



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

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Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chairman
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chairman
2 East Miller Senate Building

Submitted electronically

February 14, 2022

SUPPORT - SB520 Motor Vehicles – Speed Limits – Establishment and Enforcement

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I request your favorable report on Senate Bill 520, to allow Baltimore City to more easily set safe speed limits on its roads, which it alone maintains.

The City has long maintained its own Department of Transportation, employing professional engineers, planners, and other subject matter experts. While they are entirely capable of performing traffic and engineering investigations, the reality is that one is rarely needed to know when a posted speed limit is too great. In nearly all cases, the simple principle of the matter, that slower speeds are safer, will suffice. Requiring laborious and costly studies on a street by street basis, only to again and again confirm the obvious, is a burden without benefit, and only results in slowed efforts at making City streets safer for all users.

The Code of Maryland sets certain default speed limits which, while perhaps agreeable general guidelines across all roads in all counties, are particularly inappropriate in urban environments. It is only reasonable that if the State believes in its own ability to set standards that may be reasonable within the context of the entire state, then it should also allow the City of Baltimore the ability to determine a more appropriate and context-sensitive set of standards for itself, and to be able to apply them as local leaders see fit.

I urge your favorable report on this bill, unamended.

Sincerely,

Ryan Dorsey