



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.

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