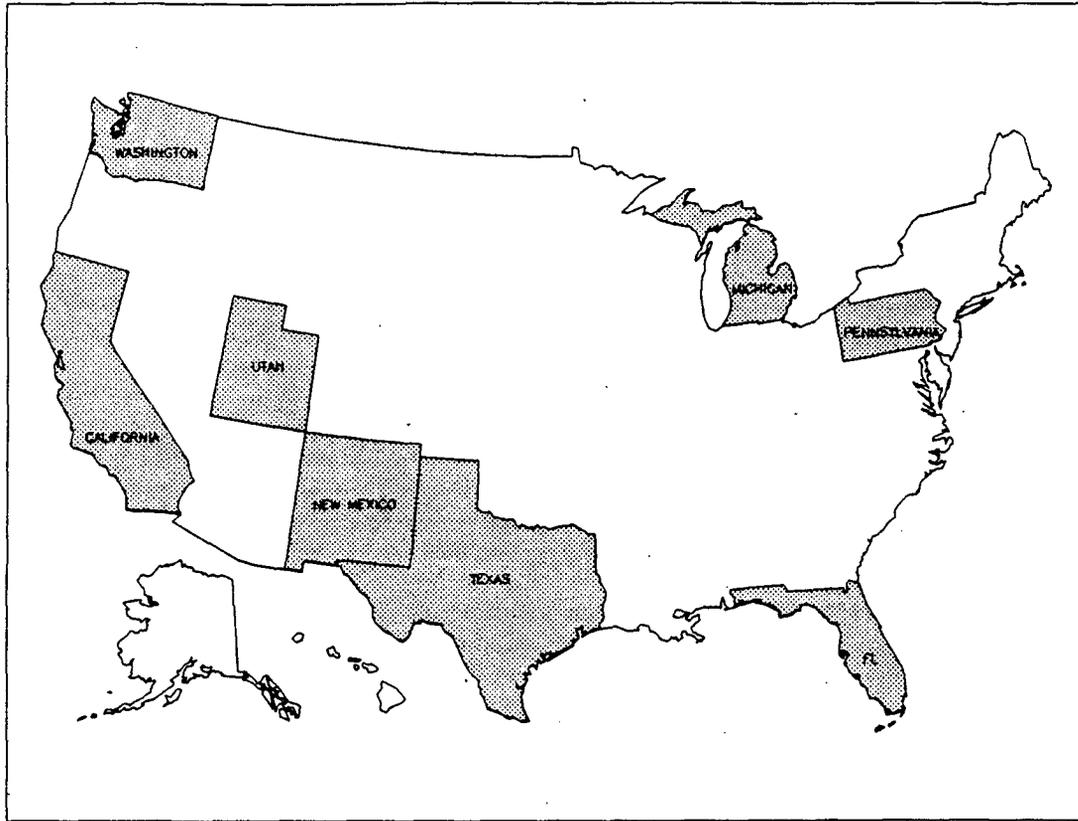
EXHIBIT 15

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FOCUSES OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Frequency as Primary Focus</u>	<u>Frequency as Secondary Focus</u>
Pro	14	18
Con	5	11
Legislation	15	16
Add-on Legislation	3	7
Local Implementation	8	15
Changing Signs	3	9
Confusion	2	3
State Fatalities Statistics	3	0
National Fatalities Statistics	1	6
Increasing Speeds	0	1
Decrease in Illegal Speeds	0	0
Federal Funding Impacts	2	0
Impact on Law Enforcement	11	14

Sample size was 56 news stories.

APPENDIX



APPENDIX: STATE SUMMARIES

EXPLANATION OF SUMMARY STATISTICS

- Number of rural interstate highway miles that were affected by the change in the speed is based upon 1987 figures.
- Ratio of licensed drivers to miles of rural interstate highway miles is based upon 1986 figures for licensed drivers and 1987 figures for number of rural interstate highway miles with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- Ratio of registered vehicles to rural interstate highway miles is based upon 1986 figures for automobile registrations and 1987 figures for number of rural interstate highway miles with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- News articles are factual in nature; opinion stories include editorials, columns, and letters to the editor.
- The lengths of newspaper articles are divided into three categories: long (more than 20 paragraphs), medium (between 11 and 20 paragraphs), and short (less than 11 paragraphs).

CALIFORNIA

California implemented the 65 mph speed limit on May 29, 1987. The new speed limit applies to 1,157 miles of rural interstate highway in California.

In California, 145 articles from eight newspapers were analyzed. The newspapers covered four CMSA's.

Thirty-six percent of the articles were located on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of the stories was 12 paragraphs. Fifteen percent of the stories were opinion pieces; 85 percent were news stories.

Fourteen percent of the opinion pieces opposed the 65 mph speed limit change.

The major focuses of the stories appearing in California were legislation, location implementation, and State statistics for highway traffic fatalities.

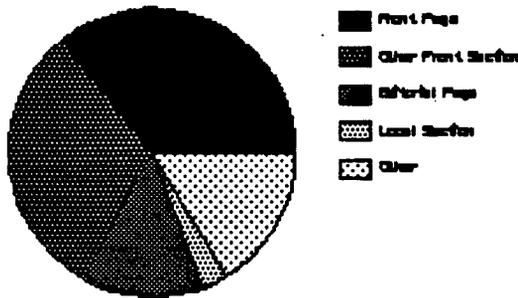
Seventy-six percent of the newspaper coverage in California occurred between February and May of 1987.



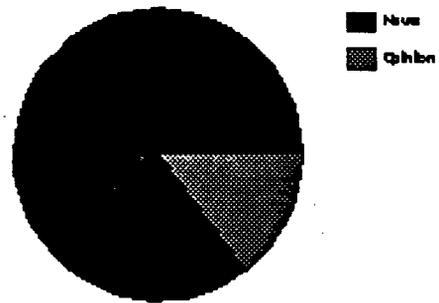
CALIFORNIA

- California raised the speed limit on rural interstate highways to 65mph on May 29, 1987.
- California has 1,157 miles of rural interstate highway with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 8,658 licensed drivers per rural interstate highway mile in California.
- There are 13,279 registered vehicles per rural interstate highway mile in California.

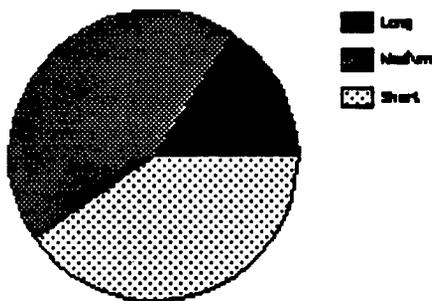
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
California



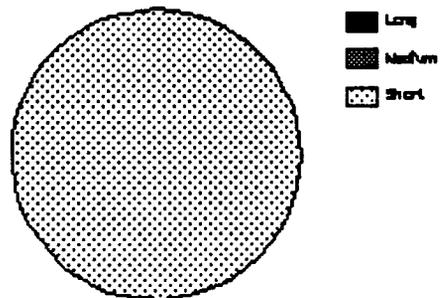
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
California



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
California



LENGTHS IN SECONDS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES
California



NEWSPAPERS

San Francisco
Chronicle

San Diego
Union Tribune

Oakland
Tribune

Los Angeles
Herald Examiner
Daily News
Times

Sacramento
Union
Bee

TELEVISION STATION

Sacramento
KCRA-TV-3

FLORIDA

Florida implemented the 65 mph speed limit on April 28, 1987. The new speed limit applies to 860 miles of rural interstate highway in Florida.

In Florida, 65 articles from four newspapers were analyzed. The newspapers covered four CMSA's.

Twenty five percent of the stories appeared on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of newspaper articles was 13 paragraphs. Thirteen percent of the articles were opinion pieces; 87 percent of the articles were news stories.

Sixty percent of the opinion pieces opposed the change to a 65 mph speed limit.

The major focuses of the articles appearing in Florida were legislation, add-on legislation, and local implementation.

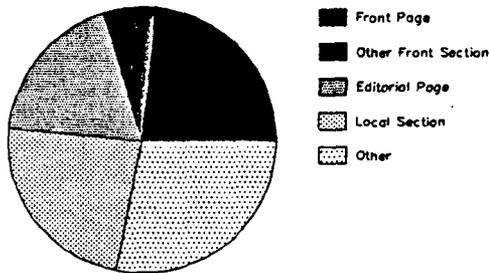
Sixty-nine percent of the newspaper coverage appeared between February and May of 1987.



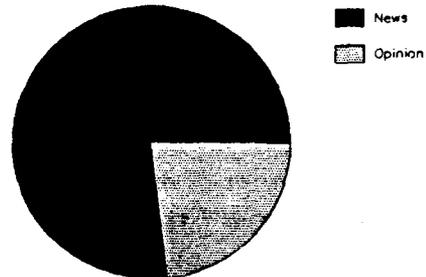
FLORIDA

- Florida raised the speed limit on rural interstate highways to 65 mph on April 28, 1987.
- Florida has 860 miles of rural interstate highway miles with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 9,692 licensed drivers per rural interstate highway mile in Florida.
- There are 9,608 registered vehicles per rural interstate highway mile in Florida.

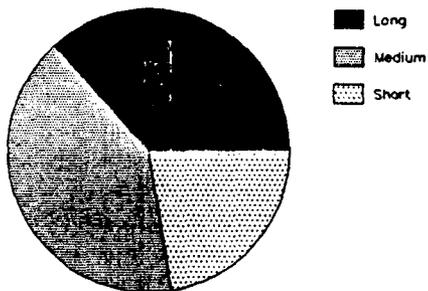
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Florida



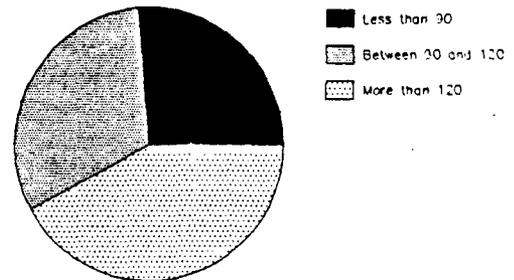
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Florida



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPERS ARTICLES
Florida



LENGTH IN SECONDS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES
Florida



NEWSPAPERS

Miami Herald	St. Petersburg Times
Tallahassee Democrat	Tampa Tribune

TELEVISION STATIONS

St. Petersburg WSTP-TV	Miami WSVN-TV
Tampa WTVT-TV	Jacksonville WJXT-4

MICHIGAN

Michigan implemented the 65 mph speed limit on November 29, 1987. The new speed limit applies to 720 miles of rural interstate highway in Michigan.

In Michigan, 85 articles from four newspapers were analyzed. The newspapers covered three CMSA's.

Twenty-six percent of the articles were located on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of the articles was 14 paragraphs. Fifteen percent of the articles were opinion pieces; 85 percent were news stories.

Twenty-three percent of the opinion pieces opposed the 65 mile per hour speed limit.

The major focuses of the stories in Michigan were legislation, add-on legislation, and the impact on law enforcement.

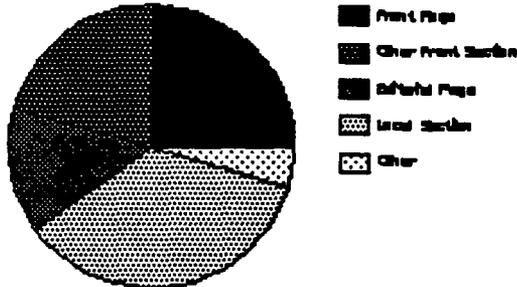
Forty percent of the newspaper coverage was between February and May of 1987.



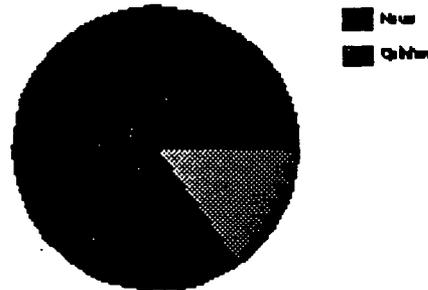
MICHIGAN

- Michigan raised the speed limit on rural Interstate highways to 65 mph on November 29, 1987.
- Michigan has 720 miles of rural Interstate highway with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 7,723 licensed drivers per rural Interstate highway mile in Michigan.
- There are 7,529 registered vehicles per rural Interstate highway mile in Michigan.

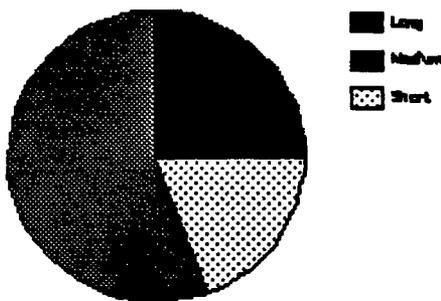
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Michigan



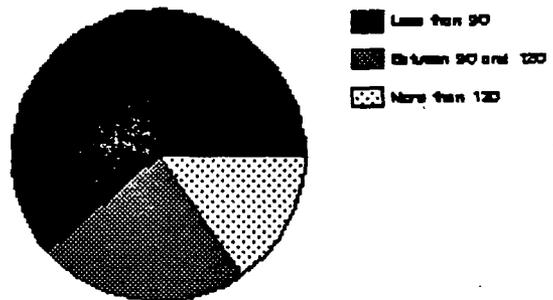
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Michigan



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Michigan



LENGTH IN SECONDS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES
Michigan



NEWSPAPERS

Grand Rapids
Press

Detroit
Free Press
News

Lansing
State Journal

TELEVISION STATIONS

Lansing
WLIX

Detroit
WXYZ-TV

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico implemented the 65 mph speed limit on April 3, 1987. The new speed limit applies to 957 miles of New Mexico's rural interstate highway.

In New Mexico, 34 articles from two newspapers were analyzed. The newspapers covered two CMSA's.

Thirty-two percent of the articles were located on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of the articles was 14 paragraphs. All of the articles were news stories; none were opinion pieces.

The major focuses of the articles appearing in New Mexico were state fatalities statistics, impact on law enforcement, and increase in speeds.

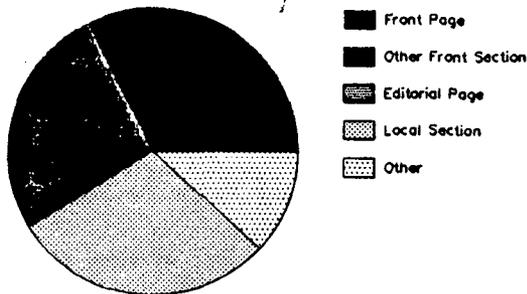
Forty percent of the newspaper coverage was between February and May of 1987.



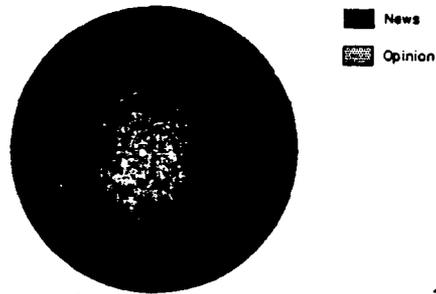
NEW MEXICO

- New Mexico raised the speed limit on rural interstate highways to 65 mph on April 3, 1987.
- New Mexico has 957 miles of rural interstate highway with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 1,070 licensed drivers per rural interstate highway mile in New Mexico.
- There are 866 registered vehicles per mile of rural interstate highway in New Mexico.

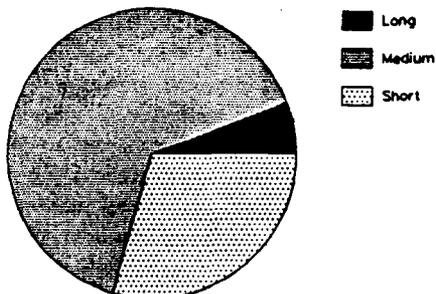
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
New Mexico



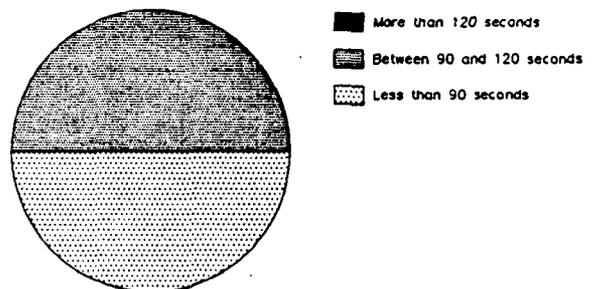
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
New Mexico



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
New Mexico



LENGTHS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES
New Mexico



NEWSPAPERS

Sante Fe
New Mexican

Albuquerque
Journal Tribune

TELEVISION STATION

Albuquerque
KGGM-TV Channel 13

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania did not implement the 65 mph speed limit in 1987. In Pennsylvania, 65 articles from four newspapers were analyzed. The newspapers covered three CMSA's.

Thirty-seven percent of the articles were located on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of the articles was 13 paragraphs. Twenty-three percent of the articles were opinion pieces; 77 percent were news stories.

Twenty-seven percent of the opinion pieces opposed the change in the speed limit.

The major focuses of the articles appearing in Pennsylvania were legislation and reasons for changing and not changing the speed limit.

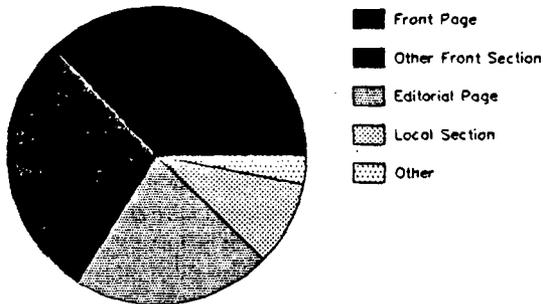
Eighty-two percent of the newspaper coverage in Pennsylvania occurred between February and May of 1987.



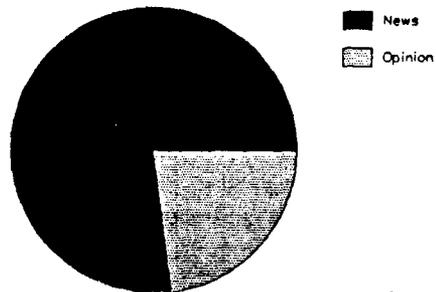
PENNSYLVANIA

- Pennsylvania did not implement the 65 mph speed limit in 1987.
- Pennsylvania does not have any rural interstate highway miles with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 7,691,269 licensed drivers in Pennsylvania.
- There are 6,090,520 registered vehicles in Pennsylvania.

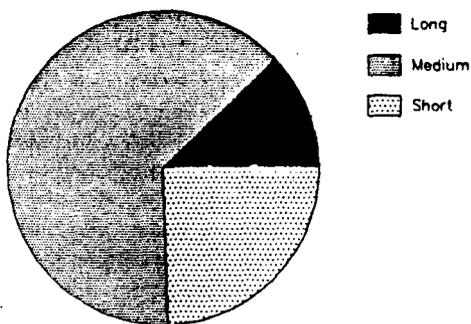
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES Pennsylvania



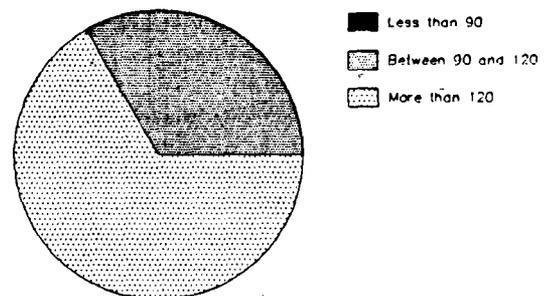
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES Pennsylvania



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES Pennsylvania



LENGTH IN SECONDS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES Pennsylvania



NEWSPAPERS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Philadelphia Daily News Inquirer
Harrisburg Patriot News	

TELEVISION STATION

Pittsburgh
WPXI Channel 11

TEXAS

Texas implemented the 65 mph speed limit on May 9, 1987. The new speed limit applies to 2,441 miles of Texas's rural interstate highways.

Ninety articles from seven Texas newspapers were analyzed. The newspapers covered five CMSA's.

Thirty percent of the articles were located on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of the stories was 13 paragraphs. Thirteen percent of the stories were opinion pieces; 87 percent were news stories.

None of the opinion pieces in Texas were opposed to the 65 mph speed limit change.

The major focuses of the news stories appearing in Texas were local implementation, legislation, and reasons why the speed limit should be raised.

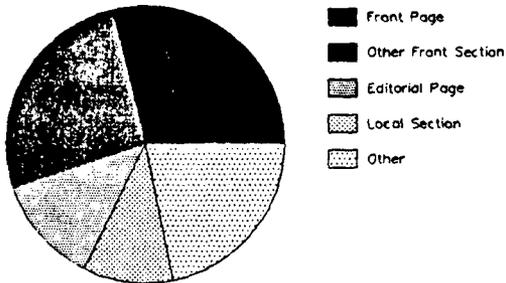
Seventy-nine percent of the newspaper coverage in Texas occurred between February and May of 1987.



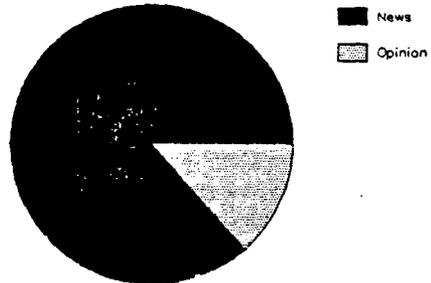
TEXAS

- Texas raised the speed limit on rural interstate highways to 65 mph on May 9, 1987.
- Texas has 2,441 miles of rural interstate highway with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 4,469 licensed drivers per rural interstate highway mile in Texas.
- There are 3,482 registered vehicles per rural interstate highway mile in Texas.

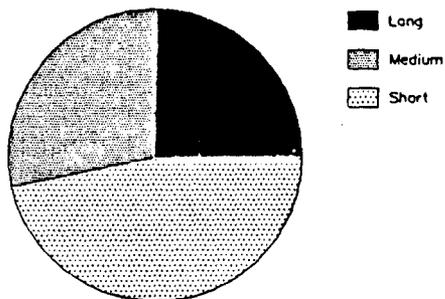
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Texas



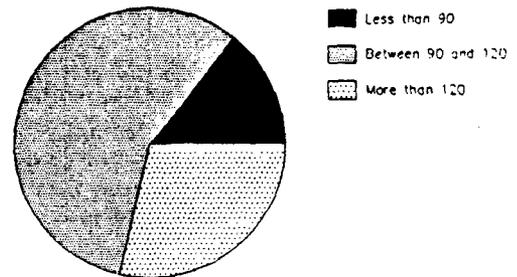
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Texas



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Texas



LENGTH IN SECONDS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES
Texas



NEWSPAPERS

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Dallas
Morning News
Times Herald | Austin
American Statesman |
| Fort Worth
Star Telegram | Houston
Post
Chronicle |
| El Paso
Times | |

TELEVISION STATIONS

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Dallas
WFAA-TV | Houston
KRTK |
|-------------------|-----------------|

UTAH

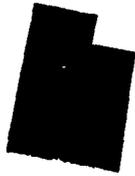
Utah implemented the 65 mph speed limit on May 22, 1987. The new speed limit applies to 775 miles of Utah's rural interstate highways.

In Utah, 15 articles from one newspaper were analyzed. The newspaper covered one CMSA.

Thirteen percent of the articles were located on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of the articles was 14 paragraphs. All of the articles analyzed were news stories; no opinion stories were found.

The major focus of the stories appearing in Utah was legislation.

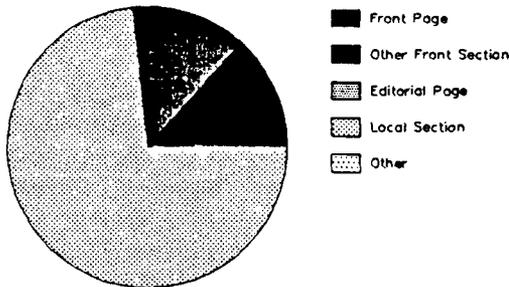
Seventy-nine percent of the newspaper coverage in Utah occurred between February and May of 1987.



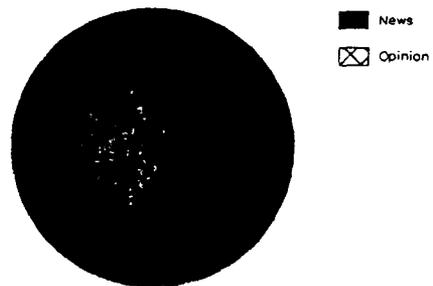
UTAH

- Utah raised the speed limit on rural interstate highways to 65 mph on May 22, 1987.
- Utah has 775 miles of rural interstate highway with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 1,252 licensed drivers per rural interstate highway mile in Utah.
- There are 967 registered vehicles per rural interstate highway mile in Utah.

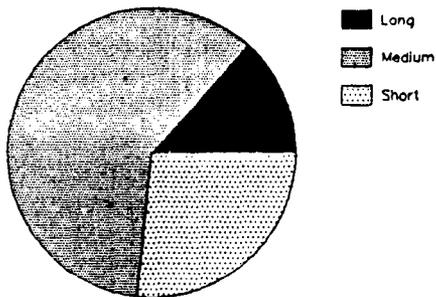
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Utah



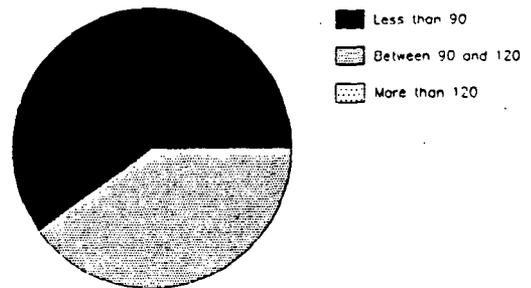
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Utah



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Utah



LENGTH IN SECONDS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES
Utah



NEWSPAPER
Salt Lake City
Tribune Desert News

TELEVISION STATION
Salt Lake City
KSL-TV

WASHINGTON

Washington implemented the 65 mph speed limit on April 29, 1987. The new speed limit applies to 526 miles of Washington's rural interstate highway.

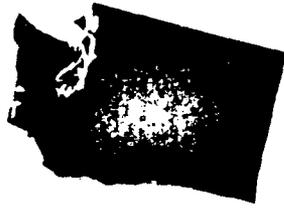
In Washington, 51 articles from four newspapers were analyzed. The newspapers covered three CMSA's.

Thirty-five percent of the articles were located on the front page of the newspaper. The average length of the articles was 12 paragraphs. Fourteen percent of the articles were opinion pieces; 86 percent were news stories.

Seventeen percent of the opinion pieces opposed the 65 mph speed limit.

The major focuses of the newspaper articles in Washington were legislation, reasons for changing the speed limit, and local implementation.

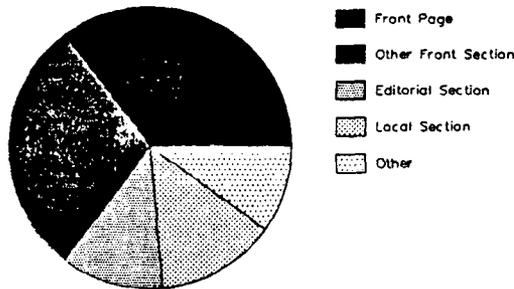
Sixty-three percent of the newspaper coverage in Washington occurred between February and May of 1987.



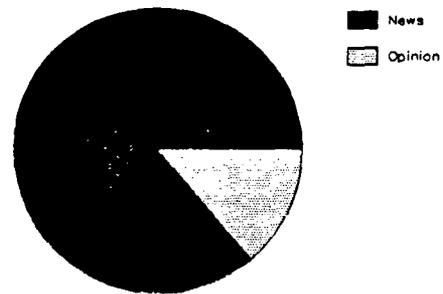
WASHINGTON

- Washington raised the speed limit on rural interstate highways to 65 mph on April 29, 1987.
- Washington has 526 miles of rural interstate highway with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 5,759 licensed drivers per rural interstate mile in Washington.
- There are 4,963 registered vehicles per rural interstate highway mile in Washington.

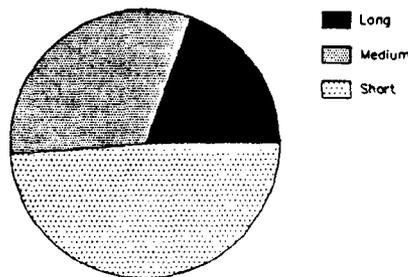
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Washington



TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Washington



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Washington



NEWSPAPERS

Seattle
Times
Post-Intelligencer

Spokane
Spokesman Review-Chronicle

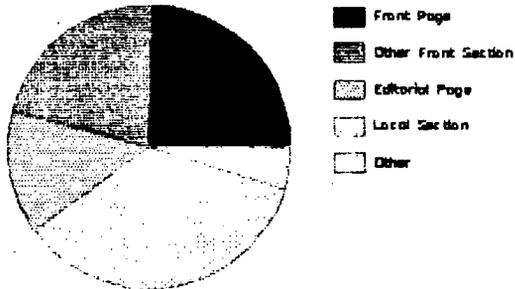
Tacoma
News Tribune



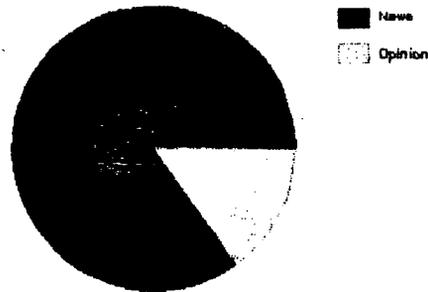
MICHIGAN

- Michigan raised the speed limit on rural interstate highways to 65 mph on November 29, 1987.
- Michigan has 720 miles of rural interstate highway with a speed limit of 65 mph.
- There are 7,723 licensed drivers per rural interstate highway mile in Michigan.
- There are 7,529 registered vehicles per rural interstate highway mile in Michigan.

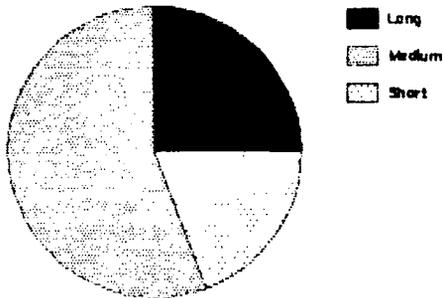
LOCATION OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Michigan



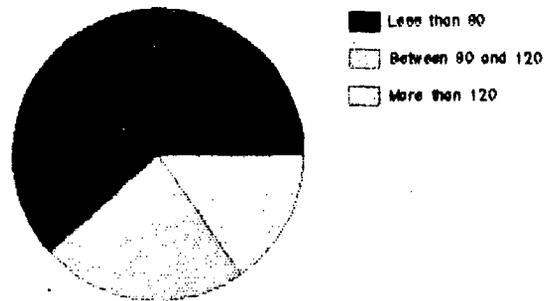
TYPES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Michigan



LENGTHS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
Michigan



LENGTH IN SECONDS OF TELEVISION NEWS STORIES
Michigan



NEWSPAPERS

Grand Rapids Press
Lansing State Journal
Detroit Free Press News

TELEVISION STATIONS

Lansing WLIX
Detroit WXYZ-TV