

# THE EFFECT OF AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE AND ACCIDENT LIABILITY LAWS ON TRAFFIC FATALITIES\*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the incentive effects of automobile insurance, compulsory insurance laws, and no-fault liability laws on driver behavior and traffic fatalities. We analyze a panel of 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia for 1970–98, a period in which many states adopted compulsory insurance regulations and/or no-fault laws. Using an instrumental variables approach, we find evidence that automobile insurance has moral hazard costs, leading to an increase in traffic fatalities. We also find that reductions in accident liability produced by no-fault liability laws have led to an increase in traffic fatalities (estimated to be on the order of 6 percent). Overall, our results indicate that, whatever other benefits they might produce, increases in the incidence of automobile insurance and moves to no-fault liability systems have significant negative effects on traffic fatalities.

In the United States today, we are at the threshold of a great experiment in social insurance—one of the most far-reaching in consequence of any that has been yet attempted in the New World. Probably within the next decade or two, most of the states will pass laws, the purposes of which will be the financial assistance of some or all of the victims of automobile accidents, and the prevention of such accidents in so far as is possible. [EDISON L. BOWERS, *Selected Articles on Compulsory Automobile Insurance* (1929)]

## I. INTRODUCTION

THIS paper examines how economic incentives and liability regulation influence driver behavior and, in turn, traffic fatalities. We use the introduction

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of compulsory insurance and no-fault liability regulation to examine the moral hazard effects of automobile insurance, compulsory insurance laws, and no-fault liability laws. We analyze a panel of 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia for 1970–98, a period in which many states adopted compulsory insurance regulations and/or no-fault laws. Using compulsory insurance as an instrument for the proportion of uninsured motorists, we find that automobile insurance has significant moral hazard costs, namely, reducing precautions and increasing traffic fatalities. We also find that limiting motor vehicle liability through no-fault liability laws leads to an increase in traffic fatalities. Overall our results indicate that, whatever benefits flow from increasing the incidence of automobile insurance and from moves to a no-fault system, there are also significant moral hazard costs to doing so.

Traffic accidents have very large costs that merit substantial attention by economists.<sup>1</sup> These accidents claim over 40,000 lives each year in the United States, roughly the same as the number of Americans killed during the Vietnam War. Americans spend roughly \$100 billion each year on automobile insurance premia, and they bear over \$250 billion in uninsured accident costs each year. The incidence of motor vehicle crashes and traffic fatalities is likely to be influenced significantly by choices made by drivers (including whether to use seat belts or air bags, how carefully to drive, whether to drink alcohol, and how much to drive). Accordingly, economists have long been interested in how these choices are influenced by agents' economic incentives and by various legal rules and policy measures.<sup>2</sup>

Beginning in 1970, most U.S. states adopted compulsory automobile insurance requirements. Over the same period, 16 states adopted no-fault automobile insurance. The impact of these policy shifts on traffic fatalities is of interest for two reasons. First, identifying this effect—which we shall see is significant—is necessary for assessing the social desirability of these policies. Second, these changes in automobile insurance regulations provide a large-scale natural experiment through which we can examine the moral hazard effects of automobile insurance and the incentive effects of liability exposure. In this sense, the changes in laws that we examine offer an interesting window on a larger set of phenomena.

Specifically, we investigate two related issues. First, we examine whether having automobile insurance (empirically, we examine the proportion of uninsured motorists) has a moral hazard effect on traffic fatalities. As a theoretical matter, insurance does have the moral hazard cost of reducing the

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Aaron Edlin, *Per-Mile Premiums for Auto Insurance* (Working Paper No. 6934, Nat'l Bur. Econ. Res. 1999); Steven D. Levitt & Jack Porter, *How Dangerous Are Drinking Drivers?* 109 *J. Pol. Econ.* 1198 (2001).

<sup>2</sup> For the seminal work, see Sam Peltzman, *The Effects of Automobile Safety Regulation*, 83 *J. Pol. Econ.* 667 (1975); Sam Peltzman, *Regulation of Automobile Safety* (1975).

policyholder's incentives to take precautions against the insured loss.<sup>3</sup> This is also theoretically the case for the particular type of insurance that we examine, namely, insurance for automobile accidents.<sup>4</sup> However, the question is whether the reduction in precautions against automobile accidents produced by automobile insurance—which theory predicts—is empirically significant. For example, it might be that drivers' concern for their own safety and health provides sufficient incentives for them to take precautions (to the extent that taking precautions is affected at all by incentives) and that the presence of insurance makes little difference on the margin. Although there has been much interest in the incidence of automobile insurance and uninsured motorists,<sup>5</sup> whether automobile insurance leads to moral hazard costs is an open question that has not been addressed by existing research.

Our strategy for examining this issue is to look at the consequences of a natural experiment: the adoption of compulsory insurance regulations in some states governed by tort law. Because this change produces a reduction in the number of uninsured motorists not attributable to other confounding factors, we are able to test the consequences of a reduction in the number of uninsured motorists on traffic fatalities. Although some work on compulsory insurance has been done,<sup>6</sup> none of these papers makes the connection between such regulations and traffic fatalities. Richard Derrig and coauthors,<sup>7</sup> who do connect the two, find insignificant effects on fatalities rates. Our results indicate that a reduction in the incidence of uninsured motorists produces an increase in traffic fatalities.

The second issue we examine is the effect on traffic fatalities of the reduction in liability brought about by no-fault laws. Early work by M. Elisabeth Landes<sup>8</sup> suggested that by reducing incentives to drive carefully, such laws have led to an increase in traffic fatalities in the United States. Sub-

<sup>3</sup> Classic references that analyze this effect include Mark Pauly, *The Economics of Moral Hazard: Comment*, 58 *Am. Econ. Rev.* 531 (1968); A. Michael Spence & Richard Zeckhauser, *Insurance, Information and Individual Action*, 61 *Am. Econ. Rev.* 380 (1971); Steven Shavell, *On Moral Hazard and Insurance*, 93 *Q. J. Econ.* 541 (1979). For a comprehensive recent survey of models investigating the moral hazard costs of insurance, see Ralph Winter, *Optimal Insurance under Moral Hazard*, in *Handbook of Insurance* 155 (Georges Dionne ed. 2000).

<sup>4</sup> See Steven Shavell, *On Liability and Insurance*, 13 *Bell J. Econ.* 120 (1982); Steven Shavell, *Economic Analysis of Accident Law* (1987); Steven Shavell, *On the Social Function and Regulation of Liability Insurance*, 25 *Geneva Papers Risk & Ins.* 166 (2000).

<sup>5</sup> Edlin, *supra* note 2, documents the congestion externalities of driving, but these are distinct from the moral hazard costs of insurance.

<sup>6</sup> See Yu-Luen Ma & Joan T. Schmidt, *Factors Affecting the Relative Incidence of Uninsured Motorists Claims*, 67 *J. Risk & Ins.* 81 (2000); Cassandra R. Cole, Randy E. Dumm, & Kathleen A. McCullough, *The Uninsured Motorist Problem: An Investigation of the Impact of Enforcement and Penalty Severity on Compliance*, 19 *J. Ins. Reg.* 613 (2001).

<sup>7</sup> A. Richard Derrig *et al.*, *The Effect of Population Safety Belt Usage Rates on Motor Vehicle-Related Fatalities*, 34 *Accidents Analysis & Prevention* 101 (2002).

<sup>8</sup> M. Elisabeth Landes, *Insurance Liability and Accidents: A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation of the Effect of No-Fault Accidents*, 25 *J. Law & Econ.* 49 (1982).

sequent results have been mixed: Paul Zador and Adrian Lund<sup>9</sup> found the opposite effect; S. Paul Kochanowski and Madelyn Young<sup>10</sup> and Derrig and coauthors<sup>11</sup> found no significant effect; and J. David Cummins, Richard Phillips, and Mary Weiss<sup>12</sup> recently found a significant positive effect of no-fault liability laws on traffic fatalities.<sup>13</sup> However, all states that adopted no-fault limitations on liability also adopted compulsory insurance requirements at the same time, and these earlier studies did not attempt to separate the effects of the two elements of the legislation. Thus, they did not isolate the effect of limitations on liability as distinct from the effects of the accompanying adoption of compulsory insurance requirements. We consider the two elements of legislation simultaneously and in this way are able to identify the effect of no-fault limitations on liability separately from the effect of compulsory insurance requirements. We find that no-fault limitations on liability do increase fatalities. Specifically, we estimate that the effect of such limitations is to increase fatalities by about 10 percent.

This paper is also related to, and seeks to contribute to, the broader literature on the factors and policy measures that influence traffic fatalities. There is an extensive literature on how the use of seat belts directly reduces fatalities and on whether it indirectly increases fatalities by encouraging users to drive less carefully.<sup>14</sup> There is also work on how traffic fatalities are influenced by the consumption of alcohol and, in turn, by measures that discourage the sale of alcohol.<sup>15</sup> Michelle White<sup>16</sup> investigates how comparative and contributory negligence rules affect the levels of care used by drivers (as judged by jury determination in accident cases). Aaron Edlin and

<sup>9</sup> Paul Zador & Adrian Lund, Re-analysis of the Effects of No-Fault Auto Insurance on Fatal Crashes, 53 *J. Risk & Ins.* 226 (1986).

<sup>10</sup> S. Paul Kochanowski & Madelyn V. Young, Deterrents Aspects of No-Fault Automobile Insurance: Some Empirical Findings, 52 *J. Risk & Ins.* 269 (1985).

<sup>11</sup> See note 8 *supra*.

<sup>12</sup> J. David Cummins, Richard D. Phillips, & Mary A. Weiss, The Incentive Effects of No-Fault Automobile Insurance, 44 *J. Law & Econ.* 427 (2001).

<sup>13</sup> In studies on other countries, Rose Anne Devlin, Liability versus No-Fault Automobile Insurance Regimes: An Analysis of the Experience of Quebec, in *Contributions to Insurance Economics* 499 (G. Dionne ed. 1992), and R. Ian McEwin, No-Fault and Road Accidents: Some Australasian Evidence, 9 *Int'l Rev. Law & Econ.* 13 (1989), found that no-fault liability laws increased fatalities in Quebec and in Australia and New Zealand, respectively.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, note 3 *supra*; Steven D. Levitt & Jack Porter, Sample Selection in the Estimation of Air Bag and Seat Belt Effectiveness (Working Paper No. 7210, Nat'l Bur. Econ. Res. 1999); Alma Cohen & Liran Einav, The Effect of Mandatory Seat Belt Laws on Driving Behavior and Traffic Fatalities (Olin Paper No. 341, Harvard L. Sch. 2001).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, note 2 *supra*; A. Frank Sloan, Bridget A. Reilley, & Christoph M. Schenzler, Tort Liability versus Other Approaches for Deterring Careless Driving, 14 *Int'l Rev. L. & Econ.* 53 (1994).

<sup>16</sup> Michelle J. White, An Empirical Test of the Comparative and Contributory Negligence Rules in Accident Law, 20 *RAND J. Econ.* 308 (1989).

Edlin and Pinar Mandic<sup>17</sup> examine the effects of miles driven on fatalities and how they can be influenced by appropriately designed taxes or insurance premia.

This paper is organized as follows. Section II provides the necessary background by discussing the laws regarding compulsory insurance and no-fault liability. Section III lays out theoretical predictions and our approach to testing them. Section IV describes the data. Section V presents our results. Section VI makes concluding remarks.

## II. AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE AND LIABILITY FOR ACCIDENTS

We start with some background on automobile insurance and liability. There is a wide range of regulation governing automobile insurance and liability. In this paper, we focus on two aspects of regulation that directly affect drivers: compulsory insurance and no-fault systems.

### A. *Compulsory Insurance Regulation*

Each year, a large amount of insurance coverage for automobile accidents is purchased in the United States. Total automobile liability insurance premia are over \$100 billion annually. A significant amount of insurance would be bought without any regulation, simply because drivers are risk averse. However, current purchases might be influenced by the existence of compulsory insurance regulations.

Compulsory automobile insurance means that all those operating a motor vehicle must purchase insurance. Given the bounded nature of assets that individuals commonly have, it is often rational for them to elect not to purchase insurance if they are free to do so.<sup>18</sup> Compulsory insurance laws ensure some compensation to those injured in automobile accidents.<sup>19</sup> When drivers have limited assets, such laws also force drivers to at least partly internalize some of the externality imposed on others by their driving.<sup>20</sup>

Compulsory insurance regulation was first introduced in Massachusetts in 1927. It had been adopted by 22 states by 1975 and by 45 states by 1997, the end of the sample period (see Table 1). Among these states, there is variation in the amount of each type of insurance that individuals are required to purchase and in the methods used to enforce this regulation. We observe

<sup>17</sup> Edlin, *supra* note 2; Aaron Edlin & Pinar Karaca Mandic, *The Accident Externality from Driving* (Public Law Research Paper No. 130, Univ. California, Berkeley, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Gur Huberman, David Mayers, & Clifford W. Smith, *Optimal Insurance Policy Indemnity Schedules*, 14 *Bell J. Econ.* 415 (1983).

<sup>19</sup> See Edward Stone, *Compulsory Automobile Liability Insurance*, 4(6) *Pamphlet Ins.* (1926), for an early work advocating compulsory insurance laws on this basis.

<sup>20</sup> See Shavell, *Economic Analysis of Accident Law* *supra* note 5; R. William Keeton & Evan Kwerel, *Externalities in Automobile Insurance and the Underinsured Driver Problem*, 27 *J. Law & Econ.* 149 (1984).

TABLE 1  
AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE LAW, 1969–98

State	Introduction of Compulsory Insurance	No-Fault Insurance	Add-On Provision
Alabama			
Alaska	1986 (except for 1989)		
Arizona	1983 (except for 1990–95)		
Arkansas	1988		1974
California	1975 (except for 1990–95)		
Colorado	1974	1974	
Connecticut	1973	1973	
Delaware	1972		1972
District of Columbia	1984	1984–86	1987
Florida	1972–77	1972	
Georgia	1975	1975–91	
Hawaii		1974 (except for 1998)	
	1974		
Idaho	1976		
Illinois	1989		
Indiana	1983		
Iowa	1998		
Kansas	1974	1974	
Kentucky	1975	1975	
Louisiana	1979		
Maine	1988		
Maryland	1973		1973
Massachusetts	Before 1969	1971	
Michigan	1973	1973	
Minnesota	1975	1975	
Mississippi			
Missouri	1987		
Montana	1981		
Nebraska	1986		
Nevada	1974	1974–79	
New Hampshire			1971
New Jersey	1973	1973	
New Mexico	1984		
New York	Before 1969	1974	
North Carolina	Before 1969		
North Dakota	1976	1976	
Ohio	1984		
Oklahoma	1977		
Oregon	1980		1972
Pennsylvania	1975	1976–83; 1990	1984–89
Rhode Island	1992		
South Carolina			1974 (except for 1990)
	1974		
South Dakota	1987		1972
Tennessee			
Texas	1984		1973
Utah	1974 (except for 1990–94)	1974	
Vermont	1986; 1988–89; 1992		
Virginia	1984		1972

TABLE 1 (Continued)

State	Introduction of Compulsory Insurance	No-Fault Insurance	Add-On Provision
Washington	1991		1978
West Virginia	1986		
Wisconsin			1972
Wyoming	1980		
Number of states	46	17	13

two aspects of enforcement: 40 states require that a driver's insurance status be reported at the time of an accident, and 35 states require that insurance companies notify the appropriate state authorities if a driver's insurance policy lapses.

#### B. Accident Liability Systems: Tort versus No Fault

Historically the liability of drivers for accident losses was governed by tort principles. Drivers were liable for losses to others that resulted from their negligent behavior. In theory, a tort system with a negligence rule that functions perfectly—that is, in which courts can always costlessly and accurately determine whether behavior was negligent—provides optimal incentives for care in driving and accident prevention. However, in practice, the tort system has various flaws, such as the substantial administrative costs and delays involved in adjudicating negligence and thus liability.

Perceived problems with the tort system have led reformers to propose no-fault liability systems. As early as 1926, the idea that there are potential benefits from limiting negligence-based suits and offering protection against injuries in automobile insurance regardless of fault was considered.<sup>21</sup> In 1932, the Columbia University Counsel for Research in Social Sciences proposed a scheme in which each motor vehicle owner would be required to carry a policy covering him against liability arising from injury, economic loss, or death, regardless of fault. In 1965, Robert Keeton and Jeffrey O'Connell<sup>22</sup> published an influential study that called for a move to a no-fault system.

The first jurisdiction to adopt such a scheme was Saskatchewan (in Canada) in 1946. In the United States, the first state to adopt a no-fault system was Massachusetts in 1971. By 1975, 16 states had adopted a no-fault system. Most of these states (with the exception of Massachusetts and New York) adopted compulsory insurance concurrently with no-fault limitations on liability. The number of states with a no-fault system fell to 14 in 1997, with six states switching status in between.

There are two important elements of a no-fault system. First, (most) no-

<sup>21</sup> See P. T. Sherman, *Compulsory Insurance of Compensation for Injuries by Automobile Accidents*, 4(7) Pamphlet Ins. (1926).

<sup>22</sup> Robert Keeton & Jeffrey O'Connell, *Basic Protection for the Traffic Victim* (1965).

TABLE 2  
INSURANCE STATUS BEFORE AND AFTER COMPULSORY INSURANCE

STATUS WITHOUT COMPULSORY INSURANCE	STATUS WITH COMPULSORY INSURANCE	
	Insured	Uninsured
Insured	(Insured, Insured)	(Insured, Uninsured)
Uninsured	(Uninsured, Insured)	(Uninsured, Uninsured)

fault systems require drivers to purchase insurance that provides first-party coverage for accident losses, regardless of who was at fault. Second, no-fault systems limit the extent to which drivers can be sued through negligence-based suits. In a pure no-fault system, victims do not have any recourse to negligence-based suits. However, all states provide for thresholds beyond which the parties to an accident have recourse to lawsuits. As outlined in Table 1, in 12 states (Arizona, Delaware, Maryland, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin) and the District of Columbia, no-fault liability regulation exists in parallel with the traditional tort system. In these so-called add-on states, there are no limitations to litigation. The remaining states provide either a monetary or verbal (that is, descriptive) threshold beyond which individuals have the right to sue.

Because of its hybrid nature, it is difficult to predict the effects of add-on regulation. Hence, in our analysis, we focus on no-fault laws but also examine the effect of the threshold below which tort limitations are imposed, since no-fault systems with a low threshold resemble add-on regulations.

### III. THEORETICAL PREDICTIONS AND TESTING APPROACH

We begin by discussing the effect of compulsory insurance laws on uninsured motorists and fatalities, both theoretically and empirically. Next, we discuss the effect of no-fault laws on uninsured motorists and fatalities and the issues that arise in identifying the effect of no-fault laws as distinct from compulsory insurance laws. Finally, we discuss the direct effect of uninsured motorists on traffic fatalities and the instrumental variables identification of this effect.

#### A. *The Effect of Compulsory Insurance Regulations*

The effects of compulsory insurance regulation on drivers will vary depending on what insurance choice they would have made in the absence of compulsory insurance. Table 2 identifies four groups of individuals.

The individuals in the first row, first column, would have purchased insurance in the absence of regulation and continue to do so when it is com-

pulsory. For these “always-insurers,” the regulation has no direct effect, since their insurance status does not change (we adapt the terminology of Guido Imbens and Joshua Angrist).<sup>23</sup>

Drivers in the second row, first column, are induced to adopt insurance because of compulsory insurance regulation. This is the group for whom the instrumental variables method identifies the effect of insurance on fatalities. These individuals did not deem insurance to be worthwhile or necessary in the absence of regulation, but they obtain it when it is compulsory. These drivers are forced to pay the premium but, accordingly, are faced with diminished liability in case of an accident. Because of the classic moral hazard problem,<sup>24</sup> these individuals typically will drive less carefully when insured.<sup>25</sup>

Individuals in the second row, second column, would not have purchased insurance in the absence of regulation and do not purchase it even when it is compulsory. The driving behavior of these individuals is affected to the extent that compulsory insurance laws are effective: those drivers who remain uninsured are induced to drive more carefully, since their status as uninsured drivers is illegal under compulsory insurance laws. If, however, compulsory insurance laws were ineffective, then there would be no effect on uninsured drivers. We expect that the former case is empirically relevant.

Finally, drivers in the first row, second column, would be insured in the absence of compulsory insurance but choose not to insure themselves when it is required. Assuming that individuals do not derive some benefit from defying compulsory insurance regulations, this cell will be empty.

In summary, we have identified two critical groups: those who adopt insurance because of regulation (who are likely to drive more and less carefully) and those who are always uninsured (who are likely to drive less and more carefully because of regulation).

HYPOTHESIS 1. Under compulsory insurance, we have the following:

- i) the proportion of uninsured motorists decreases;
- ii) the decrease in the number of uninsured motorists produces an increase in the number of fatalities among switchers; and

<sup>23</sup> Guido Imbens & Joshua Angrist, Identification and Estimation of Local Average Treatment Effects, 62 *Econometrica* 467 (1992). It can, however, have indirect effects, through the price of insurance and through the insurance status of other drivers. However, these indirect effects are either negligible or second order. This would influence individual's decisions regarding how much insurance to purchase. Another indirect effect would be with respect to liability from, or to, other drivers involved in an accident. If drivers are insured, in principle they are covered regardless of the insurance status of the other driver. Of course, the insurance company is affected, and this may have an indirect effect on the insured driver through the price of insurance. These indirect effects presumably have only a small impact on driving behavior, since this is more likely to be affected by insurance status than by the extent of coverage.

<sup>24</sup> See Shavell, *supra* note 4; Shavell, On Liability and Insurance, *supra* note 5.

<sup>25</sup> Shavell, On Liability and Insurance, *supra* note 5, notes that the presence of insurance creates equivalence between strict liability and a negligence rule form of liability. Although insurance does create moral hazard, Shavell demonstrates that the provision of insurance is socially desirable.

iii) those who remain uninsured motorists drive more carefully, producing a decrease in the number of fatalities for this group.

We test this hypothesis by examining the direct effect of compulsory insurance laws on uninsured motorists and fatalities. An issue that arises in identifying the effects of compulsory as distinct from no-fault regulations is that both sets of laws often were introduced together. In particular, states that adopted no-fault limitations on liability adopted compulsory insurance regulations at the same time, and likewise for add-on regulations. As a result, to identify the effect of compulsory insurance, we restrict attention to states and years that have neither no-fault nor add-on provisions. We refer to this as the compulsory sample. The first column of Table 3 presents the states and years that are included in this sample. All 50 states (and the District of Columbia) and all regions are represented in the sample. In the midwestern, southern, and western states, approximately half are present for the entire sample period. The least represented region is the northeast, with New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont represented for the full sample period but many other northeastern states represented only in the early 1970s.

#### *B. The Effect of No-Fault Systems*

The literature on no-fault systems has argued that motorists will drive less carefully under a no-fault system than under a tort system. Since a no-fault system limits drivers' liability from their actions, it weakens their incentives to take precautions when driving. By the same token, it also could lead to increased driving.

However, this argument ignores the fact that the effects of no-fault limitations on liability will be different for insured and uninsured drivers. The standard analysis applies to the former group. Insured drivers are protected (by insurance) from liability if they are the victims of an accident, and no-fault regulations limit their liability if they cause an accident. In contrast, for uninsured drivers, the incentives differ in these two cases. If an uninsured driver causes an accident, then he faces reduced liability under a no-fault scheme (even if the driver can be sued under the monetary or verbal threshold, the driver cannot be sued for pain and suffering); this presumably leads to reduced precautions when driving. If an uninsured driver is the victim of an accident, his recourse to compensation is also limited in a no-fault system (because a victim under the no-fault system cannot sue for additional pain and suffering compensation); this would lead to more cautious driving behavior. These two effects go in opposite directions, as summarized in the following hypothesis:

**HYPOTHESIS 2.** By adopting no-fault limitations on liability in addition to compulsory insurance requirements,

i) for insured drivers, liability decreases, leading to an increase in the number of fatalities; and

TABLE 3  
 SAMPLES USED FOR COMPULSORY AND NO-FAULT INSURANCE, 1969-98

State	Region	Compulsory Evaluation Sample	No-Fault Evaluation Sample
Iowa	Midwest	1969-98	1998-
Illinois	Midwest	1969-98	1989-98
Indiana	Midwest	1969-98	1983-98
Kansas	Midwest	1969-73	1974-98
Michigan	Midwest	1969-72	1973-98
Minnesota	Midwest	1969-74	1975-98
Missouri	Midwest	1969-98	1987-98
North Dakota	Midwest	1969-75	1976-98
Nebraska	Midwest	1969-98	1986-98
Ohio	Midwest	1969-98	1984-98
South Dakota	Midwest	1969-71	
Wisconsin	Midwest	1969-71	
Connecticut	Northeast	1969-72, 1998-89	1973-98
District of Columbia	Northeast	1969-83	1984-86
Massachusetts	Northeast	1969-71	1970-98
Maine	Northeast	1969-98	1988-98
New Hampshire	Northeast	1969	
New Jersey	Northeast	1969-72	1973-98
New York	Northeast	1969-73	1970-98
Pennsylvania	Northeast	1969-75	1975-83, 1990-98
Rhode Island	Northeast	1969-98	1992-98
Vermont	Northeast	1969-98	1986, 1988-89, 1992-98
Alabama	South	1969-98	
Arkansas	South	1969-73	
Delaware	South	1969-71	
Florida	South	1969-71	1972-77
Georgia	South	1969-74, 1992-98	1975-98
Kentucky	South	1969-74	1975-98
Louisiana	South	1969-98	1979-98
Maryland	South	1969-72	
Mississippi	South	1969-98	
North Carolina	South	1969-98	1969-98
Oklahoma	South	1969-98	1977-98
South Carolina	South	1969-73	1974-89, 1995-98
Tennessee	South	1969-98	
Texas	South	1969-72	
Virginia	South	1969-71	
West Virginia	South	1969-98	1986-98
Alaska	West	1969-98	1985-98
Arizona	West	1969-98	1983-89, 1996-98
California	West	1969-98	1975-89, 1996-98
Colorado	West	1969-73	1974-98
Hawaii	West	1969-73	1974-98
Idaho	West	1969-98	1976-98
Montana	West	1969-98	1981-98
New Mexico	West	1969-98	1984-98
Nevada	West	1969-73, 1980-98	1974-98
Oregon	West	1969-71	
Utah	West	1969-73	
Washington	West	1969-77	
Wyoming	West	1969-98	1980-98

ii) for uninsured drivers, if at fault, liability decreases, leading to an increase in the number of fatalities, but if not at fault, coverage decreases, possibly leading to a decrease in the number of fatalities. Therefore, the overall effect is ambiguous;

The overall effect is thus theoretically ambiguous, and an empirical investigation is needed.

As discussed above, one difficulty with identifying the effect of no-fault laws as distinct from compulsory laws is that most states adopted these laws at the same time. To identify the effect of no-fault limitations on liability, as distinct from compulsory insurance, we examine the effect of no-fault limitations among states that have either compulsory insurance or no-fault regulation, excluding add-on states (we call this the no-fault sample). As we can see from the second column of Table 3, this is a somewhat more restrictive sample. All regions are represented, but for a reduced period. Many states are present later in the sample period after they had adopted compulsory insurance or no-fault and compulsory systems or had eliminated no-fault or add-on provisions.

We cannot (and do not) claim that this sample, and likewise the compulsory sample discussed in Section IIIA, corresponds to the full sample of U.S. states. However, both samples are broadly representative. Further, we will allow for year fixed effects to address the issue that the no-fault sample is more representative of the latter half of the sample period. Finally, the samples represent the only subgroups in which the effects of these policies can be identified, so to that extent we have to accept this limitation.

### C. *The Effect of Insurance Status on Fatalities*

To the extent that insurers cannot monitor the behavior of the policyholder perfectly and make the policy conditional on optimal behavior, insurance coverage will tend to reduce the care and precautions that drivers take while driving. This is the familiar moral hazard cost of insurance. Thus, the prediction is that the higher the proportion of uninsured motorists, the lower the number of accidents.

HYPOTHESIS 3. A higher incidence of uninsured motorists leads to fewer traffic fatalities.

In the popular press and in the literature on uninsured motorists, the existence of such motorists is viewed as unambiguously bad. We do not question that the presence of automobile insurance produces risk-bearing and compensation benefits. Our interest, however, is in exploring whether insurance also has a down side, a moral hazard cost that needs to be taken into account in any assessment of uninsured motorists and regulations affecting their incidence.

We use an instrumental variables strategy to identify the effect of uninsured motorists on traffic fatalities; because both of these outcomes are jointly

determined, ordinary least squares estimation of the relationship would be subject to simultaneity bias.<sup>26</sup> As established in Imbens and Angrist and in Angrist, Imbens, and Donald Rubin,<sup>27</sup> an instrumental variables strategy identifies the effect of the instrument on those who are induced to change their treatment assignment on the basis of the instrument. In our case, the instrumental variables strategy thus identifies the effect on those induced to obtain insurance as a result of compulsory insurance regulation. As discussed in Section IIIA, we expect the effect for this group to be negative: as the proportion of uninsured motorists decreases, fatalities increase because of the moral hazard effect on switchers.

The two candidates for instrumental variables are compulsory insurance and no-fault liability laws. In Section VA, we argue that both sets of laws are exogenous conditional on a range of controls and hence are plausible candidates for instruments. But we must also consider whether either of these satisfies the requirement that they affect the outcome (fatalities) only through their effect on uninsured motorists.

As discussed in Section IIIB, no-fault laws affect fatalities by influencing the liability that drivers face from their actions. Even if the number of uninsured motorists were unaffected by no-fault laws, the laws could have a significant effect on fatalities through incentive effects on both motorists who are currently insured and those who are uninsured.

Instead, the direct effect of the adoption of compulsory insurance on fatalities is to induce motorists to switch from being uninsured to being insured. There is also potentially an indirect effect, namely, inducing drivers who remain uninsured to drive more carefully. Despite the possibility of an indirect effect, we believe that instrumental variables is a reasonable strategy for two reasons. First, to the extent that the indirect effect depends on the number of uninsured motorists induced to drive more safely, the effect should be small. Second, and more important, to the extent that the indirect effect of compulsory insurance on fatalities will lead to a reduction in traffic fatalities (if uninsured motorists are induced to drive more safely), any direct positive effect we find must be downward biased relative to the true effect.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In particular, traffic fatalities depend on the number of insured drivers, but we can imagine a second equation in which drivers choose insurance status on the basis of the rate of traffic fatalities. In this case, the ordinary least squares estimates of a single equation will be inconsistent.

<sup>27</sup> See note 24 *supra*; Joshua Angrist, Guido Imbens, & Donald Rubin, Identification of Causal Effects Using Instrumental Variables, 91 J. Am. Stat. Ass'n 444 (1994).

<sup>28</sup> Thus, if the direct effect of uninsured drivers on fatalities is negative, an indirect effect would bias our results toward zero.

## IV. DATA DESCRIPTION

We use a panel of annual state-level variables. The data cover all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia for the years 1970–98.<sup>29</sup> The data include information about (1) some components of automobile insurance law, (2) the level of uninsured motorists, (3) states' demographics characteristics, and (4) fatality rates.

We obtain information about automobile insurance regulations and accident liability regulations from the American Insurance Association for the years 1970 to 2001.<sup>30</sup> The variables we use are (1) whether a state has compulsory auto insurance ("yes" denotes those states that require minimum liability insurance or some proof of financial responsibility), (2) which enforcement mechanisms a state uses for compulsory insurance (including checking insurance status at the time of an accident or verifying insurance status at the time of vehicle registration), (3) whether a state adopted a no-fault or add-on system instead of a tort liability system (the default), and (4) whether a no-fault state has a monetary or verbal threshold (and the value of the threshold).

We obtain data on uninsured motorists from the Insurance Research Council (IRC) for the years 1976–98. Several methods have been used to estimate the proportion of uninsured motorists.<sup>31</sup> From these, we use the IRC's estimates because they are the most comprehensive of those available.<sup>32</sup> The incidence rates of uninsured motorists reported by the IRC vary considerably across states, from 4 percent in Maine to 30 percent in Colorado and South Carolina (for the year 1997). Our data on traffic fatalities are from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System.<sup>33</sup> We use fatalities per person as the outcome instead of the more commonly used fatalities per vehicle-mile traveled, but as a robustness check, we present results using fatalities per vehicle-mile

<sup>29</sup> Information on uninsured motorists is available only from 1976 on.

<sup>30</sup> American Insurance Association, Summary of Selected State Laws and Regulations Relating to Automobile Insurance (1976–2000).

<sup>31</sup> J. Daniel Kahzoom, What We Know about Uninsured Motorists and How Well We Know What We Know, 17 J. Ins. Reg. 59 (2000).

<sup>32</sup> The IRC uses two variables to calculate the proportion of uninsured motorists: Uninsured Motorists Claim, which is the number of uninsured motorists claims for injuries caused to the insured by uninsured motorists, and Bodily Injury Liability Claim, which is the number of injuries caused by insured motorists. The ratio of the Uninsured Motorists Claim frequency to the Bodily Injury Liability Claim frequency is then used to measure the extent of the uninsured-motorist problem. Under the null hypothesis of no moral hazard and equal probability of an accident for insured and uninsured motorists, it can be shown (using the model of Levitt & Porter, *supra* note 2) that the IRC measure is identical to the fraction of uninsured motorists in the population. Thus, this issue does undermine our conclusion that the possibility of no moral hazard can be rejected. Furthermore, as an empirical matter, we check the robustness of our results to using the log (rather than the level) of uninsured motorists, since this variable is more robust to potential measurement error.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Fatality Analysis Reporting System (available at <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov>).

traveled.<sup>34</sup> A description of our variables appears in Table 4, and their sources are outlined in the Data Appendix.

## V. THE RESULTS

### A. *The Conditional Exogeneity of the Laws*

In studying the effect of compulsory insurance and no-fault regulation on the proportion of uninsured motorists and driving fatalities, it is important to investigate first whether the laws are plausibly exogenous (conditional on the covariates and state and year fixed effects in our specification). The concern is a systematic selection of which states choose to adopt these laws and when. There are three potential sources of selection.

First is selection on observables: states that choose to adopt may differ in terms of age, ethnicity, income, and so on. We will address this by including these variables as controls in our subsequent specifications. Second, we are concerned with selection on the outcome, in particular, that states with a higher level of uninsured motorists or fatalities may be more likely to enact automobile insurance legislation. This will be addressed by allowing for state and year fixed effects. Third, there could be time-varying selection on the outcome. In particular, states that experience a shock (for example, a sudden increase) in one of the outcomes may be more likely to adopt regulation. Since controlling for lagged dependent variables in a fixed-effects regression is challenging, this is a greater concern. We present two tests of the exogeneity of the laws, one in Table 5 and the other in Section VD below.

Table 5 examines whether selection into the laws is predicted by lagged outcomes. We use the deviation of uninsured motorists and fatalities from state means, because our subsequent specifications will remove non-time-varying state-specific effects using state dummies. In columns 1 and 4, we present a probit regression of compulsory insurance and no-fault regulation on a range of exogenous variables, including population, ethnic composition, crime, per capita income, and the age profile of the population. Most are statistically significant predictors of the laws. States with a lower proportion of blacks, more violent crimes, and a higher proportion of drivers outside the 18-to-24 age range are more likely to have compulsory insurance. For no-fault laws, the signs are largely reversed. This basic set of variables predicts the laws with about 70 percent accuracy. Thus, controlling for these

<sup>34</sup> Although fatalities per vehicle-mile traveled is perhaps appropriate for measuring the risk faced by motorists, it is problematic for measuring the effect of compulsory insurance and liability regulation on fatalities at the state level, which is the focus of this paper. The adoption of these laws can affect drivers' behavior through multiple channels, including vehicle-miles traveled. Thus, fatalities per vehicle-mile traveled can increase because of an increase in the number of fatalities or because of a decrease in vehicle-miles traveled. Since the focus of this paper is the effect of states that adopt compulsory insurance and no-fault legislation, fatalities per person is a more appropriate outcome.

TABLE 4  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	ACCIDENT LIABILITY REGULATIONS			AUTO INSURANCE REGULATIONS	
	FULL SAMPLE	No-Fault States	Non-No-Fault States	Compulsory Insurance States	Non-Compulsory-Insurance States
Average speed	56.031 (2.462)	56.090 (2.592)	56.005 (2.407)	56.029 (2.732)	56.033 (1.939)
Variance of speed	6.628 (2.373)	6.337 (1.422)	6.751 (2.669)	6.689 (1.923)	6.526 (2.975)
Seat-belt rate	.348 (.247)	.331 (.250)	.355 (.246)	.401 (.244)	.242 (.219)
% Drunk drivers	.250 (.097)	.248 (.082)	.259 (.090)	.257 (.081)	.252 (.101)
Cars registered	.525 (.079)	.544 (.079)	.519 (.078)	.520 (.076)	.537 (.084)
% New cars registered	.069 (.020)	.073 (.019)	.067 (.020)	.067 (.020)	.072 (.020)
% Trucks registered	.283 (.112)	.246 (.116)	.303 (.106)	.298 (.121)	.262 (.085)
% Black	.106 (.122)	.087 (.086)	.114 (.132)	.105 (.116)	.109 (.132)
% Hispanic	.049 (.072)	.052 (.042)	.050 (.082)	.055 (.072)	.041 (.073)
Population in millions	4.73 (5.15)	5.85 (4.78)	4.32 (5.27)	4.94 (5.33)	4.39 (4.84)
Violent crime per capita	.005 (.003)	.005 (.003)	.005 (.004)	.005 (.003)	.004 (.003)
Property crime per capita	.045 (.012)	.047 (.013)	.044 (.012)	.046 (.012)	.043 (.013)
Vehicle-miles traveled	39,025 (41,837)	44,648 (33,047)	37,505 (45,308)	41,120 (42,982)	36,113 (40,572)
Unemployment rate	6.258 (2.152)	5.875 (1.979)	6.313 (2.170)	5.964 (1.976)	6.675 (2.350)
Per capita income	15,617 (6,170)	16,442 (6,826)	15,285 (5,856)	17,048 (6,143)	12,742 (5,140)
% Population aged 5–17	.199 (.023)	.195 (.025)	.199 (.021)	.195 (.021)	.203 (.023)
% Population aged 18–24	.115 (.017)	.115 (.018)	.115 (.017)	.111 (.017)	.122 (.016)
% Population aged 25–44	.299 (.029)	.300 (.027)	.301 (.028)	.306 (.025)	.290 (.030)
% Population aged 45–64	.193 (.017)	.193 (.019)	.193 (.016)	.194 (.017)	.190 (.015)
Ratio uninsured	.129 (.070)	.120 (.069)	.132 (.070)	.122 (.062)	.140 (.081)
Fatalities per 10,000 persons	2.23 (.91)	1.78 (.67)	2.38 (.93)	1.98 (.76)	2.54 (.99)
Fatalities per vehicle-mile	.023 (.007)	.021 (.006)	.024 (.008)	.022 (.007)	.026 (.008)
Observations:					
Minimum	889	265	623	554	334
Maximum	1,327	364	912	874	402

NOTE.—Standard deviations are in parentheses.

observables will account for a significant proportion of selection into the laws. Of course, in our subsequent specifications, we will also include an additional, powerful source of control, namely, state and year fixed effects.

In columns 2 and 3, we examine whether lagged outcomes predict the passage of compulsory insurance, and in columns 5 and 6, we examine the impact of these variables on no-fault laws. Neither the first nor the second lags of uninsured drivers and fatalities is a significant predictor of compulsory insurance or no-fault regulation. Furthermore, the increase in the predictive power of the models is minimal, increasing from 68 to 71 percent for compulsory and 77 to 78 percent for no-fault regulation. This suggests that lagged outcomes are not a significant source of selection in our data.

This test, of course, has its limitations. In Table 5, selection into the laws could be based on other functional forms of the outcome. Consequently, in Section VD, we present another test of the exogeneity of the laws.

#### *B. The Effect of Compulsory Insurance*

We begin by examining the impact of compulsory insurance laws on the proportion of uninsured motorists and traffic fatalities. In addition to being of intrinsic interest, this will serve as the first stage of our instrumental variables strategy, presented in the next section. As indicated above, compulsory insurance was introduced by some states concurrently with no-fault system. In order to obtain an estimate of the effect of compulsory insurance, unconfounded with the effects of no-fault, we restrict ourselves to the sample of states and years that were not under a no-fault or add-on regime.

Table 6 presents our specifications. In addition to introducing a dummy for compulsory insurance, we control for a range of variables including automobile registration per capita, proportion of trucks among registered vehicles, the black fraction of the population, violent and property crimes, unemployment, and per capita real income. In column 1, we see that the direct effect of compulsory insurance is negative and statistically significant at the 1 percent level. This confirms hypothesis 1(i). The magnitude is large as well. Compared with a base level of 12.9 percent, compulsory insurance reduces the incidence of uninsured motorists by 2.4 percentage points.

The result in column 1 is important for two reasons. First, it establishes that compulsory insurance achieved at least part of its mandate of reducing the incidence of uninsured motorists. Second, the size and significance of the effect will be helpful when using compulsory insurance as an instrument for the incidence of uninsured motorists.

In columns 2 and 3, we examine the robustness of this result. In column 2, we estimate the effect of compulsory insurance within a 4-year window of the passage of compulsory insurance laws. Although this more than halves the number of observations, using a narrower window reduces the effect that state-specific time trends might have on the estimates. We note that the effect

TABLE 5  
ARE THE LAWS PREDICTABLE?

	COMPULSORY INSURANCE			NO-FAULT INSURANCE		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ratio uninsured, deviation from state mean, first lag		-.666 (.449)	-.460 (.458)		.334 (.341)	.382 (.363)
Fatalities person person, deviation from state mean, first lag		-3.694 (2.293)	-2.862 (2.345)		.213 (2.386)	1.124 (2.470)
Ratio uninsured, deviation from state mean, first lag			-.240 (.424)			.134 (.396)
Fatalities per person, deviation from state mean, second lag			-1.620 (2.265)			-1.257 (2.424)
Unemployment rate	-.022** (.008)	-.014 (.009)	-.013 (.009)	-.006 (.007)	-.012 (.009)	-.012 (.009)
% Black	-.491* (.221)	-.637** (.244)	-.611* (.255)	-.299 (.214)	-.512* (.249)	-.544* (.262)
% Hispanic	-.142 (.276)	-.129 (.301)	-.052 (.314)	-1.509** (.360)	-1.692** (.398)	-1.676** (.415)
Population in millions	-.001 (.003)	-.004 (.004)	-.005 (.004)	.02** (.003)	.02** (.004)	.02** (.004)
Violent crime per thousand	24.029* (11.443)	31.118* (12.338)	29.751* (12.869)	-34.029** (10.500)	-32.025** (11.523)	-30.452* (12.042)

Property crime per thousand	1.945 (1.849)	.326 (2.061)	.017 (2.163)	9.742** (1.761)	9.013** (1.960)	8.324** (2.054)
Real per capita income	-.002 (.011)	.007 (.012)	.013 (.013)	.083** (.009)	.089** (.011)	.093** (.011)
% Population aged 5–17	4.661** (1.046)	5.216** (1.268)	5.863** (1.403)	-4.146** (.955)	-4.018** (1.131)	-4.039** (1.251)
% Population aged 18–24	-3.852** (1.148)	-2.562 <sup>+</sup> (1.528)	-2.131 (1.743)	1.130 (1.070)	1.424 (1.465)	1.976 (1.710)
% Population aged 25–44	6.299** (1.107)	5.740** (1.185)	5.528** (1.229)	-6.854** (1.002)	-7.054** (1.087)	-7.150** (1.134)
% Population aged 45–64	7.243** (1.483)	7.370** (1.610)	7.295** (1.685)	-5.918** (1.346)	-6.266** (1.455)	-6.630** (1.528)
Predictive accuracy	.68	.71	.71	.77	.78	.78
Observations	1,221	910	808	1,221	910	808

NOTE.—Marginal coefficients are present. Standard errors are in parentheses.

<sup>+</sup> Significant at the 10% level.

\* Significant at the 5% level.

\*\* Significant at the 1% level.

TABLE 6  
EFFECT OF COMPULSORY INSURANCE

	RATIO UNINSURED					FATALITIES				
	(1)	4-Year Window (2)	log (3)	(4)	(5)	Per 10,000 Persons (6)	Per 10,000 Persons: 4- Year Window (7)	Per Vehicle- Mile (8)	Per 10,000 Persons	
									(9)	(10)
Compulsory insurance	-.024** (.004)	-.031** (.006)	-.20** (.032)	-.025** (.004)	.026** (.004)	-.0134 (.0475)	.0242 (.0644)	1.51e-04 (5.95e-04)	8.65e-06 <sup>+</sup> (5.05e-06)	.0152 (.0486)
Require proof of insurance if accident				.002 (.003)					-.118** (.0401)	
Verify insurance at vehicle registration				-.017** (.004)					-.149** (.0460)	
Car registration per person	.057 (.040)	.12 <sup>+</sup> (.069)	.73** (.30)	.049 (.039)	.037 (.046)	2.18** (.355)	.363 (.789)	.016** (.004)	2.60** (.470)	2.18** (.365)
% Trucks registered	-.004 (.077)	.22 (.14)	1.17* (.59)	-.005 (.076)	-.010 (.079)	2.26** (.576)	-.0196 (1.48)	.011 (.007)	1.06 (.920)	2.05** (.769)
% Black	-.34 (.24)	.56 (.43)	-5.79** (1.82)	-.39 <sup>+</sup> (.23)	-.33 (.25)	5.14** (1.51)	4.20 (4.91)	.038* (.019)	3.35 (2.85)	4.78** (1.77)
Violent crime per thousand	1.71 (2.06)	-9.30* (4.21)	-14.9 (15.7)	2.63 (2.05)	2.08 (2.18)	-28.6 (19.7)	-23.1 (45.7)	-.031 (.25)	-22.9 (22.9)	-22.5 (22.5)
Property crime per thousand	-.20 (.36)	.040 (.74)	2.78 (2.75)	-.35 (.36)	-.20 (.40)	13.7** (3.50)	16.5* (8.37)	9.94e-04 (.044)	19.9** (4.29)	15.3** (4.10e)

Unemployment rate	5.52e-04 (.001)	-8.73e-04 (.002)	-.012 (.009)	.001 (.001)	1.08e-04 (.001)	-.0324** (.0116)	-.0437* (.0214)	-5.14e-04** (1.46e-04)	-.0668** (.0134)	-.0384** (.0117)
Real personal income in 1984 dollars	-1.33e-10 (9.27e-11)	-7.37e-10 (6.02e-10)	-1.11e-09 (7.06e-10)	-1.43e-10 (9.10e-11)	-1.04e-10 (1.02e-10)	3.93e-09** (8.23e-10)	9.00e-09+ (4.64e-09)	3.75e-11** (1.03e-11)	4.37e-09** (1.05e-09)	4.92e-09** (9.03e-10)
% Population aged 18-24	.30 (.26)	2.15** (.66)	-3.82+ (1.98)	7.19e-04 (.26)	.20 (.27)	19.1** (2.86)	29.5** (7.93)	.14** (.036)	19.2** (3.08)	17.4** (2.86)
Vehicle-miles traveled per person					.99 (2.50)					71.3** (26.8)
Seat-belt laws					-.009 (.012)					-.151 (.134)
Alcohol consumption per capita					9.61e-05 (1.13e-04)					1.24e-03 (1.50e-03)
New car registration per person					-.17 (.15)					-1.11 (.723)
Observations	489	183	489	489	489	803	315	803	565	803
R <sup>2</sup>	.35	.28	.36	.38	.35	.88	.88	.88	.86	.76

NOTE.—All specifications include state and year fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses.

+ Significant at the 10% level.

\* Significant at the 5% level.

\*\* Significant at the 1% level.

remains similar in sign, magnitude, and significance. In column 3, we reestimate column 1 using  $\log(\text{ratio uninsured})$  as the dependent variable. We find that the effect of compulsory insurance remains negative and significant at the 1 percent level and that the magnitude of the effect is very similar: the coefficient of  $-.024$  in column 1 corresponds roughly to a 20 percent reduction in the incidence of uninsured drivers, as does the effect in column 3.

In column 4, we examine the impact of two mechanisms used to enforce compulsory insurance, namely, checking insurance status at the time of an accident and requiring that insurance is verified when a vehicle is registered. The former does not have a statistically significant effect, but the latter is significant and negative, further reducing the incidence of uninsured motorists by 1.7 percentage points. Finally, in column 5, we confirm that our result is robust to adding a wide range of additional controls (vehicle-miles traveled per person, seat belt laws, average speed of drivers, alcohol consumption per capita, and car registration per person).

In columns 6–10, we see that the effect of compulsory insurance on fatalities per person is somewhat equivocal. In column 6, the direct effect is negative, although not statistically significant. When we estimate the effect within a 4-year window of the adoption of compulsory insurance, shown in column 7, we find a positive (and insignificant) effect. In column 8, we use fatalities per vehicle-mile traveled as the outcome and also find an insignificant positive effect. In column 9, we see that when we include enforcement mechanisms for compulsory insurance (checking insurance status at the time of an accident and verifying insurance status at the time of registration), the direct effect is positive and significant, but the enforcement mechanisms have a negative (and significant) effect on fatalities. Finally, in column 10, we confirm that the effect of no-fault regulation remains significant when we include additional control variables.

The fact that the effect on fatalities is not overwhelming is not surprising in light of the discussion in Section IIIA (hypothesis 1, (ii) and (iii)). Whereas individuals who switch from being uninsured to being insured might drive less carefully, thereby increasing fatalities, we would expect the opposite effect for those individuals who remain uninsured.

### *C. The Effect of No-Fault Regulation*

As discussed in the introduction, the literature has established that no-fault laws increased traffic fatalities in conjunction with compulsory insurance. The literature has been confined to examining this joint effect because it has examined no-fault regulation in isolation from compulsory insurance. In this section, we identify the effect of no-fault regulation, as distinct from compulsory insurance, by confining ourselves to the states and years that had

either compulsory insurance or no-fault legislation. Hence, the effect of no-fault legislation is relative to the starting point of compulsory insurance.<sup>35</sup>

In Table 7, columns 1–5, we examine the effect on uninsured motorists. In column 1, we see that no-fault regulation increases the incidence of uninsured motorists: the effect is both large (3.1 percentage points) and significant (at the 1 percent level). In column 2, we reestimate the same specification in a 4-year window of the passage of no-fault legislation. The effect is somewhat larger in magnitude and still statistically significant. In column 3, we run the log specification and obtain similar results: the effect is significant at a 1 percent level and corresponds to a magnitude of roughly 3 percent.<sup>36</sup>

In column 4, we examine the effect of the thresholds above which accident victims can resort to tort claims. A no-fault system with a low threshold essentially should operate like a tort system, since most claims exceed the threshold beyond which tort action is permitted.<sup>37</sup> A threshold of zero corresponds to an add-on system in which victims have a choice of whether to resort to a no-fault or tort system. The lowest threshold among pure no-fault states is \$200. As the threshold increases, the no-fault system becomes more stringent. We incorporate this information into the categorical variable LEVEL that takes the value zero for add-on states, one for no-fault states with low thresholds (less than \$200), and two for states with high thresholds (greater than \$500). If the effect of no-fault legislation on uninsured motorists is robustly positive, then we expect this coefficient also to be positive: as the no-fault system becomes more stringent, the incidence of uninsured motorists increases. Our results confirm this: the effect of the LEVEL variable is positive and significant.<sup>38</sup> Of course, because the variable is categorical,

<sup>35</sup> Note, however, that the form of compulsory insurance under tort and no-fault systems differs. Under tort, compulsory insurance consists of third-party coverage. Under a no-fault system, compulsory insurance consists of first-party coverage. We examine the sensitivity of our results to this difference as follows: we compare the effect of compulsory insurance under a tort system with the effect of a no-fault system with a low threshold. The latter system imposes only a negligible degree of tort limitation, and thus we estimate the effect of the move from third- to first-party compulsory insurance. The effect is very small in magnitude and not statistically significant. This suggests that our results are robust to this concern.

<sup>36</sup> If we were to examine the effect of no-fault regulation on uninsured motorists in the full state-year sample, the effect would be positive but smaller in magnitude and not significant. This is because in the full sample, the effects of no-fault and compulsory insurance are confounded (by the fact that they were typically introduced at the same time).

<sup>37</sup> A result that is established theoretically in Yu-Ping Liao & Michelle White, *No-Fault for Motor Vehicles: An Economic Analysis* (Working Paper No. 99-016, Univ. Michigan, Dep't Econ. 1999).

<sup>38</sup> John Rolph, James Hammitt, & Robert Houchens, *Automobile Accident Compensation: How Pays How Much How Soon?* 52 *J. Risk & Ins.* 667 (1985), using a micro-level cross section of insurance claims in 1977, shows that a positive threshold leads to a reduction in bodily injury insurance claims. Our result differs because it allows for state and year fixed effects, covers a much longer time horizon, and examines the impact of the threshold on fatalities.

TABLE 7  
EFFECT OF NO-FAULT REGULATION

	RATIO UNINSURED					FATALITIES				
	(1)	4-Year Window (2)	log (3)	(4)	(5)	Per 10,000 Persons (6)	Per 10,000 Persons: 4- Year Window (7)	Per Vehicle- Mile (8)	Per 10,000 Persons	
									(9)	(10)
No-fault	.031** (.010)	.040** (.015)	.26** (.079)		.040** (.011)	.258** (.0714)	.0759 (.0863)	.002* (9.61e-04)		.307** (.0765)
LEVEL				.007** (.003)					.104** (.0217)	
Car registration per person	-.025 (.040)	-.12* (.060)	.073 (.33)	.006 (.040)		1.28** (.319)	-.384 (.386)	.015** (.004)	1.48** (.316)	1.22** (.360)
% Trucks registered	-.053 (.057)	-.17+ (.087)	-.49 (.47)	-.027 (.058)		.989+ (.515)	.509 (.645)	.011+ (.007)	1.27** (.515)	.937+ (.521)
% Black	-.16 (.29)	-.030 (.53)	2.25 (2.33)	-.34 (.29)		2.11 (1.68)	-3.84* (1.92)	-.046* (.023)	.781 (1.71)	1.43 (1.72)
Violent crime per thousand	-3.04 (2.20)	-3.78 (3.54)	-22.8 (17.9)	-3.24 (2.21)		46.4** (18.1)	63.1** (23.2)	.58** (.24)	41.1* (18.0)	42.5** (18.3)
Property crime per thousand	-.88** (.32)	-3.07** (.58)	-3.79 (2.59)	-.80** (.32)		7.14** (2.53)	2.73 (3.86)	.017 (.034)	8.23** (2.51)	5.31* (2.67)
Unemployment rate	-4.48e-04 (.001)	.002 (.002)	-8.76e-04 (.009)	-7.30e-04 (.001)		-.0585** (9.89e-03)	-.0328** (.0113)	-4.81e-04** (1.33e-04)	-.0621** (9.86e-03)	-.0560** (.0104)

Real personal income in 1984 dollars	-1.57e-10 <sup>+</sup> (9.17e-11)	-2.78e-10 (2.89e-10)	-8.29e-10 (7.43e-10)	-1.71e-10 <sup>+</sup> (9.18e-11)		2.70e-9** (7.15e-10)	5.90e-09** (1.66e-09)	1.79e-11 <sup>+</sup> (9.63e-12)	2.61e-09** (7.10e-10)	2.79e-09** (7.64e-10)
% Population aged 18-24	-.38 <sup>+</sup> (.23)	-.35 (.35)	-2.18 (1.84)	-.39 <sup>+</sup> (.23)		5.92** (1.87)	.558** (2.32)	.037 (.025)	5.77** (1.86)	5.69** (1.88)
Vehicle-miles traveled per person					.68 <sup>+</sup> (.41)					6.97 <sup>+</sup> (4.18)
Seat-belt laws					-.051** (.012)					-.129 (.0994)
Average speed					5.46e-04 (4.50e-04)					6.31e-03 (4.07e-03)
Alcohol consumption per capita					1.09e-04** (3.57e-05)					6.84e-04* (2.96e-04)
New car registration per person					.57** (.13)					-.224 (1.17)
Observations	528	225	528	528	528	671	291	671	671	671
R <sup>2</sup>	.35	.51	.46	.35	.41	.88	.85	.88	.88	.81

NOTE.—All specifications include state and year fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses.

<sup>+</sup> Significant at the 10% level.

\* Significant at the 5% level.

\*\* Significant at the 1% level.

the magnitude of the effect is difficult to interpret.<sup>39</sup> Finally, in column 5, we confirm that our results are unchanged in sign, magnitude, and significance by including additional control variables.

In columns 6–10, we examine the effect of no-fault regulation on fatalities. In column 6, we see that the direct effect is positive and significant. Thus, from hypothesis 2, the effect of reduced liability dominates the effect of reduced insurance. The magnitude of the effect is on the order of 10 percent. This corresponds to 5,160–6,450 lives in the United States depending on the year.<sup>40</sup> In column 7, we reestimate the effect in a 4-year window of the passage of no-fault legislation. Since the sample size is greatly reduced, it is not surprising that the effect is no longer statistically significant. However, the sign of the effect remains positive, although the magnitude is smaller. In column 8, we estimate the effect on fatalities per vehicle-mile traveled and find a positive and significant effect. The magnitude of this effect is on the order of 7 percent of fatalities per vehicle-mile. In column 9, we observe that the threshold effect for fatalities is also positive and statistically significant. In column 10, we demonstrate the robustness of our estimate to additional controls. Overall, these results provide strong evidence of the incentive effects of no-fault regulation. In Section IIIC, we observed that although drivers who are uninsured might in principle drive more carefully under a no-fault system, insured drivers experience a reduction in their exposure to liability and would accordingly drive less carefully. Given the relative proportions of these two groups, it is natural that the latter effect dominates for fatalities.<sup>41</sup>

While the effect of no-fault legislation on traffic fatalities is important, we wish to stress again that it is not the sole consideration in assessing such a system. No-fault systems have benefits in terms of reducing administrative costs, and these benefits might make it worthwhile even if it increases traffic fatalities. Whether this would be the case, of course, would depend on the magnitude of the effect, if any, on traffic fatalities.

#### D. *Exogeneity Revisited*

In Table 8, we present another set of tests of the exogeneity of compulsory insurance and no-fault laws. We examine whether leads and lags of the laws are able to predict the level of uninsured motorists and fatalities. Since the specifications also include the contemporaneous laws, the lead (lag) effect

<sup>39</sup> An additional check would be to exclude low-threshold states from the no-fault group. Our results are robust to this specification.

<sup>40</sup> This is at the upper end of the range of estimates produced by Cummins, Phillips, & Weiss, *supra* note 13. One reason why our estimates are larger is that we are identifying the separate effects of no-fault and compulsory insurance, whereas Cummins, Phillips, & Weiss, *supra* note 13, estimates the joint effect of these laws.

<sup>41</sup> In the full sample, the effect of no-fault on fatalities is smaller, although still statistically significant.

TABLE 8  
LEAD AND LAG EFFECTS OF THE LAWS

	RATIO UNINSURED ( <i>N</i> = 489, <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .36)		FATALITIES PER 10,000 PERSONS ( <i>N</i> = 803, <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .88)		RATIO UNINSURED ( <i>N</i> = 528, <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .35)		FATALITIES PER 10,000 PERSONS ( <i>N</i> = 671, <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .88)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Compulsory insurance,	-.015*	-.015*	-.07	.03				
	(.006)	(.006)	(.07)	(.09)				
Compulsory insurance, 1-year lead	-.01	-.008	.08	.08				
	(.006)	(.008)	(.06)	(.06)				
Compulsory insurance, 1-year lag		-.006		-.13				
		(.006)		(.08)				
No-fault law					.043**	.050**	.35**	.24*
					(.015)	(.019)	(.10)	(.12)
No-fault law, 1-year lead					-.015	-.015	-.13	-.13
					(.014)	(.014)	(.10)	(.10)
No-fault law, 1-year lag						-.007		.13
						(.013)		(.08)

NOTE.—All specifications include controls for car registration, truck registration, fraction of black population, violent crime per capita, property crime per capita, unemployment, real personal income, and state and year fixed effects. Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

\* Significant at the 5% level.

\*\* Significant at the 1% level.

of the laws is identified from the period prior to their adoption (after their repeal). If selection into compulsory insurance and no-fault regulation were due to a feature of the state for which we do not control (for example, a shock just prior to the passage of the law), then the laws should be significant predictors of uninsured motorists or fatalities even when they were not in effect. In columns 1 and 2, for uninsured motorists, we note that neither the lead nor lag effects of compulsory insurance are significant and that compulsory insurance itself continues to enter with a negative and significant sign. For fatalities per person, the direct effect of compulsory insurance was not significant in Table 6. In Table 8, columns 3 and 4, this remains true even after leads and lags of the law are introduced and is also true of the leads and lags themselves. In columns 5–8, we examine the effect of leads and lags of no-fault laws. For both uninsured motorists and fatalities, the direct effect remains positive and statistically significant. Neither the lead nor the lag of no-fault regulation is a significant predictor of uninsured motorists or fatalities. Overall, Table 8 reconfirms our results in Table 5, which suggest that the compulsory insurance and no-fault laws are plausibly exogenous with respect to our outcomes of interest.

#### *E. The Effect of Uninsured Motorists*

In Table 9, we estimate the effect of uninsured motorists on fatalities using the compulsory sample (see Section IIIA and Table 3).<sup>42</sup> Table 9, column 1, presents an ordinary least squares regression of the effect of the ratio of uninsured motorists on fatalities per person. The coefficient is positive but not statistically significant. However, as discussed above, this estimate potentially suffers from simultaneity bias. In subsequent columns, we address this issue by using an instrumental variables strategy.

Column 2 presents the estimated effect of uninsured motorists on fatalities using compulsory insurance as an instrumental variable. We see that effect is negative and significant at the 10 percent level. This confirms hypothesis 3. The magnitude of the effect is such that a .01 increase in the ratio of uninsured motorists leads to a 2 percent decrease in the number of fatalities per year (16 fatalities relative to a per-state and per-year average on the order of 1,000). A 1-standard-deviation variation in the incidence of uninsured drivers would lead to a 10 percent decrease in the number of fatalities.

<sup>42</sup> The reason why we estimate the effect of uninsured motorists on fatalities for the compulsory sample is that our instrumental variables strategy is valid only for this sample. For compulsory insurance, we have a clear case that any indirect effect of compulsory on fatalities will bias our results toward zero. Instead, in the full sample, we have to contend with the direct and indirect effects of no-fault regulation (since these cannot be distinguished from the effect of compulsory insurance in the full sample). In particular, although the effect of no-fault regulation on uninsured motorists may lead to a decrease in the number of fatalities, the direct effect of no-fault regulation leads to an increase in the number of fatalities, as we show in Section VC.

In columns 3–7, we examine the sensitivity of our results. When we estimate the effect in a 4-year window of the passage of compulsory insurance regulations, in column 3, we still obtain a negative estimate. The fact that the coefficient is no longer significant is not surprising given that we lose two-thirds of our observations and, of course, still allow for state and year fixed effects. In column 4, we examine the effect for fatalities per vehicle-mile traveled, and in column 5, we use  $\log(\text{ratio uninsured})$  as the dependent variable. In both cases, the effect has the same sign and remains statistically significant. The magnitude of the effects is also similar.

In column 6, we examine the robustness of the result to controlling for vehicle-miles traveled per person (instead of including it as the denominator of dependent variable as in column 5). The coefficient on uninsured motorists remains statistically significant, and the magnitude of the effect increases (a 1-standard-deviation increase in the number of uninsured motorists leads to an 11 percent decrease in the number of fatalities). Our results are also robust to controlling for a range of additional variables, including automobile registration per person, average speed, alcohol consumption per capita, and seat-belt laws (column 7).

Because instrumental variables identify the effect of the dependent variable on the outcome for those induced to switch as a result of the instrument,<sup>43</sup> in Table 9 we are estimating the effect on those individuals induced to switch insurance status as a result of compulsory insurance. Thus our results confirm the moral hazard story for this group.<sup>44</sup> The alternative explanation—a reduction of fatalities due to selection among drivers—is ruled out as long as the instrument is valid. Of course, the additional controls in columns 6 and 7 give added confidence in the validity of the instrument, since they rule out some possible sources of omitted-variable bias (that could invalidate the instrument).

It is important to stress that the purchase of insurance by motorists has effects other than on fatalities, and these effects are clearly beneficial. Such insurance reduces the risk-bearing costs of drivers and leads to compensation of some victims who otherwise would receive less or no compensation. So, although interesting and important for its own sake, the moral hazard costs of insurance are just one element in an overall evaluation of the incidence of uninsured motorists.

<sup>43</sup> See note 24 *supra*.

<sup>44</sup> As noted in Imbens & Angrist, *supra* note 24, even though the instrumental variables estimator identifies the effect of the endogenous variable on the outcome for those induced to switch by the instrument, we cannot specifically identify which individuals these are in our data.

TABLE 9  
EFFECT OF UNINSURED MOTORISTS ON FATALITIES

	INSTRUMENTAL VARIABLES, USING COMPULSORY INSURANCE							
	OLS: Fatalities per 10,000 Persons (1)	Fatalities per 10,000 Persons (2)	Fatalities per 10,000 Persons: 4- Year Window (3)		Fatalities per Vehicle-Mile (4)	Fatalities per 10,000 Persons		
						(5)	(6)	(7)
Ratio uninsured	.355 (.608)	-4.08 <sup>+</sup> (2.44)	-1.59 (2.84)	-.049 <sup>+</sup> (.029)		-4.08 <sup>+</sup> (2.44)	-4.15 <sup>+</sup> (2.31)	
log(ratio uninsured)					-.48 <sup>+</sup> (.282)			
Car registration per person	2.78** (.513)	2.88** (.547)	.885 (1.11)	.023** (.007)	3.00** (.547)	2.84** (.548)	3.12** (.649)	
% Trucks registered	.907 (1.00)	.696 (1.07)	-1.14 (2.12)	.002 (.013)	1.27 (1.07)	.673 (1.07)	.722 (1.10)	
% Black	3.85 (3.14)	2.57 (3.39)	-2.78 (6.44)	.020 (.041)	1.18 (3.58)	2.98 (3.40)	1.70 (3.52)	
Violent crime per thousand	-6.93 (.003)	2.83 (29.2)	2.24 (65.9)	.12 (.35)	-11.3 (28.2)	7.13 (.003)	17.9 (31.1)	
Property crime per thousand	18.2** (4.71)	18.3** (4.99)	20.7 <sup>+</sup> (11.1)	.065 (.060)	20.4** (5.05)	16.3** (5.31)	17.3** (5.54)	
Unemployment rate	-.0759** (.0147)	-.0714** (.0157)	-.0623* (.0298)	-6.10e-04** (1.89e-04)	-.0792** (.0154)	-.0697** (.0158)	-.0701** (.0172)	

Real personal income in 1984 dollars	4.05e-09** (1.15e-09)	4.23e-09** (1.22e-09)	3.93e-10 (9.20e-09)	3.69e-11** (1.47e-11)	4.24e-09** (1.20e-09)	4.16e-09** (1.22e-09)	4.17e-09** (1.38e-09)
% Population aged 18-24	22.6** (3.37)	25.1** (3.82)	33.7** (13.9)	.17** (.046)	22.1** (3.50)	24.3** (3.84)	24.4** (3.84)
Vehicle-miles traveled per person						36.0 (33.7)	31.3 (35.1)
Seat-belt laws							-.0485 (.173)
Average speed							-.0101 (8.28e-03)
Alcohol consumption per capita							1.56e-03 (1.58e-03)
New car registration per person							1.89 (2.13)
Observations	489	489	183	489	489	489	489
R <sup>2</sup>	.76	.69	.80	.71	.70	.75	.75

NOTE.—OLS = ordinary least squares. All specifications include state and year fixed effects. Standard errors are in parentheses.

+ Significant at the 10% level.

\* Significant at the 5% level.

\*\* Significant at the 1% level.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This paper has investigated the effect of compulsory insurance regulation and no-fault limitations on the incidence of uninsured motorists and on traffic fatalities. Also, using compulsory insurance laws as an instrumental variable, we have investigated the effect of insurance on traffic fatalities.

The evidence indicates that compulsory insurance rules do deliver their intended effect, which is a significant reduction in the incidence of uninsured motorists. The evidence also indicates that increasing the incidence of insurance produces an increase in the number of fatalities. The magnitude of this moral hazard effect is potentially large: a 2 percent increase in the number of fatalities for each percentage point decrease in the number of uninsured motorists. While the switch by some motorists to become insured increases fatalities, this is at least partly offset by the effect of compulsory insurance on those drivers who chose to remain uninsured. These individuals drive more carefully, which works to reduce fatalities. Finally, we have been able to isolate the effect of the reductions in liability brought about by moves to a no-fault system. Such reductions in liability produce a significant increase in the number of fatalities. Our analysis indicates that drivers' behavior, like the behavior of economic agents in other contexts, is influenced by financial incentives. Reductions in the expected financial costs of accidents, produced by reductions in liability or by the purchase of liability insurance, lead to more traffic fatalities.<sup>45</sup>

It is interesting to note that the presence of uninsured motorists is generally regarded as a severe problem.<sup>46</sup> Assuming that it is undesirable to have uninsured motorists, researchers examining this subject have focused on ways to reduce the incidence of such motorists. We do not doubt that a reduction in the incidence of uninsured motorists will produce some benefits by increasing the extent to which accident victims are compensated. Indeed work by Henry Grabowski, W. Kip Viscusi, and William Evans<sup>47</sup> documents an increase in loss payments and a reduction in legal and administrative expenses under no-fault regimes. However, our analysis indicates that such reductions are not an unmitigated good. Automobile insurance also has a costly side,

<sup>45</sup> Our results in this paper contrast with those of Cohen & Einav, *supra* note 15. The latter study finds that mandatory seat-belt laws are not associated with the moral hazard cost of increased fatalities. Whether this contrast in findings is due to differences in the type of payoff affected or other institutional features of the laws is an open question.

<sup>46</sup> See Insurance Research Council, *Uninsured Motorists (1999–2000)*; National Association of Independent Insurers, *The Ineffectiveness of Compulsory Private Passenger Automobile Liability Insurance Laws (1999)*; Kahzzoom, *supra* note 32.

<sup>47</sup> Henry Grabowski, W. Kip Viscusi, & William Evans, *Price and Availability Tradeoffs of Automobile Insurance Regulation*, 56 *J. Risk & Ins.* 275 (1989).

reducing precautions and increasing fatalities.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, our work indicates that reducing the incidence of uninsured motorists might not make potential victims better off. To be sure, when some uninsured motorists purchase insurance, victims of accidents caused by these motorists might receive more compensation. However, potential victims also would face a higher incidence of such accidents. And as long as victims cannot generally expect to be fully compensated for such accidents (which they cannot, as insurance levels are often insufficient to cover damages fully), increasing the number of accidents would be costly to potential victims. Whether potential victims would benefit from reducing the incidence of uninsured motorists thus would depend on which of these two effects is stronger, an issue that the present analysis cannot resolve.

Our analysis also indicates that, whatever the benefits of moving to no-fault liability, such benefits involve a significant moral hazard cost. In particular, the evidence suggests that such moves increase fatalities and that this increase is larger than has been previously recognized.

Of course, our evidence does not enable us to reach an overall assessment of the rules governing accident liability and accident insurance. By focusing on traffic fatalities alone, we ignore, among other things, the effect of such rules on risk-bearing costs or on administrative costs. However, our analysis does highlight some of the unintended consequences of the rules governing automobile insurance and liability. By identifying and estimating the moral hazard costs of automobile insurance and no-fault arrangements, our analysis highlights important effects that should be taken into account in an overall assessment of these policies.

#### DATA APPENDIX

Traffic fatalities: Total number of people killed in car accidents. Sources: U.S. Department of Transportation, *Highway Statistics* (1970–98); U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Fatality Analysis Reporting System (available at <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov>).

Income per capita: Income per capita. Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (1976–84); U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1983–98).

New cars: Number of new cars registered. Source: *Ward's Automotive Yearbook* (1975–98).

Population: Total population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1970–98).

% Black: Percentage black of population; extrapolated between noncensus years. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (various years).

% Hispanic: Percentage Hispanic of population; extrapolated between noncensus

<sup>48</sup> In a full cost-benefit analysis, the value of the additional loss of life would have to be assessed. For details, see the extensive survey in W. Kip Viscusi, *Fatal Tradeoffs: Public and Private Responsibilities for Risk*, ch. 4 (1992).

- years. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (various years).
- % Population aged 5–17: The percentage of people in the population between ages 5 and 17. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1970–98).
- % Population aged 18–24: The percentage of people in the population between ages 18 and 24. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1970–98).
- % Population aged 25–44: The percentage of people in the population between ages 25 and 44. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1970–98).
- % Population aged 45–64: The percentage of people in the population between ages 45 and 64. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1970–98).
- Property crime: Number of property crimes. Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports* (1970–98) (available at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>).
- Property crime per capita: Total property crime per capita. Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports* (1970–98) (available at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>).
- Car registration: Number of cars registered. Source: *Ward's Automotive Yearbook* (1976–98).
- Trucks registered: Number of trucks registered. Source: *Ward's Automotive Yearbook* (1975–98).
- % Trucks registered:  $(\text{trucks registered}) / [(\text{trucks registered}) + (\text{cars registered})]$ .
- Average speed: Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, *Highway Statistics* (1975–95).
- Unemployment rate: Unemployment rate. Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (1970–98) (available at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm>).
- Uninsured motorists: Number of claims when an insured motorist is injured by a motorist who does not have liability insurance or by a hit-and-run motorist. Source: Insurance Research Council, *Uninsured Motorists* (1976–97, missing 1987 and 1988).
- Violent crime: Number of violent crimes. Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports* (1970–98) (available at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>).
- Violent crime per capita: Total violent crime per capita. Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports* (1970–98) (available at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>).
- Vehicle-miles traveled, total: Vehicle-miles traveled for roads. Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, *Highway Statistics* (1970–98).

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