



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