



## TESTIMONY TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

### HB 612 (MC 10-24) Montgomery County – Highways – Maximum Speed Limits

Position: Support

By: Susan Albertine, LWVMC President

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We urge the General Assembly to instruct the state to **allow a local authority in Montgomery County to decide speed limits on certain state highways in the county** using an engineering and traffic investigation to change the maximum speed limit on those roads.

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) has counted about 33 state highways in the county. **It makes sense that reasonable, safe conditions on any part of a highway within the county should determine a maximum speed limit for that part of the highway.** This will improve pedestrian, bicycle and motorist safety and might save dollars that could be used in other ways.

**Nationally, the trend in 2023 was toward fewer road deaths, but Maryland saw an increase. Fatalities were up 6% from 2022 to 600 roadway deaths statewide – the most in nearly 20 years.** This indicates that the county should be given the authority to change speed limits where populations live and accidents occur because the county understands these areas best and can respond accordingly.

**Unfortunately, Montgomery County – and all the other counties in Maryland – has extremely limited authority to change these speed limits. Meanwhile, speeding traffic on roadways is a threat to pedestrians and bicyclists, not to mention motorists. At lower speeds, drivers have a wider field of vision and are more likely to notice other road users.** We need to monitor speed limits – especially near schools – to make it possible for students to walk safely to school rather than going by car or bus. And while we encourage transit use, please remember that people must still cross roadways to get to bus stops and metro stations. They should be able to cross roads safely; their lives depend on it.

**The League of Women Voters' positions back this legislation. We support local concerns being incorporated into transportation plans and believe there should be a partnership between local and state agencies in order to achieve better planning.** We believe in building and enhancing walkability options as an alternative to vehicles since we encourage safe transit, biking and walking. This bill directly affects living in Montgomery County and its walking, biking and use of transit as well as vehicle use.

**The LWVMC urges the Maryland legislature to support HB 612.**