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Baltimore County Senate Delegation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for SB 11
Motor Vehicles – Speed Limits – School Zones
Before the Environment and Transportation Committee
On March 23, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Kumar, members of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

I am here before you today to present Senate Bill 0011, which addresses a vitally important topic concerning the safety of our school children and those who aid their commute to and from their respective schools. With school zone crossing guards and speed limit signs already working to control the safety and protection of children of all ages on their walk into school, the addition of speed cameras is a measure adding another level of security and well-being for parents and school administrators. Current legislation allows school zones up to a 0.5-mile radius away from the school, and for the placement of speed cameras on any street within that range.

In a story that made national news in February 2022, a Maryland crossing guard was hit by a speeding car when she pushed a middle school student out of harm's way.¹ The incident was caught on camera by a nearby school bus. The school did not have a speed camera. Another crossing guard was hit and hospitalized in critical condition in October 2022,² with no camera footage available as the nearest camera is 0.3 miles away, housed at a busy community intersection.³

SB 11 will bring consistency to the Maryland school zones and speed zones. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has guidance or regulations that govern these matters. SB11 will put their guidance in the Maryland Transportation Code. This bill will not change the wording of the Transportation Code as it relates to the definition of a school zone's radius. What it does is to establish in the Transportation Code a definition that describes what that radius means and what

¹ 'Hero': Maryland crossing guard hit while protecting student from car. KIRO-7, February 6, 2022.

² Elementary school crossing guard critically injured after being hit by car in Northeast Baltimore. WMAR-2, October 26, 2022.

³ Baltimore City Speed Cameras – Google My Maps. N.d.

steps a jurisdiction must undertake to establish a “School Zone,” which SHA’s definition, as noted in the amendment, “is a designated roadway segment approaching, adjacent to, and beyond school buildings or grounds, or along which school related activities occur.”

The amendment changes the bill’s initial radius from 0.1-mile to 0.5-mile taking us back to what the guidance from SHA allows, in conjunction with the fact that except in unusual circumstances and justified by a traffic engineering study, a school zone shall be adjacent to the school; and may not exceed 500 feet approaching or beyond the school building or school grounds.

Senate Bill 11 passed the Senate on a vote of 43-0.

I ask for a favorable report for Senate Bill 11.