



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 154
Finance Committee
Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Good morning, Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 154 which will require a standard for school zone speed limit signs to be placed at the beginning of a school zone across the state.

Senate Bill 154 is a reintroduction of SB 85 from the previous General Assembly. Currently, signage indicating school zones can vary throughout districts. For example, a sign may indicate that an area is a school zone during restricted hours, but fail to list the hours of restriction. Others signs may state that a school zone is in effect only when students are present, while another sign may have flashing lights which indicate that a school zone is in effect. This lack of uniformity is confusing for both students and drivers and places the safety of our children at risk. Senate Bill 154 will help to solve this confusion by creating a more uniformed standard for school zone signs in Ohio.

According to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study, there are 5 teen pedestrian deaths in the US each week; in addition, there has been a 13 percent increase in the pedestrian death rate for 12-19 year olds since 2013. Only about 4 out of 10 school zones had speed limits of 20 miles per hour posted and marked crosswalks are missing in approximately 3 out of 10 school zones.

In detail, SB 154 will require the beginning of a school zone to be marked with either a sign that gives notice of the hours of when the school zone speed limit will be in effect, or a sign with flashing lights to indicate that the school zone speed limit is in effect. The Department of Transportation (ODOT) will establish the standards for these signs. Under the provisions of the bill, ODOT must also provide funding for all equipment necessary for the change of signage.

Senate Bill 154 is a common sense bill that puts the safety of Ohio's children first and makes our school zones safer for Ohio drivers as well.

Chairwoman Kunze and members of the Committee, I appreciate your attention to this important issue and I respectfully request your favorable consideration and passage of Senate Bill 154. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.