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Calif., Fla. drivers get thousands of tickets in Mass.

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MATTHEW J. LEE/GLOBE STAFF/FILE 2016

By [Matt Rocheleau](#) and [Todd Wallack](#)

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The vast majority of traffic violations in Massachusetts, about 87 percent in recent years, were issued to drivers from Massachusetts. Out-of-state drivers account for the rest, according to [a Globe review](#) of traffic ticket data.

Because of New England's compact size, it's not unusual to see a fair number of vehicles on the road with license plates from other states, police said.

The tourist attractions, sports teams with regionwide followings, and many colleges around the state, particularly in the Boston area, also are likely to increase the number of out-of-state drivers traveling on Massachusetts roads, officials said.

Data show that drivers from states surrounding Massachusetts tend to receive the most violations. Also ranking fairly high were two faraway places: Florida and California.



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Police noted that might be because both states are well-populated.



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Mass. police issuing fewer traffic violations

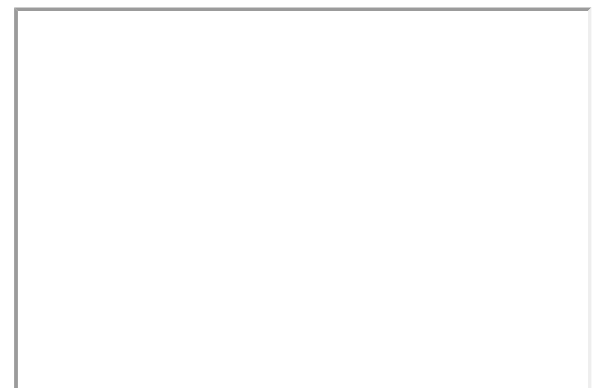
In some cases, reductions in federal and state grants for traffic enforcement have led to cuts in the number of troopers and officers assigned to patrol duty.

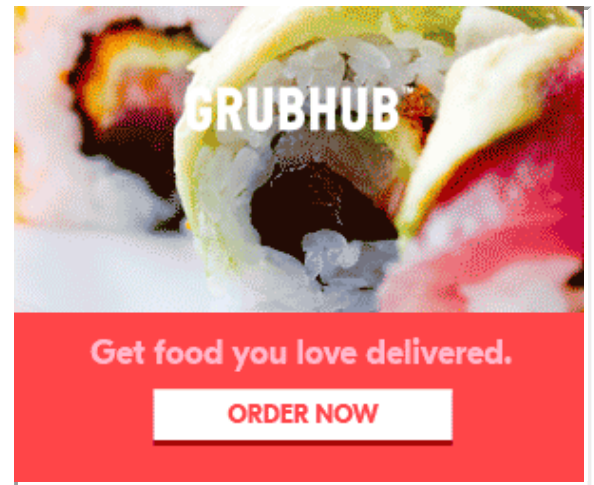
Where and when traffic violations are issued

And, “We have many residents who split their time between winter homes in Florida and summer homes up here,” said Mark Leahy, executive director of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association and former Northborough police chief.

Also there are a fair number of “Florida and California as well as NY license plates that make their way to Mass. as rental vehicles,” said Brian Kyes, president of the Massachusetts Major City Chiefs of Police Association and chief of Chelsea police.

John Carr, an activist with the Massachusetts chapter of the National Motorists Association, said he believes police do sometimes target enforcement on roadways near the state border, including efforts to crack down on drug trafficking.





And he said he believes that in some cases, whether a driver is from in-state or out-of-state might factor into whether police issue a fine or not.

But law enforcement officials denied those notions.

“It has not been my experience that any police flock to the border,” Leahy said. Instead, “They tend to stay in busier areas with a lot of traffic.”

And “I don’t believe in the nonresident vs. resident stuff at all, including lee-way, to be truthful,” he added.

Data show State Police issued about 61 percent of all violations to out-of-state drivers.

Kyes said that is probably because State Police patrol major highways that are more likely than local roads to have out-of-state drivers traveling on them. But he said that neither State Police nor local police target out-of-state vehicles.

State Police spokesman David Procopio said: “We do not focus more intensely on border areas. Nor do we target non-Massachusetts registrations. We see violations. We don’t see cars or license plates, so to speak.”

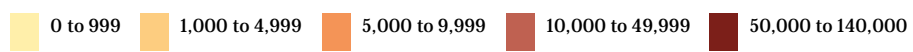
Cambridge-based attorney Ryan Caselden, whose firm represents drivers who fight traffic violations, said that in his experience police tend to treat local and out-of-state drivers similarly.

“They probably issue them about the same,” he said.

States whose drivers received most violations in Mass.

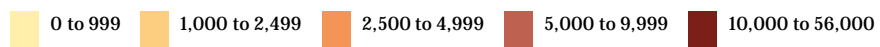
This map shows the number of violations issued by Massachusetts police to drivers from other states from 2010 through spring 2016. Not displayed on the map are the number of violations issued to drivers from Massachusetts, which totaled 4,507,407 during that span.





Violations issued to out-of-state drivers

This map shows the raw number of violations issued to out-of-state drivers in each municipality from 2010 through spring 2016.



State Police issue most of the violations given to out-of-state drivers

STATE POLICE MUNICIPAL POLICE

2010-spring 2016



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