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HB 193 Anne Arundel County - Speed Limits – Establishment
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FAVORABLE
March 27, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland and an Anne Arundel County resident for over 60 years. AARP advocates for two million Marylanders age 50 and over. AARP Maryland supports HB 193, and we thank Delegates Lehman and Pena Melnyk for supporting this important legislation.

HB 193 authorizes Anne Arundel County and municipalities in Anne Arundel County to decrease the maximum speed limit to not less than 15 miles per hour on highways after performing an engineering and traffic investigation; and prohibiting Anne Arundel County and municipalities in Anne Arundel County from implementing a new speed monitoring system to enforce speed limits on highways on which the speed limit has been reduced under the Act.

AARP Maryland believes jurisdictions should have the ability to change driving speeds. Everyone should feel safe crossing a street. But the streets can be dangerous, especially for older Americans. According to an AARP report, the number of pedestrians killed by vehicles rose 35 percent in the past decade—and the death rate is almost twice as high for people over 75 as for the general population.

Making streets safe has been an important issue for AARP. AARP Maryland advocates for everyone, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities to have Safe Streets. Case in point, a 60 something year old man was killed recently in Anne Arundel County (Pasadena, Maryland) after leaving a restaurant.

Walking and bicycling promote physical and mental health for all ages. Walking is the second most popular means of getting around (after driving.) Many communities are not designed to promote walking and bicycling. Residential areas are often far from commercial facilities. Sidewalks are often nonexistent or in poor condition. Crosswalk signals are often not timed for the slower pace of older pedestrians. Unsafe conditions for pedestrians are most pronounced in lower-income communities and communities of color. Older adults are also overrepresented in deaths involving people walking.

If a pedestrian or bicyclist is struck by a vehicle traveling 40 miles per hour, there is a 90 percent chance of death or severe injury, whereas there is a 10 percent chance of death or severe injury if struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 miles per hour. Slowing down is essential to eliminating traffic deaths. (Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's

Risk of Severe Injury or Death, 2011). Communities are increasingly seeking to address road safety.

AARP Maryland believes states should adopt and fully implement complete streets/safe streets policies to enable safe access for users of all ages and abilities. This includes pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit users.

AARP Maryland respectfully asks the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 193. If you have any questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@arp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.