

March 7, 2025

I am writing today in strong support of HB1173, a critical piece of legislation that would allow for the placement and use of speed monitoring systems on high-risk highways in Montgomery County. This bill is not about revenue generation; it is about public safety. The reality is that we are facing an escalating crisis on our roads, and action is long overdue.

I have been advocating for solutions to this issue since the fall of 2024. My neighbors in Mill Creek Towne and I have witnessed a noticeable increase in speeding and reckless driving along Shady Grove Road, as well as at the intersection of Shady Grove and Muncaster Mill Road and along Midcounty Highway. These are not just statistics on a traffic report. This is a very real and growing threat to the safety of our community.

Two devastating incidents on Shady Grove Road in recent months shook our neighborhood to its core. One involved a young woman who lost her life after crashing into a tree. Another incident saw a speeding car lose control and crash directly into a house. These tragedies are painful reminders that excessive speed and reckless driving have severe consequences. They are not mere accidents; they are preventable disasters.

Montgomery County recorded 45 traffic-related fatalities in 2024, which is a sharp increase well above the five-year average. How many more people need to be injured or killed before we take meaningful action? If we have the tools to prevent these crashes, we have a responsibility to use them.

To better understand how widespread this problem is, I conducted a poll of Derwood residents to gauge community concerns regarding excessive speeding, street racing, and noise disturbances from vehicles. The results were telling:

- 47% of respondents said the problem is increasing
- 30% believe it has stayed the same
- Only 3% feel the situation is improving
- 20% stated it is not an issue for them personally

This means that more than three-quarters of residents who have noticed a change feel the problem is getting worse or at best, staying the same. These concerns are not imagined. They are lived experiences from people who drive, walk, and bike on these roads daily.

The proposed speed cameras would not be installed indiscriminately. They would be placed in high-risk areas where data shows speeding and crashes are persistent issues. Additionally, the fines collected would not go into a general fund but would instead be reinvested into safety-related projects such as better signage, road design improvements, and traffic-calming measures to create long-term solutions.

Opponents of speed cameras often frame them as an inconvenience or a burden on drivers. But let's be clear. Obeying the speed limit is not a burden. It is a basic responsibility. If a simple mechanism like a speed camera can deter reckless driving and save lives, why wouldn't we use it?

HB1173 is a common-sense measure that will make Montgomery County's roads safer. I urge lawmakers to pass this bill and take decisive action to prevent further tragedies in our community. Our residents deserve to feel safe on our roads, not just in their vehicles but also as pedestrians, cyclists, and homeowners.

Let's act before we lose another life. Let's pass HB1173.

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