

# **HB 404\_FAV\_MML.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bill Jorch

Position: FAV



Maryland Municipal League  
*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

TESTIMONY

March 24, 2022

**Committee:** Senate Judicial Proceedings

**Bill:** HB 404 - Vehicle Laws - Speed Limits - Establishment

**Position:** Support

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League supports House Bill 404, which authorizes municipalities to lower the speed limit on a highway to 15 miles per hour (MPH) after completion of an engineering and traffic study.

Currently, only Montgomery County and municipalities in Montgomery County are authorized to lower speed limits on highways to 15 MPH after completion of a traffic study, and this bill would expand that authority to municipalities statewide. With the proliferation of GPS navigation apps, drivers are using roads that were not designed to handle such vehicular volume. As a result, speeding is a problem in many municipalities, and this bill would give local officials one more tool to combat this type of reckless driving behavior. The requirement that the speed limit may be lowered only after a traffic study is completed ensures accountability and a proper deliberative process.

As such, the League respectfully requests that the committee provide HB 404 with a favorable report.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Scott A. Hancock	Executive Director
Angelica Bailey	Director, Government Relations
Bill Jorch	Director, Research and Policy Analysis
Justin Fiore	Manager, Government Relations

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**HB0404-JPR\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FAV



## **House Bill 404**

### *Vehicle Laws – Speed Limits – Establishment*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: March 24, 2022

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 404. The bill grants local governments the ability to decrease speeds to 15 miles per hour on highways following an engineering and traffic investigation.

Counties handle a wide range of road safety and maintenance responsibilities. These responsibilities include building and maintaining roads, distributing de-icing agents before a storm, plowing, speed enforcement, responding to accidents, planning and zoning approvals, etc. Establishing speed limits is already a local responsibility, governed by best practices, but the current state law limits the lower bounds of that local authority to 25 miles per hour, other than in Montgomery County and its municipalities.

This bill recognizes a reasonable process for communities to recognize specific instances where the 25-mile-per-hour standard may not fully preserve driver or pedestrian safety, and to act locally to remedy them. Such decisions would remain subject to an appropriate study and local accountability.

HB 404 represents another practical and reasonable tool for counties to protect our streets and mutual constituents. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 404 a **FAVORABLE** report.

**BikeAAASupportHB404forJPR-20220323.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jon Korin

Position: FAV



# *Support HB404 Speed Limits*

*Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County*  
P.O. Box 208, Arnold, MD 21012 [www.bikeaaa.org](http://www.bikeaaa.org)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

March 23, 2022

RE: SUPPORT House Bill 404

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 33, president of Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (“BikeAAA”), Chair of the Anne Arundel County Bicycle Advisory Commission, Member of the 2017 Maryland Bicycle Safety Task Force and avid Maryland cyclist for over 20 years. On behalf of BikeAAA and it’s more than 1,000 members, we support HB404. This bill will empower local jurisdictions to assess and reduce speed limits. This is especially important for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, the elderly, people with disabilities and schoolchildren who may cross or travel along our roads to access schools, parks, shopping areas and other destinations. Local jurisdictions are most aware of the use and context of local roads and should have the authority to reduce speed limits to increase safety. This bill also aligns with Maryland’s commitment to Vision Zero and the increasing adoption of Vision Zero by Maryland counties. Anne Arundel County is in the process of adopting Vision Zero.

Speed reduction reduces both the likelihood of a crash and also the severity of injury if a crash occurs. Please support HB404 to improve safety, especially for our most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

Jon Korin  
President, Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County  
Tel: 443-685-4103

**HB404\_MDSierraClub\_fav - 24March2022.pdf**

Uploaded by: Josh Tulkin

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278  
Riverdale, MD 20738

**Committee: Judicial Proceedings**  
**Testimony on: HB 404 – “Vehicle Laws – Speed Limits – Establishment”**  
**Position: Favorable**  
**Hearing Date: March 24, 2022**

The Maryland Chapter of Sierra Club supports HB 404 as amended, which would authorize local authorities statewide to decrease the maximum speed limit to a reasonable and safe level on highways if engineering and traffic investigation justify such a decrease. Currently the lowest speed limit allowed on many highways is 25 miles per hour except in school zones during school hours.

We live in a car-centric culture where transportation planning, road infrastructure and vehicle laws are largely focused on enabling vehicles to get to their destination as swiftly as possible. Unfortunately, this has resulted in some drivers feeling they have priority on the road, and there are high rates of injury and death for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicle drivers and passengers. Research shows that a vehicle’s rate of speed has a direct impact on the ability to see ahead and notice people in or near the roadway, how quickly one can respond to avoid potential problems, how long it takes to stop a vehicle, and how likely someone will die or be seriously injured as a result of a collision.

Transportation is now the primary contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in our state. Tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks are also a major source of health-damaging air pollution. For these reasons, there is an urgent need to get individuals out of their cars and taking public transit, riding bikes, and walking more. However, these activities are not as safe as they should be when vehicles are travelling too fast in densely populated areas, in shopping districts, where roads are narrow, or where there is not a clear line of vision.

Lowering speed limits is a key component of “Vision Zero,” a program the state and many localities have adopted to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries for all road users. Other components of Vision Zero include having adequate sidewalks, bikeways and crosswalks, allowing sufficient time to cross streets, narrowing lanes, and adding other traffic calming measures. However, even if most of the elements of Vision Zero just mentioned are implemented, it is doubtful that the program can succeed unless the speed limit can be lowered where appropriate, as this bill would allow.

In summary, this bill as amended makes sense for our residents and our environment. We urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 404.

Brian Ditzler  
Transportation Chair  
[Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org](mailto:Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org)

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
[Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org](mailto:Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org)

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.



# **HB 404 LOCAL SPEED LIMITS SENATE DEL LEHMAN TESTIM**

Uploaded by: Mary Lehman

Position: FAV

DELEGATE MARY A. LEHMAN  
*Legislative District 21*  
Prince George's and  
Anne Arundel Counties

Environment and Transportation  
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 317  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR SMITH, VICE CHAIR WALDSTREICHER AND ESTEEMED JUDICIAL PROCEEDING MEMBERS. I AM ASKING YOUR FAVORABLE REPORT FOR HB 404, A BILL THAT AUTHORIZES LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO LOWER THE MAXIMUM SPEED LIMIT TO 15 MILES PER HOUR ON CERTAIN ROADWAYS AFTER PERFORMING AN ENGINEERING/TRAFFIC STUDY.

PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES ARE A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN MARYLAND. THE FASTER CARS TRAVEL, THE GREATER THE CHANCE FOR FATAL INJURIES TO PEDESTRIANS, BICYCLISTS, PASSENGERS, AND DRIVERS. THE GOAL OF HB 404 IS TO REDUCE INJURIES AND FATALITIES AND MAKE MARYLAND ROADS SAFER BY GIVING LOCAL JURISDICTIONS THE AUTHORITY TO LOWER SPEED LIMITS WHERE IT IS WARRANTED.

THIS LEGISLATION IS THE STATEWIDE VERSION HB562, A LOCAL BILL SPONSORED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DELEGATION THAT PASSED IN 2021. THAT BILL AUTHORIZED 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.

AS AMENDED IN THE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE LAST YEAR, IT ALSO PROHIBITED MONTGOMERY COUNTY AUTHORITIES FROM INSTALLING NEW SPEED CAMERAS WHERE THE SPEED LIMIT HAS BEEN REDUCED PURSUANT TO THE BILL'S AUTHORIZATION.

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. THE STATE AND MANY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE ADOPTED VISION ZERO POLICIES TO ELIMINATE CAR-RELATED DEATHS AND THIS BILL PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT TOOL TO ASSIST MARYLAND IN REALIZING THAT GOAL. ADDITIONALLY, THE MANDATED TRAFFIC STUDY PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS' INPUT AND CONCERNS TO BE VOICED.

THE HOUSE BILL WAS AMENDED TO CLARIFY IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SPEED MONITORING SYSTEMS IN AREAS WHERE THE SPEED LIMIT HAD BEEN REDUCED. HB 404 DOES NOT 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 BUT IT DOES PROHIBIT INSTALLATION OF CAMERAS ON ROADWAYS IF THE SPEED LIMIT IS DROPPED DOWN TO 15 MPH.

THE AMENDMENT REMOVES ANY AMBIGUITY AROUND SPEED CAMERA PLACEMENT.

HB 404 GIVES LOCAL JURISDICTIONS THE AUTHORITY TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF ENSURING TRAFFIC, PEDESTRIAN, AND BICYCLE SAFETY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND ULTIMATELY WILL SAVE LIVES.

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

# # #

# **HB0404 Bill TestimonySen.pdf**

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair  
Judicial Proceedings Committee Members  
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)  
DATE: March 23, 2022  
RE: HB0404 Vehicle Laws – Speed Limits – Establishment

### **The MLLC supports HB0404 Vehicle Laws- Speed Limits- Establishment**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0404.

The Maryland Department of Transportation(MDOT) 2020 figures show that despite the pandemic restrictions, the state saw its highest number of deadly crashes in six years. Data reports there were 573 traffic accident related deaths compared to 535 the year before. The report spotlights the main cause of accidents was a notable increase in speeding. High-speed crashes lead to more fatalities and injuries to victims. One reason is that a driver has less time to react to potential hazards when speeding. Another effect of speeding is that a motorist will be less predictable to drivers, pedestrians, bicycle riders, and others sharing the road. These individuals will base their own actions on the assumption that a driver is going the speed limit. When a vehicle is speeding, this assumption can be deadly.

Lowering the speed limit can help save lives. The problem is, the current state law limits the lower bounds of that local authority to 25 miles per hour, other than in Montgomery County and its municipalities. This bill recognizes a reasonable process for communities to recognize specific instances where the 25-mile-per-hour standard may not fully preserve driver or pedestrian safety, and to act locally to remedy them. Such decisions would remain subject to an appropriate study and local accountability. This bill will identify the highway safety needs (speed limits) of Hispanic communities in Maryland and determine how best to promote safety to those communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0404.

1. Mid-Atlantic, A. A. A. (2021, March 18). *Fatalities and fatal crashes up on less-traveled Maryland roads in 2020*. The Southern Maryland Chronicle. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from <https://southernmarylandchronicle.com/2021/03/18/fatalities-and-fatal-crashes-up-on-less-traveled-maryland-roads-in-2020/>
2. [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/Resources/Files/2021-01-23\\_VZ\\_Town\\_Hall.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/Resources/Files/2021-01-23_VZ_Town_Hall.pdf)

# **CSG Support in Senate for HB0404.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cheryl Cort

Position: FWA

March 23, 2022

The Hon. Senator William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chairman, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Maryland State Senate  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Position: **Support** with amendments for HB 0404 - Vehicle Laws - Speed Limits – Establishment

Amendments:

Page 2, Line 18, 19 & 20, strike:

~~“(H) A local authority may not implement a new speed monitoring system to enforce speed limits on any portion of a highway for which the speed limit has been decreased under this paragraph.”~~

Regarding Amendment No. 2 by Delegate Lehman: strike “decreased” insert “TO LESS THAN 25 MILES PER HOUR,” we support this amendment as far as it goes, but CSG recommends changing to: “TO LESS THAN 15 MILES PER HOUR.”

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading non-profit organization in the D.C. region, including suburban Maryland, advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We would like to express our support for House Bill 0404, with amendments. We agree with the bill’s intention to give local authorities the option to evaluate and lower speed limits on highways. Highways have a diversity of users, including people walking, biking, pushing strollers, using a wheelchair, and driving cars and trucks. The design speed and the posted speed limit are often too high, and do not sufficiently accommodate the safety and access needs of different users. Driving vehicles at high speeds is a grave danger to people. Collisions often result in severe injury and death. In fact, recent years have been the deadliest for people walking in decades. According to [Dangerous by Design](#), “the four most recent years on record (2016-2019) are the most deadly years for pedestrian deaths since 1990.”

This bill enables local authorities to change the speed limit to a more appropriate vehicle speed to better balance the needs of different users of a highway in a community. Posted speed limits, along with clear signage, enforcement and other deterrence measures, and most



importantly, redesigning a roadway for lower speeds, are all tools to ensure safe use of Maryland's public rights of way.

## Amendments

We are concerned about the bill's original blanket prohibition on the use of a new speed monitoring system to enforce a newly posted speed, even when it is validated by an engineering study. While we support Delegate Lehman's proposed Amendment No. 2, as far as it goes, we are still concerned it weakens local authorities' ability to enforce speed limits in order to address safety goals in their communities. In particular, we are concerned about the impact that limitations on enforcement could have on safety in school zones, near parks and playgrounds, libraries and main streets. If a new school zone has a posted speed limit for 15 or 20 MPH, this bill would prohibit the local authority from using a new speed monitoring system to enforce the speed limit. This would be despite the results of a study validating a speed set below 25 MPH. If a school zone is experiencing a pattern of unsafe and high speeds by motorists, the local authority should have the tools it deems appropriate to bring driver behavior into compliance with the posted legal speed limit. Without effective enforcement, speed limits are too often ignored, even in school zones.

We ask that the state not limit local authorities' ability to improve compliance with their speed limits. We need many tools to operate safe highways. Evaluation, engineering, education, and equitable enforcement are all needed to ensure our highways can be used safely by all users. Speed enforcement measures should be located and operated wherever there is an identified need to regulate speed and ensure compliance.

Barring the use of a new speed monitoring system is contrary with the intent of this bill to ensure safer operations of highways. We ask the committee to give a favorable report to this bill with the amendment we have proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort  
Policy Director

# **MD HB 404 - Vehicle Laws - Speed Limits - Establis**

Uploaded by: Peter Gray

Position: FWA



Judicial Proceedings Committee  
William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair

2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 404 - Vehicle Laws - Speed Limits - Establishment

March 24, 2022

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Peter Gray and I represent the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. I am speaking on behalf of the 2000+ WABA members and several thousands of other supporters who live in Maryland.

WABA supports the passage of HB 404 and its enabling of all jurisdictions to lower speed limits on State Highways under certain conditions. Lowering speeds on roads is an essential element of reducing the incidence of crashes and the resultant fatalities and serious injuries stemming from such crashes. Furthermore, lower speeds in turn lessen the severity of injuries due to crashes.

WABA also urges the Committee to consider changes to the language in section (a) (4) (II) prohibiting implementation of new speed monitoring systems, to allow for such automated enforcement. Automated enforcement is proven to be an effective mechanism to get cars to significantly lower their speeds, with the benefits mentioned above.

Overall, allowing local jurisdictions to lower speed limits on State Highways will give those localities an additional tool to reach Vision Zero goals by changing the conditions of the road, and will reduce crashes and the severity of injuries from those crashes.