

HB 349, Support

Ron Weiss, Fort Washington

Because HB 349 will help save lives on MD 210, I ask that you join the communities surrounding 210 in supporting HB 349.

We want to feel safe on MD 210 and get home safely to our families, but we don't feel safe.

Our district police commander likens MD 210 to a Beltway with pedestrian crosswalks and traffic lights.

HB 349 would implement a tiered fine structure for speed camera violations on MD 210, a dangerous stretch of road where 95 lives have been tragically lost in the last 17 years. As a founding member of the MD 210 Traffic Safety Committee, I have worked for 7 years to make MD 210 safer, I believe this legislation is a critical step toward improving safety and saving lives on this high-risk roadway.

Since 2009, the state has enforced a flat \$40 fine for speed camera violations, regardless of how fast a driver exceeds the speed limit. While this fine may be an adequate deterrent for minor infractions, it fails to address the more serious and reckless behavior of drivers who are grossly exceeding the speed limit, sometimes reaching speeds of 100 mph or more. The flat fine does little to discourage these extreme speeders, who present the greatest danger to other motorists and pedestrians.

A tiered fine structure would ensure that penalties are proportionate to the severity of the violation. By imposing higher fines on drivers who far exceed the speed limit, the law would send a stronger message to those engaging in dangerous speeding, while still maintaining fairness for those committing lesser infractions. This approach would create a more effective deterrent, encouraging safer driving behaviors and reducing the risk of future fatalities on this hazardous stretch of road.

Speed cameras have already proven their worth in many areas by reducing speeding and preventing accidents. However, without the proper enforcement mechanisms, their impact is limited. A stronger penalty structure is necessary to address those drivers who ignore the current \$40 fine and continue to put lives at risk by speeding excessively.

This bill has the same tiered fines (\$60 - \$500) as in the Maryland Road Worker Protection Act sponsored by Lt. Governor Miller for an unoccupied work zone.

By supporting this bill, you would help protect the lives of everyone who uses this MD 210 and prevent more families from experiencing the devastating loss of a loved one. We have the tools to make this road safer, and with your help, we can ensure that they are used effectively.

Results from the new MD 210 speed cameras indicate that there are **on average over 7,600 vehicles being cited for travelling 67 MPH per month or more on MD 210. One vehicle was clocked at an outrageous 190 MPH.**

Citation statistics for over five months of operation of the new cameras show that the cameras are effective in slowing traffic. Citations in January 2025 are 46% of what they were in August 2024.

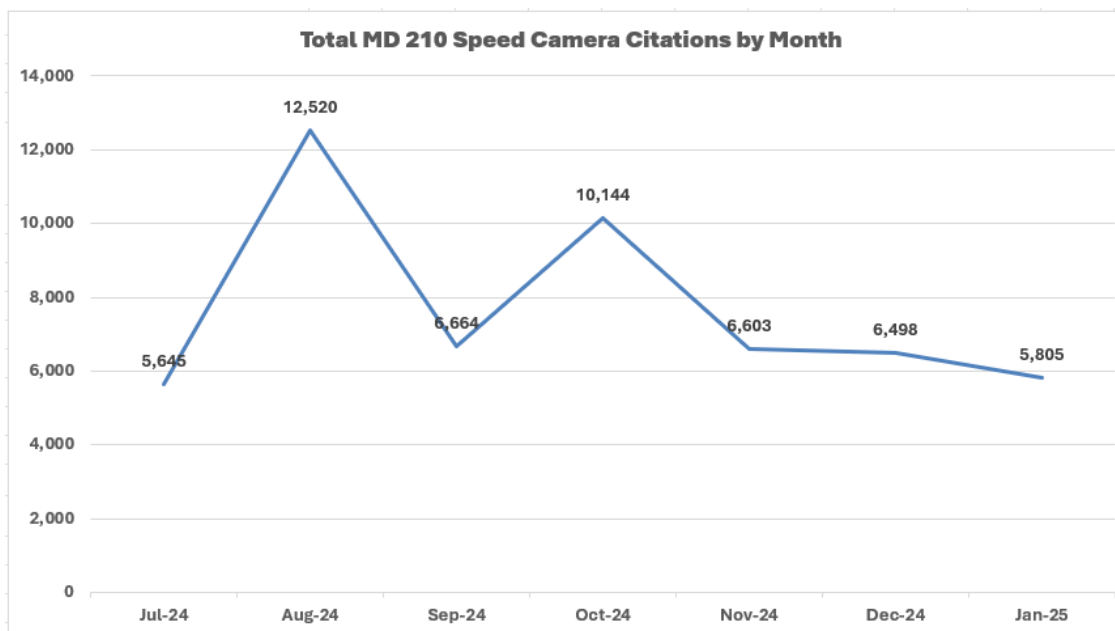
However, the same statistics also show that the current fixed \$40 fine does not deter drivers who drive to speed. Nearly 21,000 vehicles sped at 71 MPH or more during the period July 2024 – January 2025. That is 97 vehicles per day. MD 210 averages more than 2 vehicles per day speeding at 95 MPH or more.

Please support life-saving legislation – HB 349.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like further information or if I can assist in any way.

Additional information:

1. HB 349 does not have additional fines for repeat offenders.
2. Funds from uncontested citations, over and above those needed to operate the 6 MD 210 speed cameras, are required by law to go to SHA to be used to improve MD 210 safety.
3. To date, the MD 210 speed camera fines sent to SHA in accordance with the law total \$1,321,606.53. They have been used to:
 - a. Install flex posts to prevent illegal shoulder use for left turns at MD 228 (Berry Road) and MD 210.
 - b. Install **advanced hazard beacons** at intersections to alert drivers of approaching signals.
 - c. Upgrade traffic signals at key intersections, including MD 228, MD 373, and Fort Washington Road.
4. Enhance pedestrian safety features, including new crossings, countdown pedestrian signals, and accessibility improvements.
5. The new MD 210 speed cameras have been effective:



6. But there are some drivers who need a bigger enforcement stick:

