

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6590

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING SPEED LIMITS IN MUNICIPALITIES.

Vote Date: 3/20/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/27/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Concepción

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill allows municipalities to lower a speed limit by 15 M.P.H. any Office of State Traffic Authority (OSTA) approved speed limit of 35 mph or less, for a road that is entirely in their jurisdiction, as a way for the municipalities to address speed related safety concerns in their area.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Tara Ackerman, NSC State Government Affairs Manager, National Safety Council:

Supports this bill for the ability to protect all users of the roads, including vulnerable users such as pedestrians and bikers. It is their view that “modest speed reductions could prevent many collisions and reduce the severity of injuries.”

Neil Olinski, New Haven, CT: Supports this bill because slower travel will allow for a decrease in major accidents as well as the severity of injuries.

Jim Jinks, Executive Director, Bike Cheshire: Supports this bill because the possible reduction of speed limits will allow for safer conditions for non-motor vehicles. In return people will be more likely to use the roads for walking, biking, etc. This will impact driving culture as drivers will get “accustomed to (and expect) a variety of roadway users.”

Kirsten Bechtel, MD: Supports this bill because of the evidence that supports slower speed limits in connection with injuries after an accident. Also cities should have the ability to reduce speed limits in areas where they think there is an increased amount of danger.

Susan Miller, Windsor, CT: Supports this bill so that laws protecting pedestrians and other vulnerable roadway users are stronger.

Peter Reinhardt, Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Yale University: “The best and most appropriate decisions about safe speed limits are made by municipalities and neighborhoods.”

Rob Rocke, Board Member, Elm City Cycling: “Connecticut should be able to establish speed limits on their own streets, including speed limits less than 25 mph where it’s deemed appropriate.”

Melinda Tuhus, Hamden, CT: “Many motorists think the 25 mph limit on our city streets is too slow, based on how they actually drive, but if we want to make the streets safe for all users, as we must, then a slower speed (like 20 mph) would make other users -- children playing, pedestrians, cyclists, older folks whose reflexes are slower -- much safer.”

Steven Winter, New Haven, CT: Supports this bill in the process it lays out for municipalities to lower a speed limit in an area where they see a benefit in a slower speed limit. This bill will support the safety of non-motor vehicle users.

Paul Garlinghouse: Supports the bill for allowing municipalities the ability to lower speed limits because it will create safer areas for pedestrians, especially children. Driving at a slower speed will allow for better reaction time should a situation arise.

William Kurtz, Hamden, CT: Supports this bill’s goal of protecting all road users in all types of areas, including the urban settings. The method that currently sets the speed limits is outdated in the fact that municipalities cannot address the safety issues related to speed limits in their own area.

Patrick McMahon, CEO, Connecticut Main Street Center: Supports giving municipalities the ability to lower the speed limits in their areas. “The bill provides public input prior to implementation which will ensure community residents have a say in speed limit changes.”

Susan Smith, Executive Director, Bike Walk Connecticut: The support for this bill comes from their opinion that “A community is likely to know their local roads better than anyone else, so they tend to be more knowledgeable about assessing the most appropriate speed limits on those local roads... to maximize the impact of this bill, any changes in speed limits should be accompanied by appropriate enforcement, engineering and/or educational measures.”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Amy Warren, Cheshire, CT: Testified in opposition because changing the speed limit will not change the drivers’ behavior. Her concern is that lowering a speed limit to under the 25 mile

per hour minimum speed limit could cause a danger as it is harder to drive under 25 m.p.h. and increase traffic backup, as well as road rage.

Tom Wiley, Cheshire, CT: Mr. Wiley opposes this bill because slower speed limits will not solve the issues; the better solution is in driver education.

Reported by: Brittney Hedges

Date: April 5, 2019