



# Do Bans on Driver Cellphone Use make Safer Drivers?

[www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org)

SAE Government/Industry Meeting  
Washington, DC • January 29, 2010

Adrian Lund, Ph.D., President

The sad fact is that in the coming weeks in particular, too many drivers will become distracted as they study a GPS, dial a cellphone or type a text message.

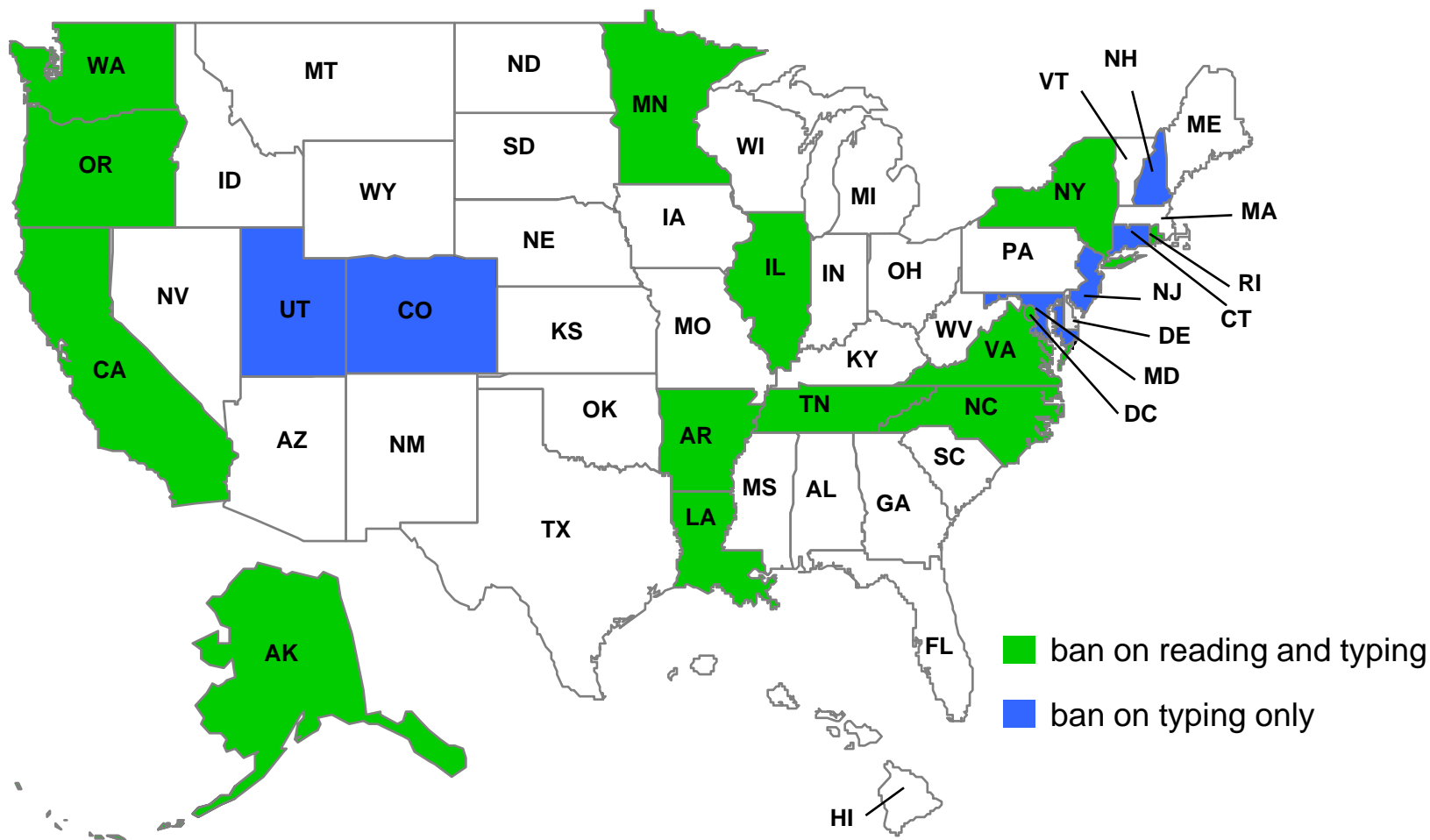
Over the past few years, distracted driving has gone from a dangerous practice to a deadly epidemic.

- Ray LaHood  
US Transportation Secretary  
*The Washington Post*, November 28, 2009



# Bans on texting while driving

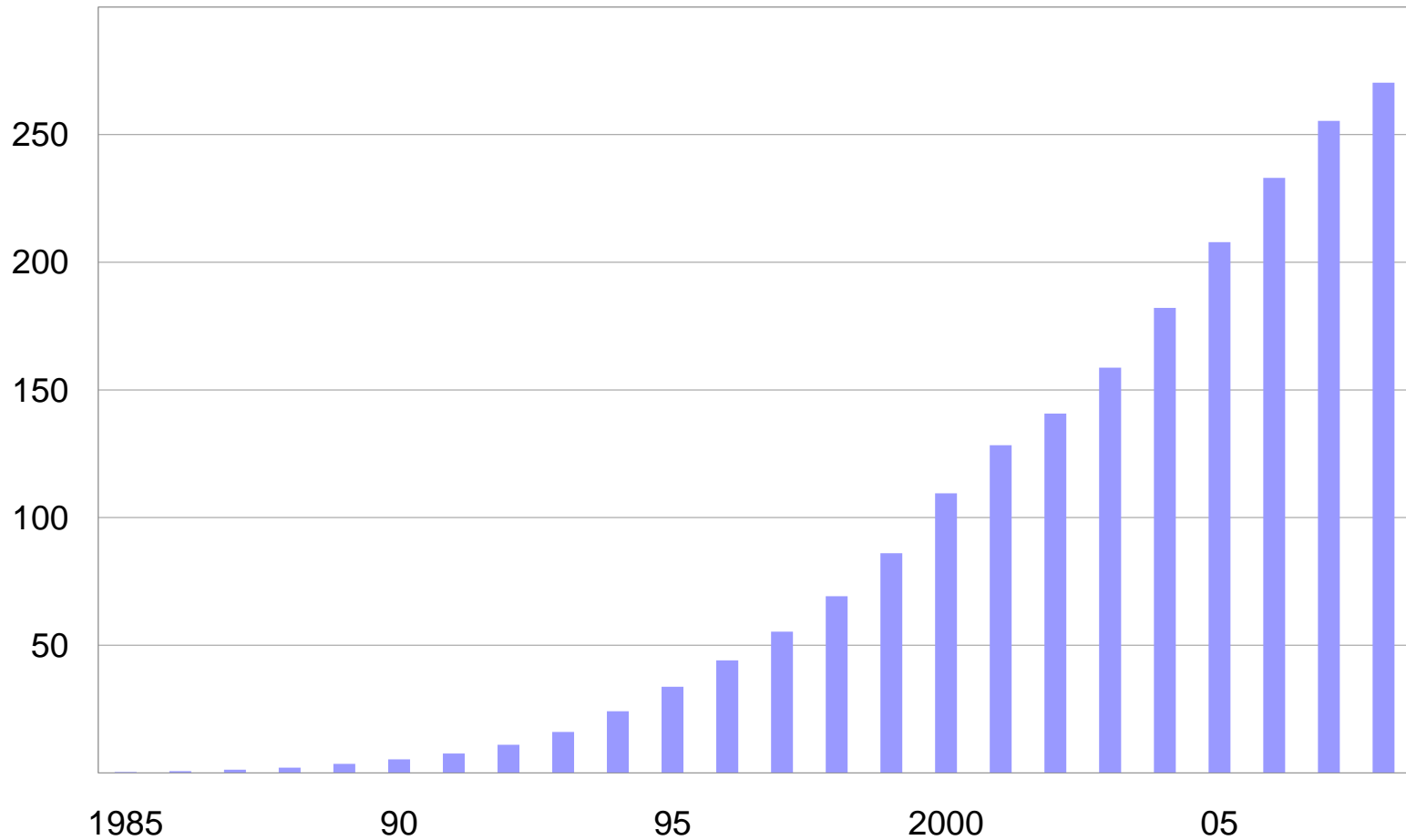
January 2010



Where's the epidemic?

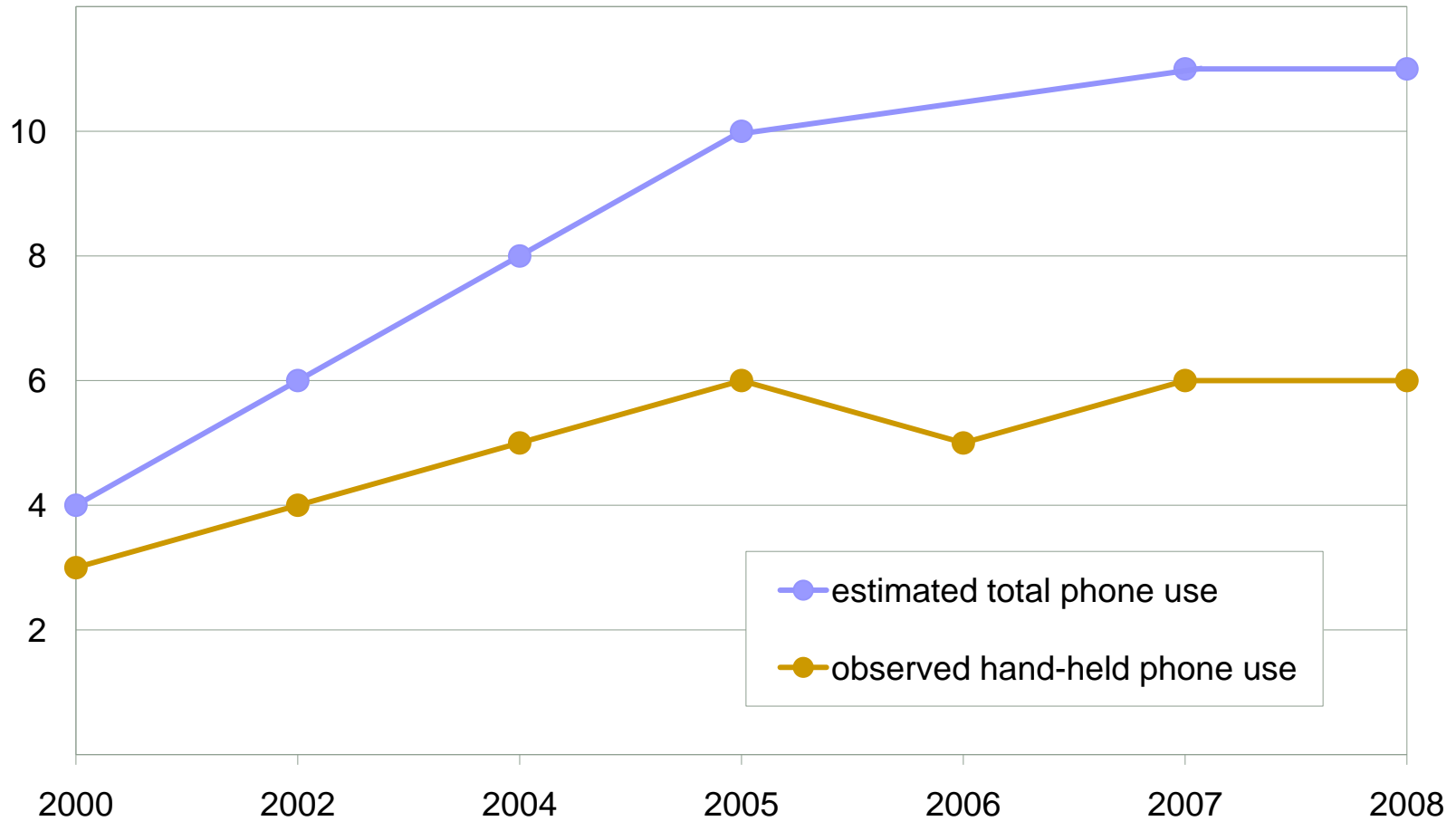
# Cellphone subscribers

In millions, 1985-2009



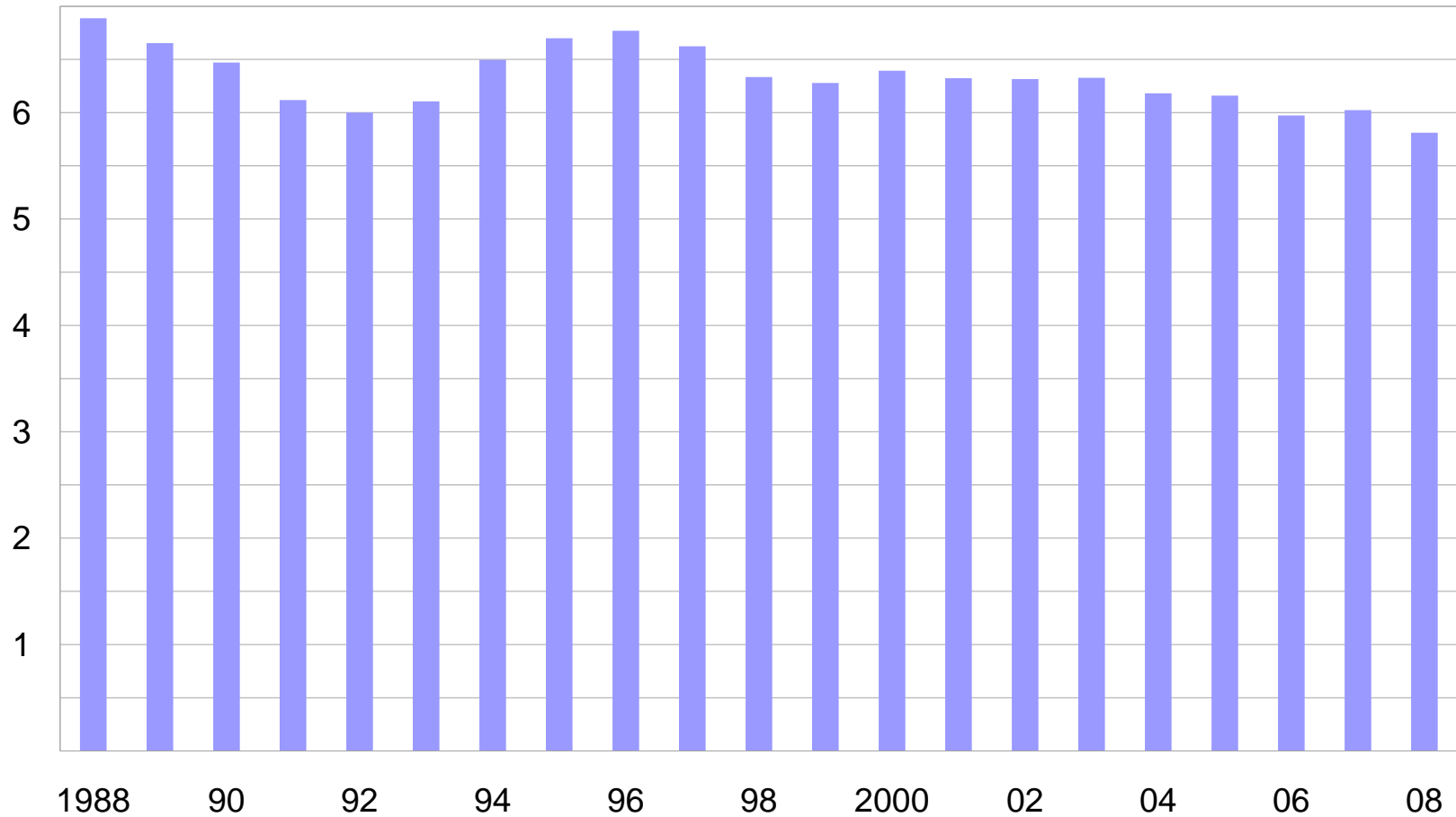
# Percent of drivers talking on phones

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2000-08



# All crashes

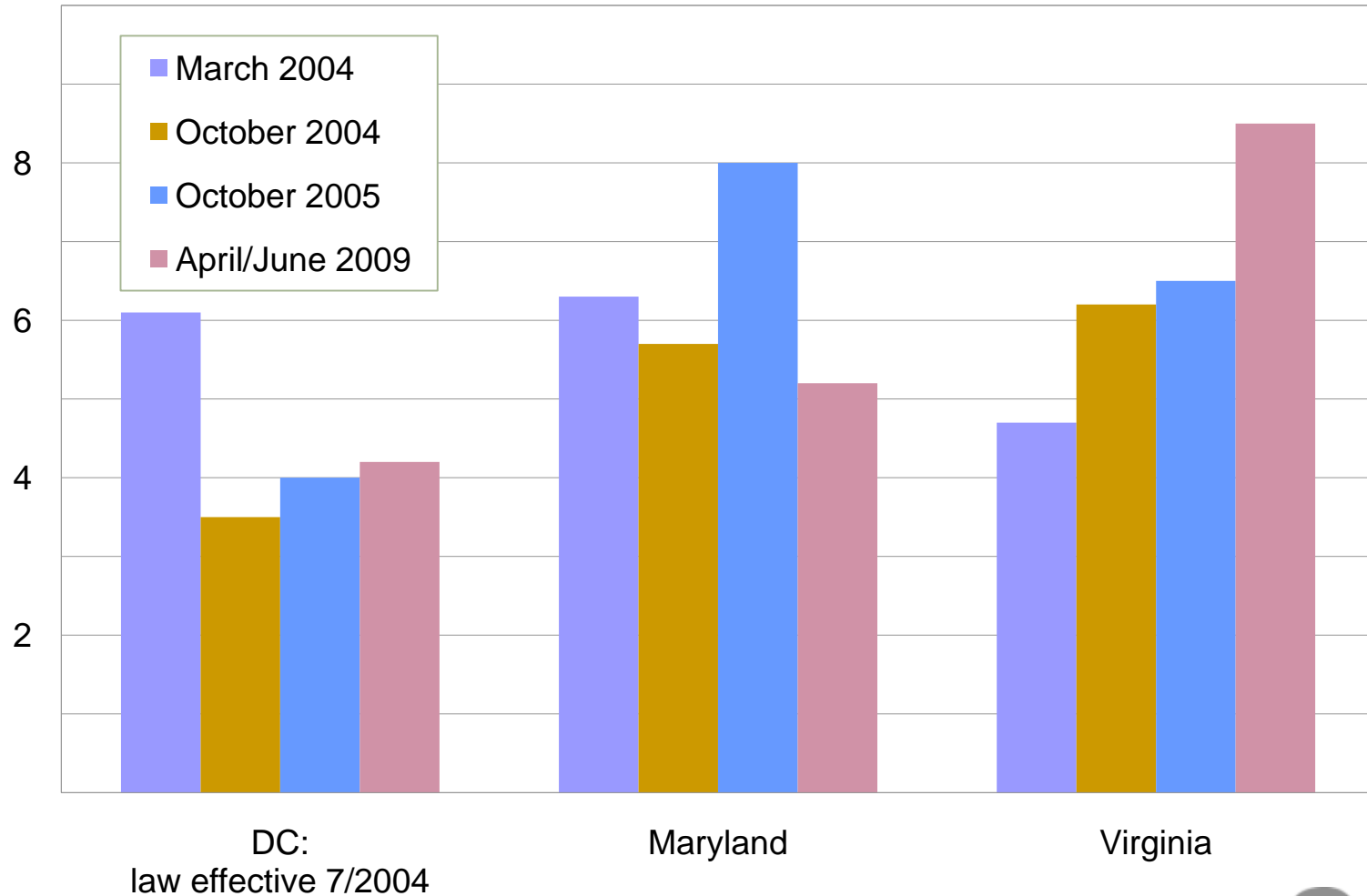
In millions, GES for non-fatal and FARS for fatal, by calendar year



How effective are  
cellphone use laws –  
the case of hand-held bans?

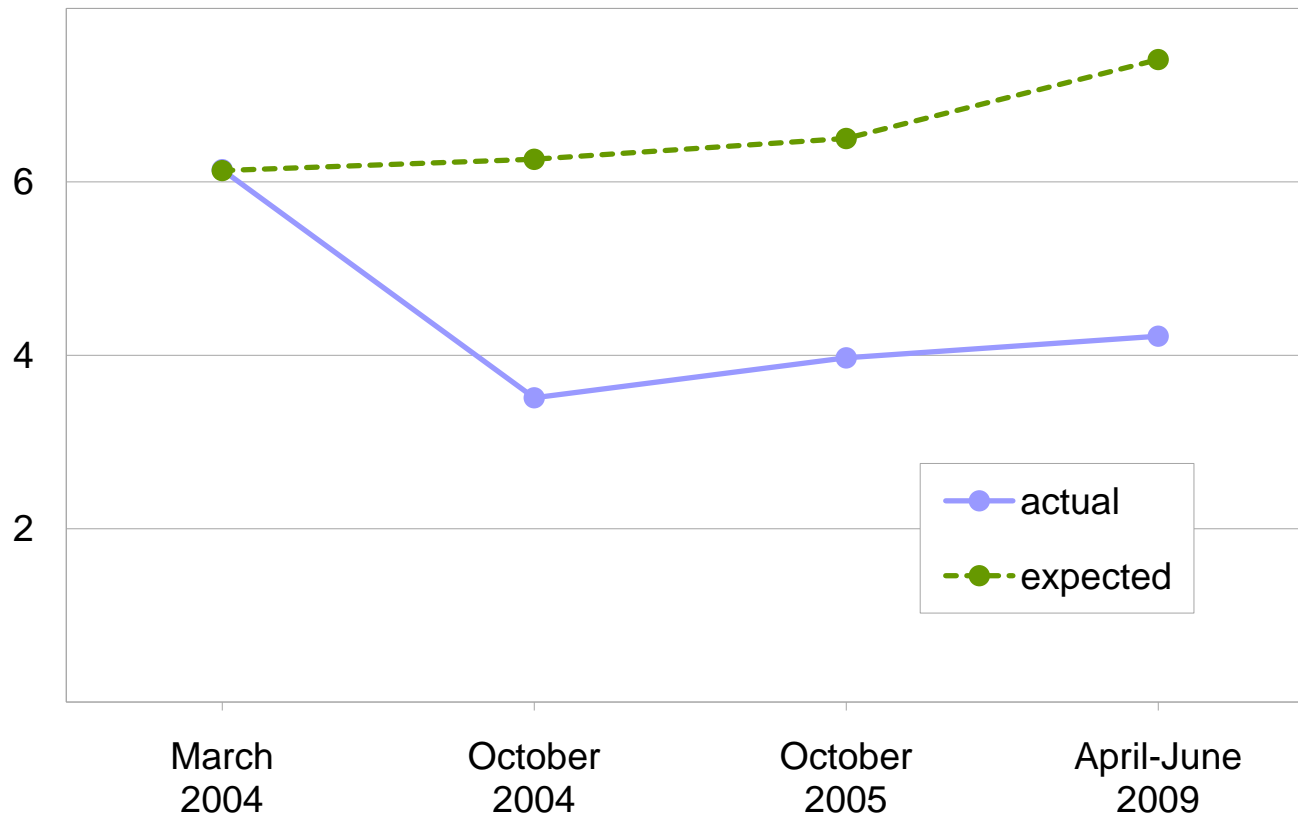
# Percent of drivers using hand-held phones

Washington, DC, metro area



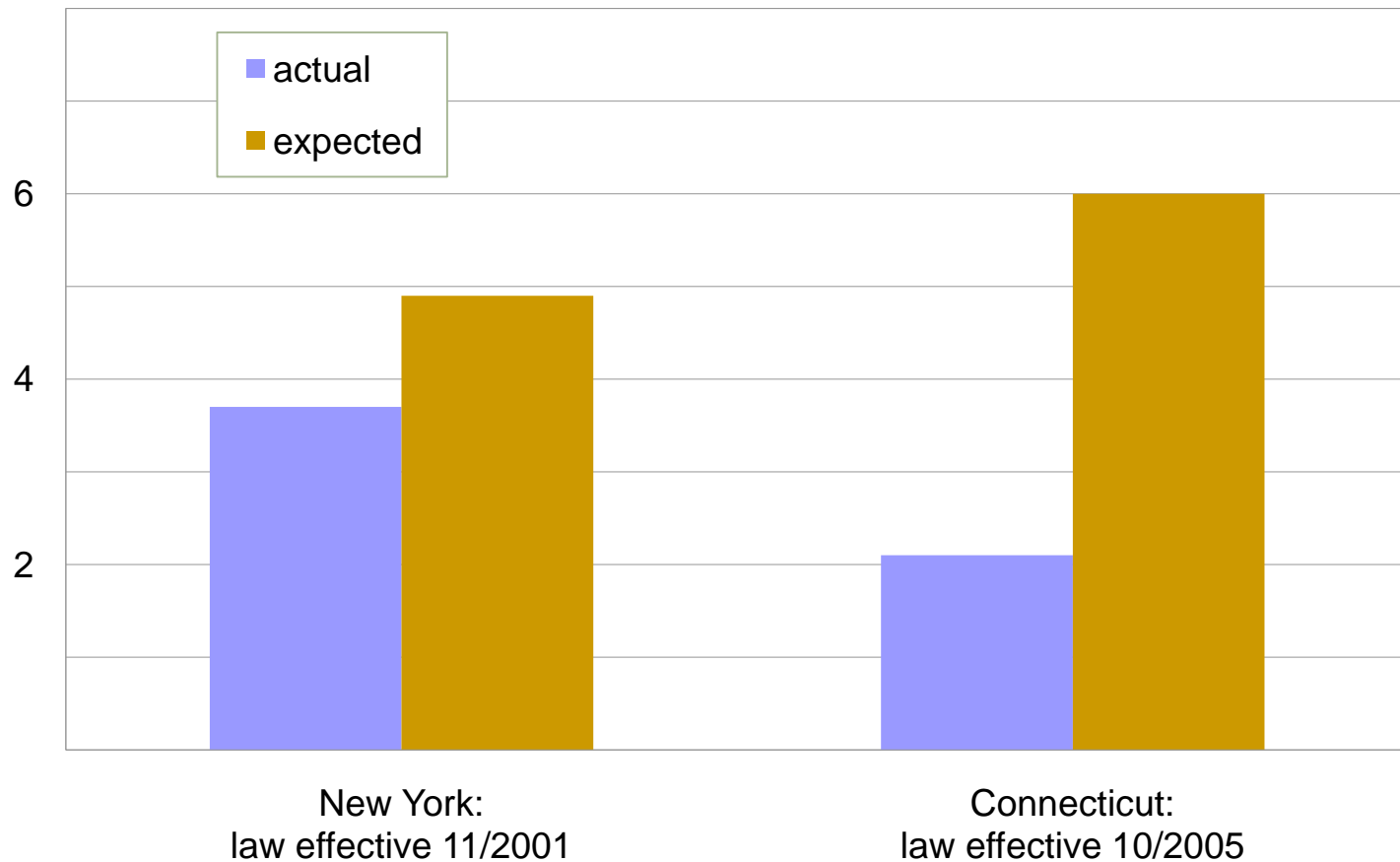
# Actual percent of drivers in Washington, DC using hand-held phones vs. use that would have been expected without cellphone law

Law effective July 2004



# Actual hand-held phone use vs. use that would have been expected without law

Percent phone use, April 2009

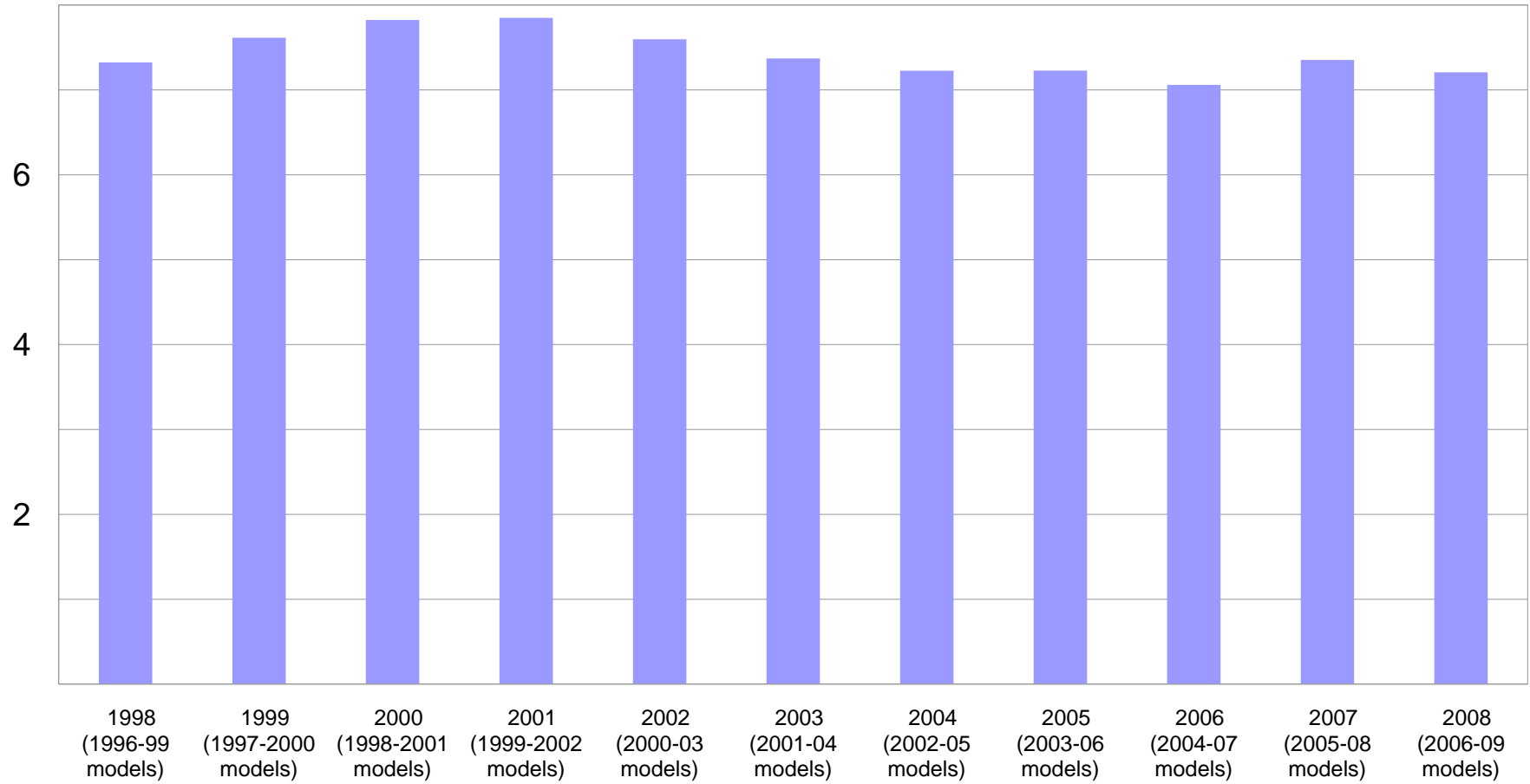


Collision claim frequencies  
in states with hand-held  
cellphone bans

# Collision claim frequencies

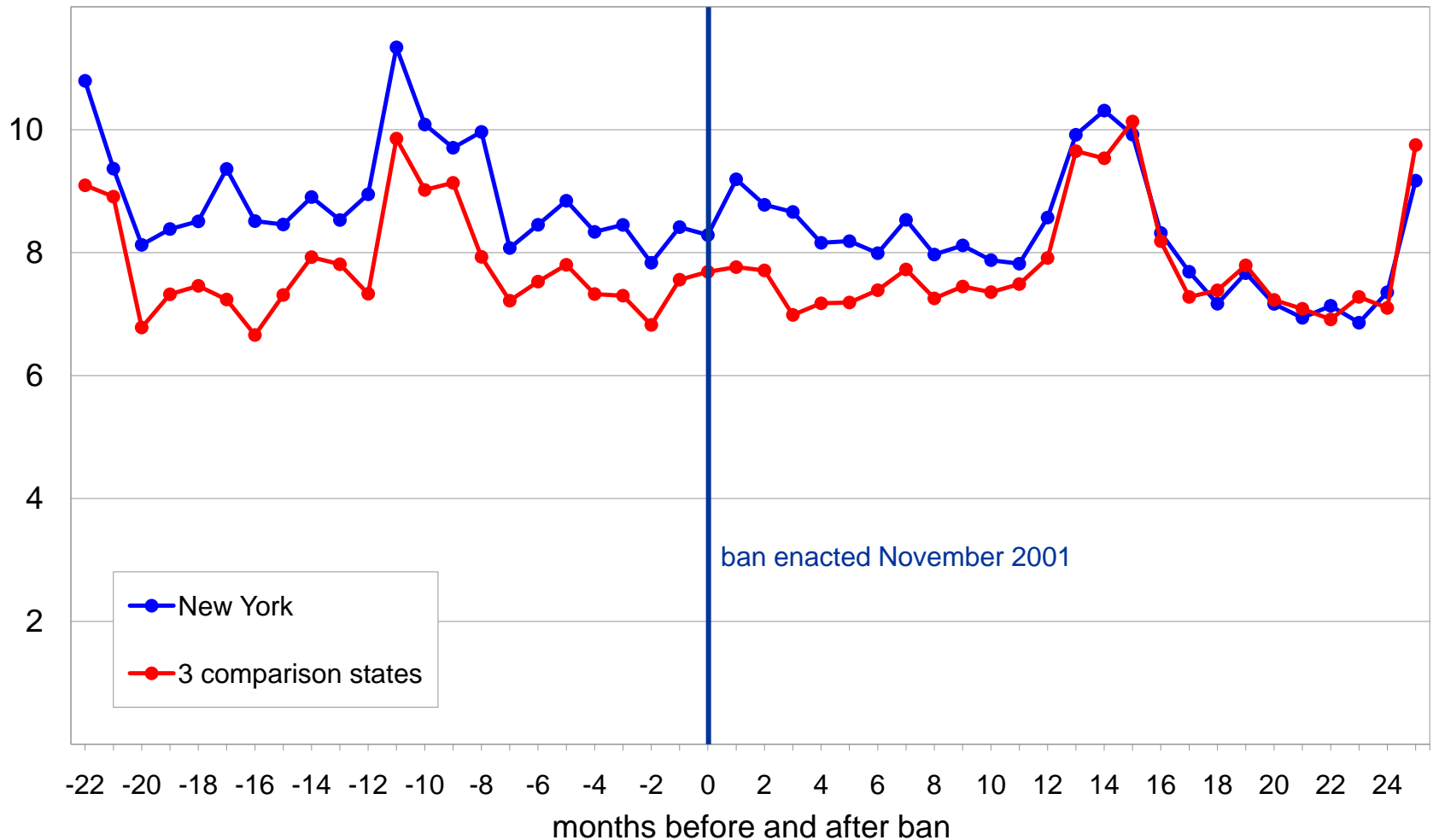
Claims per 100 insured vehicle years

By calendar year, based on 4 most recent model years



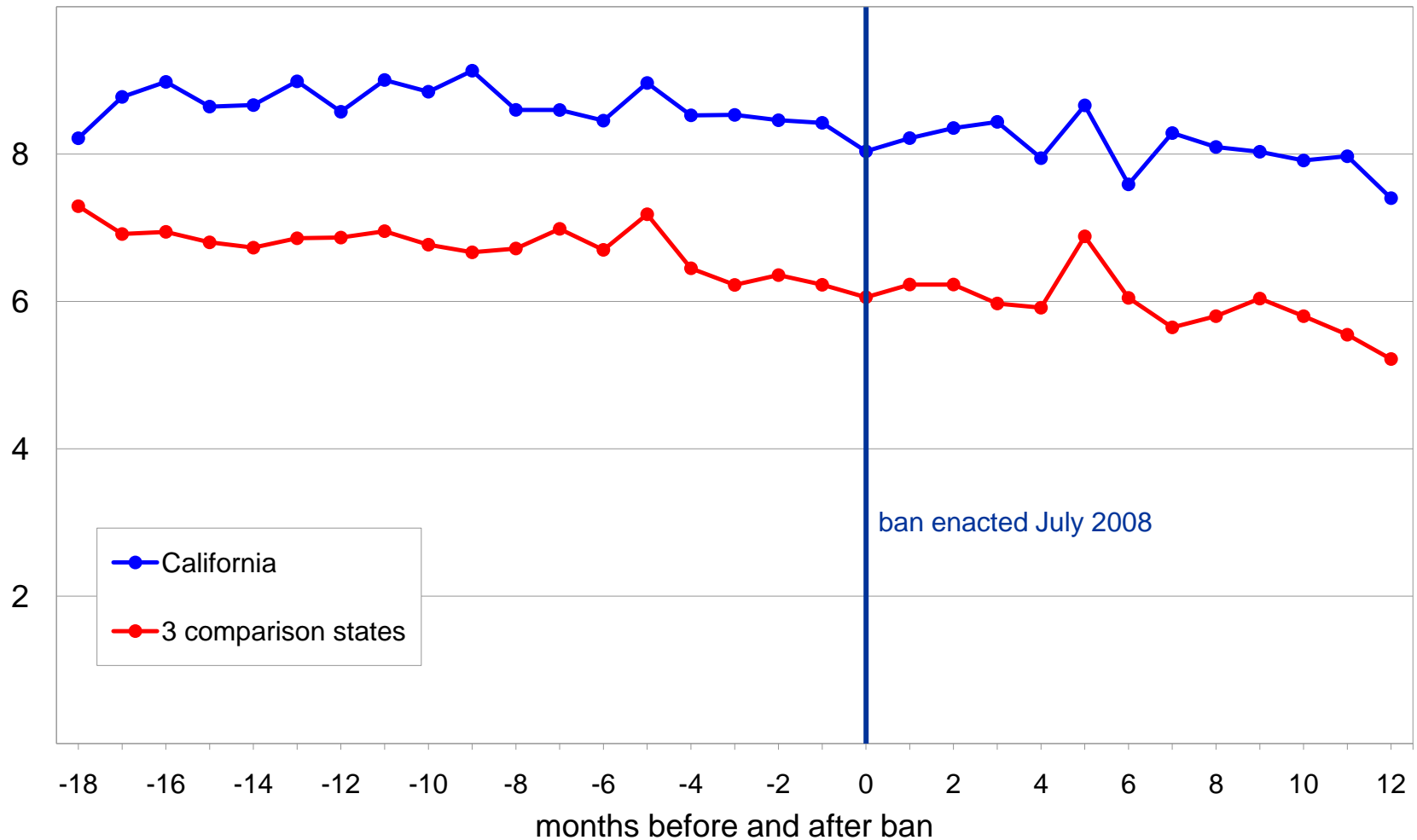
# Collision claim frequencies for new vehicles by month

New York vs. Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania



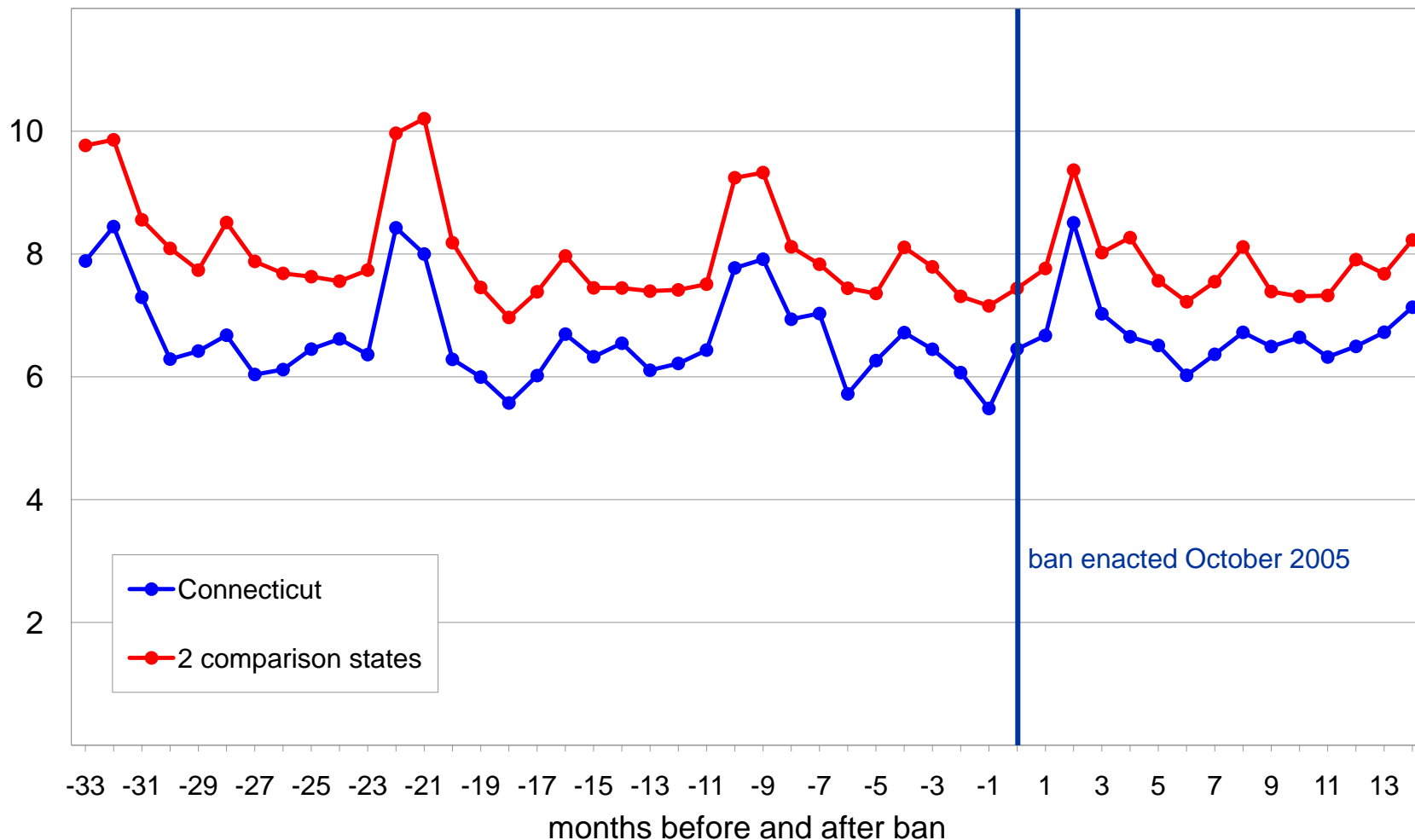
# Collision claim frequencies for new vehicles by month

California vs. Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon



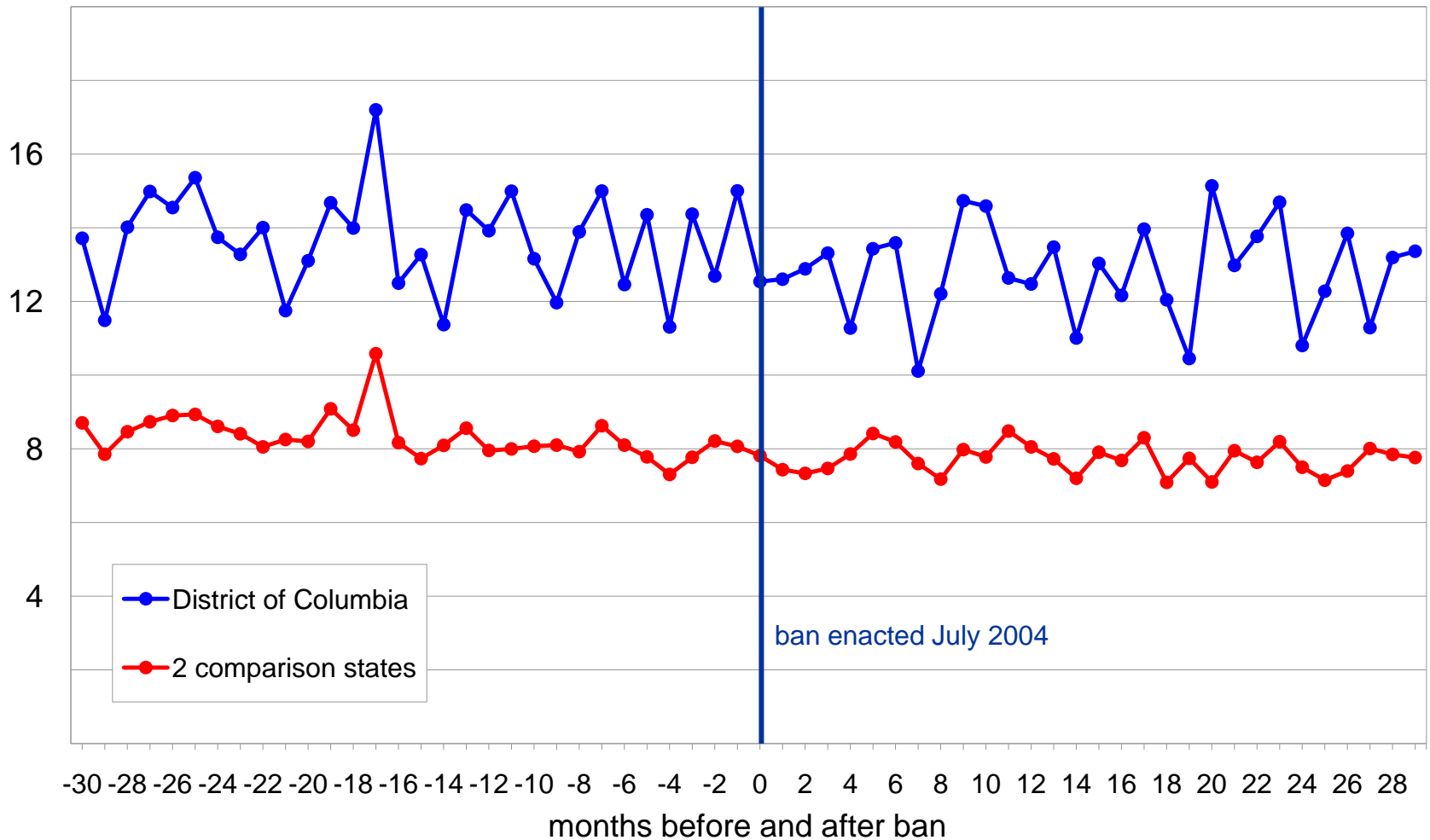
# Collision claim frequencies for new vehicles by month

Connecticut vs. Massachusetts and New York



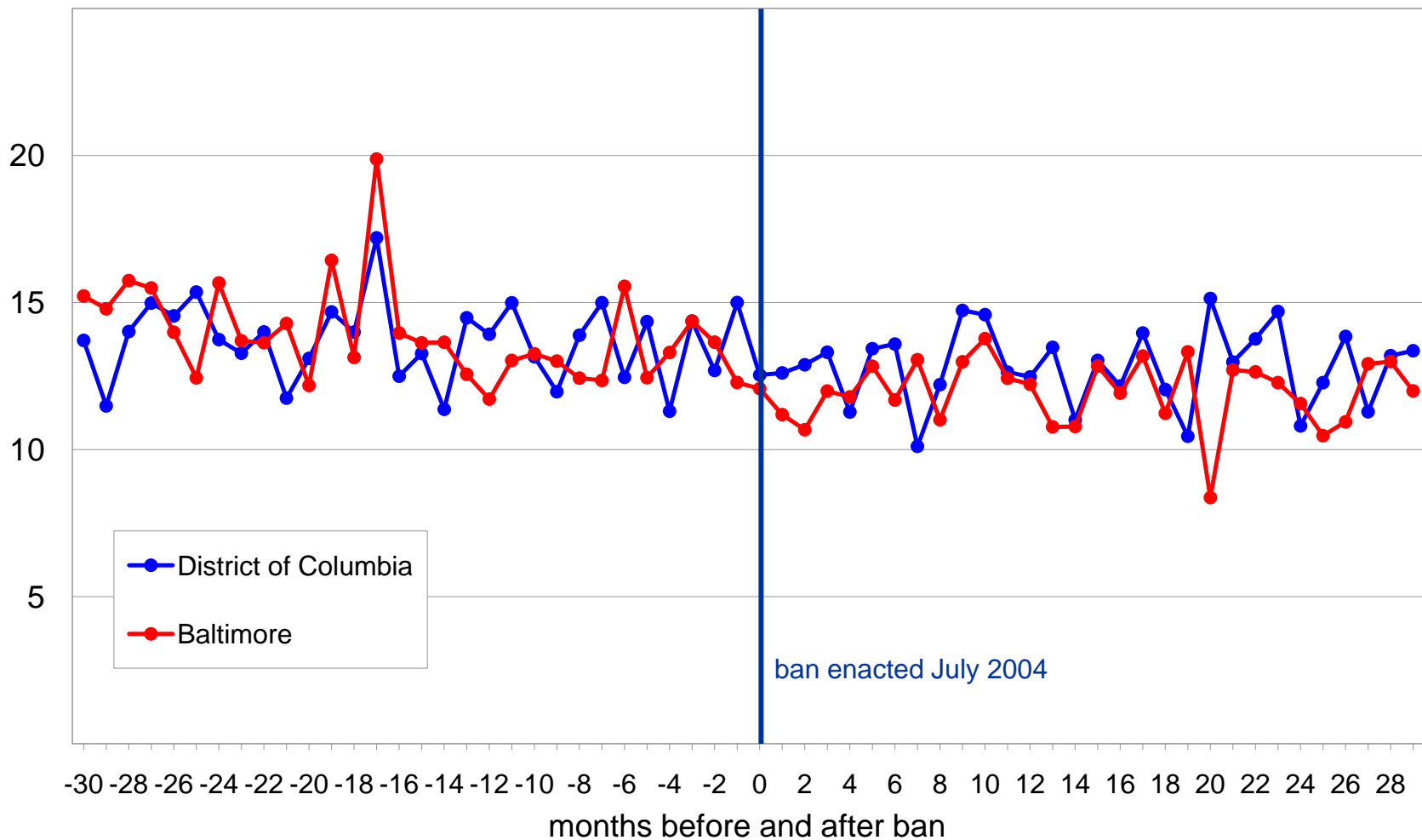
# Collision claim frequencies for new vehicles by month

District of Columbia vs. Maryland and Virginia



# Collision claim frequencies for new vehicles by month

## District of Columbia vs. Baltimore



# Would we be safer without mobile phones in cars?

## Knowledge and questions

- Analyses of cellphone usage shows it to be a potent distraction
  - Crash risk when talking is 4 times risk when not talking, hand-held or hands free
- Is it a bigger distraction than exists in its absence?
  - Cellphone usage has increased 3-fold since 2000, but crash risk has declined
- Collision claim frequency has been unaffected by state bans on hand-held phone usage by drivers
  - Those bans have reduced hand-held usage by  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$
- Research needed to determine reasons for these contradictions
  - Do drivers increase hands-free usage when hand-held usage is banned?
  - 1979 Indiana “Tri-Level Study” estimated “driver error” to be proximate cause of 9 out of 10 crashes

Does phone usage substitute for other distractions or add to them?



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