



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 404 – VEHICLE LAWS – SPEED LIMITS – ESTABLISHMENT**

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR BARVE, MR. VICE CHAIR STEIN AND COLLEAGUES. I AM ASKING YOUR FAVORABLE REPORT FOR HB 404, A BILL THAT AUTHORIZES LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO LOWER THE MAXIMUM SPEED LIMIT TO 15 MILES PER HOUR AFTER PERFORMING AN ENGINEERING/TRAFFIC STUDY. PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES ARE A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN MARYLAND. THE FASTER CARS TRAVEL, THE GREATER THE CHANCE FOR SERIOUS AND FATAL INJURIES TO PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, PASSENGERS, AND DRIVERS. THE GOAL OF HB 404 IS TO REDUCE THESE INJURIES AND MAKE MARYLAND ROADS SAFER BY GIVING LOCAL JURISDICTIONS THE AUTHORITY TO LOWER SPEED LIMITS WHERE IT WARRANTED.

THIS LEGISLATION IS THE STATEWIDE VERSION OF CH689 (2021 HB562), A LOCAL BILL SPONSORED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DELEGATION THAT PASSED IN 2021. CH689 AUTHORIZES MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND ITS MUNICIPALITIES TO DECREASE HIGHWAY SPEED LIMITS TO NOT LESS THAN 15 MILES PER HOUR AFTER CONDUCTING AN ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC INVESTIGATION. IT ALSO PROHIBITS MONTGOMERY COUNTY LOCAL AUTHORITIES FROM IMPLEMENTING A NEW SPEED MONITORING SYSTEM, (i.e, SPEED CAMERAS) WHERE THE SPEED LIMIT HAS BEEN REDUCED PURSUANT TO THE BILL'S AUTHORIZATION.

PEDESTRIAN ADVOCATES ARGUED THAT SINCE MONTGOMERY COUNTY IS NOW AUTHORIZED TO LOWER ITS SPEED LIMIT TO 15 MILES PER HOUR, OTHER COUNTIES AND BALTIMORE CITY SHOULD HAVE THE SAME OPTION. THIS BILL PROVIDES THAT OPTION BY ENABLING LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACROSS THE STATE TO IMPLEMENT THE LAW IF, AFTER AN ENGINEERING/TRAFFIC STUDY, IT IS DETERMINED TO BE THE BEST INTEREST OF THEIR COMMUNITY. ADDITIONALLY, THE MANDATED TRAFFIC STUDY PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS' INPUT AND CONCERNS TO BE VOICED.

I HAVE SUBMITTED AN AMENDMENT TO CLARIFY AN ISSUE REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SPEED MONITORING SYSTEM IN AREAS WHERE THE SPEED LIMIT HAD BEEN REDUCED. IT WAS ALWAYS OUR INTENT TO LIMIT THIS RESTRICTION TO AREAS WHERE THE SPEED LIMIT HAD BEEN DECREASED TO "LESS THAN 25 MILES PER HOUR". HB 404 WAS NOT INTENDED TO RESTRICT LOCAL JURISDICTIONS FROM INSTALLING SPEED CAMERAS ON A HIGHWAY SIMPLY BECAUSE THE SPEED LIMIT HAD BEEN DECREASED FROM 55 TO 45 MILES PER HOUR. THE AMENDMENT REMOVES ANY AMBIGUITY AROUND SPEED CAMERA PLACEMENT.

IT'S PROBABLY SAFE TO SAY THAT MOST CONSTITUENTS DON'T LIKE OR WANT MORE SPEED CAMERAS. HOWEVER, SINCE SPEED CAMERAS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE IN FORCING PEDESTRIANS TO OBEY THE LAW, LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE HOW TO BEST MANAGE TRAFFIC, SAFETY, AND SPEED-RELATED ISSUES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

AS PREVIOUSLY STATED, THE INTENT OF THIS BILL IS TO PROVIDE GREATER SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, DRIVERS, AND THEIR PASSENGERS ACROSS THE STATE. ROAD RAGE AND OTHER FORMS OF RECKLESS DRIVING HAVE INCREASED IN RECENT YEARS. HB 404 WILL GIVE LOCAL JURISDICTIONS THE AUTHORITY TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF TRAFFIC, SAFETY AND SPEED LIMIT ISSUES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND ULTIMATELY SAVE LIVES.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

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