

**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT and TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**HB 562 Montgomery County- Speed Limits – Establishment (MC 02-21)**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Kathy McGuire, Diane Hibino – Co-Presidents**

**Date: February 11, 2021**

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) supports bill HB 562 that authorizes the maximum speed limit with stipulations for both inside and outside urban districts in Montgomery County. The intent of this authorization is to provide greater safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, vehicles and their drivers.

The county needs to have speed limits changed in some places. 2020 exceeded the pedestrian deaths of 2019 despite the adoption of “Complete Streets.” Clear signage of speed limits in various areas is provided in the bill and clarity is essential. Recently the District of Columbia has lowered the speed limit for the entire jurisdiction to 20 mph unless otherwise posted. Montgomery County directly adjoins this area of lowered speed limits and it is appropriate to review the county speed limits.

LWVMC believes a coordination among state and county agencies will increase the availability of safer roads for pedestrians and provide more options than just motorized travel. These alternatives to driving are increasingly important as our roads become more congested. Rules and management of roads should reflect local concerns.

We fully recognize that the health and vitality of a community depends on residents being accessible to all manner of activity: e.g., work, day care, schools, shops, and pleasure. The trend in Montgomery County is to encourage greater numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists, but roads in the past weren’t designed for nor do they necessarily have an appropriate speed limit for safe usage for everyone. As the county becomes more densely populated, effective evaluation measures and changes should be made available for use on roads. No matter how one travels, everyone is a pedestrian for some portion of the journey.

With this bill, Montgomery County is attempting to improve upon not only traffic statistics, but also have a more comfortable and livable area by providing more flexibility in the maximum speed limit law.

LWVMC urges a favorable report of HB 562.