

# Sen Washington Testimony SB520.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Washington

Position: FAV

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D  
Legislative District 43  
Baltimore City

Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

*Chair*  
Joint Committee on Ending  
Homelessness

*Chair*  
Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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SB520 Motor Vehicles - Speed Limits - Establishment and Enforcement  
Testimony of Senator Mary Washington  
February 17, 2022

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the JPR,

In 2018, Baltimore adopted in City Code a new Complete Streets Ordinance that will alter the transportation landscape of the city. The Complete Streets approach will elevate the priority of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users in planning and roadway design to increase quality of life and mobility in Baltimore City.

SB520 would authorize Baltimore City to decrease or raise to a previously established level; the maximum speed limit on a highway under its jurisdiction without performing an engineering and traffic investigation.

This bill is in the same posture as HB941 that passed the House (124-11) in 2021, but was not referred to this committee until March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021.

Baltimore City's Complete Streets Manual has designated 10 different road types as an engineering document that would be guidance on the decisions to either raise or decrease speed limits.

SB520 also prohibits a local jurisdiction from implementing a new speed monitoring system to enforce speed limits on certain highways; and generally relating to the establishment and enforcement of speed limits on highways. This provision would prevent citizens from feeling like the new decrease in speed limits is a "Trap"

Transportation revitalization is important to Baltimore City's future. It is important that SB520 passes to enable Baltimore to create safer, more accessible and efficient streets and traffic patterns.

I respectfully request a favorable report on SB520.

In Partnership,

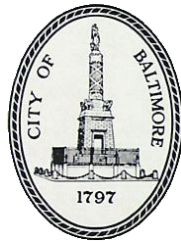
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Washington".

Senator Mary Washington, District 43

**SB0520-JPR-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Natasha Mehu

Position: FAV



**BRANDON M. SCOTT**  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**SB 520**

February 17, 2022

**TO:** Members of the Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee  
**FROM:** Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations  
**RE:** Senate Bill 510 - Baltimore City - Speed Limits – Establishment and Enforcement

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 520.

SB 520 authorizes the City of Baltimore to lower speed limits for roads based on the roadway type and industry best practice without requiring a traffic engineering study.

The Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT) published the City's first-ever Complete Streets Manual in the spring of 2021. Major components of the City's Complete Streets Manual include the formalization of design standards for promoting safer streets, slower speeds, and increased walkability as well as the establishment of street typologies for classifying City streets and standardizing roadway layout. If SB 520 were passed, Baltimore City DOT would use the City's Complete Streets Manual as a guide to identifying corridors ideal for the lowering of speed limits.

Safeguards are included in the legislation that will encourage Baltimore City DOT to utilize the speed limits authority thoughtfully and responsibly. A provision is built into the legislation, allowing the City of Baltimore to return speed limits to previously established levels. Additionally, the legislation would amend state law by prohibiting local jurisdictions from placing speed cameras on roads where speed limits have been reduced without conducting a traffic engineering study.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 520.

# **SB520 - SUPPORT - CM Dorsey.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ryan Dorsey

Position: FAV



**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL**

**RYAN DORSEY, 3<sup>rd</sup> District**

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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

# **SB0520 - SHA - Speed Limit Enforcement - LOI\_FINAL**

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan  
Governor  
Boyd K. Rutherford  
Lt. Governor  
James F. Ports, Jr.  
Secretary

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February 17, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 520 – Motor Vehicles – Speed Limits –  
Establishment and Enforcement***

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 520 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

Senate Bill 520 allows Baltimore City to alter the speed for traveling on any highway under its jurisdiction without performing an engineering or traffic study. Currently, in Baltimore City and the other 23 jurisdictions, State and local governments can change speed limits on highways under their respective jurisdiction only after completing an engineering or traffic study that conforms with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

The MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) encourages all jurisdictions to complete the appropriate engineering or traffic studies before changing speed limits on highways.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating Senate Bill 520.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Stafford  
State Legislative Manager  
Maryland State Highway Administration  
410-545-0342

Pilar Helm  
Director of Government Affairs  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
410-865-1090