



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**SB 11**

**DATE: March 23, 2023**

**SPONSOR: Senator Sydnor**

**ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: OPPOSE**

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### **Motor Vehicles – Establishment of School Zones**

Senate Bill 11 would establish a school zone to be within a .5-mile radius adjacent to a school, unless recommended by a traffic engineering study. The bill specifies that a school zone may not exceed 500 feet approaching or beyond the school or its grounds, and further provides a 35 mile per hour maximum posted speed limit in school zones during the hours posted on designated school zone signs. Montgomery County opposes SB 11.

School zones are intended to provide a safer environment for children and their families to get to and from schools. Automated traffic enforcement is an integral component of those safety zones. There are currently 50 portable camera sites, and 20 fixed pole camera sites in designated school zones throughout Montgomery County. Under SB 11, each one of the County's School Zone Speed sites would need to be evaluated – and the cameras deactivated – while the perimeter restrictions are analyzed for compliance. This would involve a long and time-consuming process to determine where the schools' property lines are located and then measured to ensure that they are within 500 feet of a school building or its grounds.

The bill would further limit automated traffic enforcement to school zones with adjacent roads posted at a 35 mile per hour maximum speed limit. This would be a problem in Montgomery County which has some schools located next to roadways that are posted at 45 miles per hour. Trying to slow those drivers down by using automated traffic enforcement that is within 500 feet away from those schools would be virtually impossible and could create hazardous conditions for students and motorists, alike.

Montgomery County has tried hard to encourage greater walkability and bicycle use in our communities. As one of the first county governments in the nation to initiate a Vision Zero plan, we are committed to eliminating serious and fatal collisions on our roads. Senate Bill 11 would directly challenge our Safe Routes to School program and potentially place our students, school staff, and our surrounding residents at risk. We urge that the Committee adopt an unfavorable report on SB 11.