

JOANNE C. BENSON
Legislative District 24
Prince George's County

Finance Committee

Joint Committees

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and State Personnel Oversight

Management of Public Funds

Protocol



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 214
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-858-3148 • 410-841-3148
800-492-7122 Ext. 3148
Fax 301-858-3149 • 410-841-3149
Joanne.Benson@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Joanne C. Benson
SB 297 Vehicle Laws- Speed Restrictions- Expressway and Interstate Highways

Good afternoon Chair Smith and esteemed members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee Senate Bill 297 seeks to create consistency in speed limits amongst Maryland Expressways and Interstate Highways. In its present posture, any individual travelling (Interstate 70) from Frederick to Hagerstown is lawfully authorized to travel at the speed of 70 miles per hour. Upon passing through Hagerstown, any individual travelling onto Interstate 270 is now required to decelerate their vehicle to the speed of 65 miles per hour. Once again, an abrupt change in speed is introduced when individuals travelling onto to Interstate 495 must again abruptly decelerate their vehicle to 55 miles per hour. Further complicating matters, adequate signage is not placed notifying travelers of the adjustment. Not only does this pose the threat of increased traffic on our interstates, but it places our drivers at risk of receiving innumerable amounts of speeding citations.

This bill would require the State Highway Administration to post notice of the maximum speed limit for an expressway at no greater than 5-mile intervals. This would consequently result in consistency in interstate highway speed.

In addition, I am also introducing an amendment to this current bill which will change the speed limit on Interstate 270 & 495 to 70 miles per hour.

Our approach to Senate Bill 297 is 2 pronged in the fact that it will seek to eliminate ongoing problems with:

- Interstate Highway Congestion
- Interstate accidents due to abrupt changes in highway speed

As to be expected, opposition to such a proposal is that this might present the argument that an increase in speed will place drivers at a greater risk. However, I have witnessed through my own personal experiences that any driver operating their vehicle at the posted speed, faces the risk of being run off the road due to those who may be operating their vehicle based on the posted speed on another interstate.

Thus, I respectfully urge the committee for favorable report on Senate Bill 297.