

Testimony on SB 424
Urban State Highways - Speed Limits - Exceptions - 5 MPH decrease in maximum speed limit
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland State Senate
by Cheryl Cort

Date: January 29, 2025

Position: **Support**

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading non-profit organization in the D.C. region, including suburban Maryland, advocating for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We wish to express our support for SB 424, which proposes to permit Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to lower the maximum speed limit by 5 MPH on urban state highways without an engineering and traffic investigation.

This change is appropriate and important to give the state another tool to address traffic safety and achieve the state's Vision Zero goals of no traffic deaths.

Lowering speed limits can be a quick action tool to help SHA better respond to traffic safety needs. Given Maryland state roads' continued high level of fatalities and severe injuries, we welcome another tactic to help strengthen our response. According to the [Federal Highway Administration](#):

Addressing speed is fundamental to the Safe System Approach to making streets safer, and a growing body of research shows that **speed limit changes alone can lead to measurable declines in speeds and crashes.** [emphasis added]

Posted speed limits, along with clear signage, equitable enforcement, other deterrence measures, and retrofitting and redesigning roadways to lower design speeds, are all tools to ensure safer use of Maryland's public rights of way. This bill supports SHA's "context driven" approach and Vision Zero goals for state roads. Lower speed roadways are fundamental to creating safer conditions for all travelers which foster vibrant communities and economic development.

We ask for a favorable report. Thank you.