

To: Senate Transportation Committee
From: Ohio Conference of AAA Clubs
Date: March 21, 2023
Re: HB 23 Testimony

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Am. Sub. HB 23.

We are writing to express our concern regarding the proposed increase in speed limits. As the Ohio Conference of AAA Clubs, we believe that this decision could have severe consequences on the safety of drivers, passengers, and pedestrians alike.

Research conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) has shown that increasing speed limits can lead to an increase in fatal crashes. The research found that for every 5 mph increase in speed, the risk of a fatal crash increases by 8.5%. Additionally, 2020 IIHS data shows that 70% of fatal crashes in rural areas occurs on roads with speed limits of 55 mph or higher.

While we understand that some drivers may believe that driving faster on these roads will save them time, the reality is that the risks associated with higher speeds outweigh any perceived benefits. When vehicles are traveling at higher speeds, the margin for error is greatly reduced, making it more difficult for drivers to react to unexpected situations such as sudden stops, animals in the road, or other hazards.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has conducted numerous studies on the impact of speed on road safety, and their findings are clear: higher speed limits result in more accidents, more severe injuries, and more fatalities. Specific to two-lane roads, they often have narrow lanes, sharp curves, and limited visibility, making them particularly dangerous at higher speeds.

Additionally, raising the speed limit would increase the risk of accidents involving pedestrians, cyclists, and wildlife. Two-lane roads often pass through rural areas and wildlife habitats, where animals and other vulnerable road users are more likely to be present. At higher speeds, drivers have less time to react to unexpected obstacles, increasing the likelihood of a collision.

For these reasons, we urge you to reconsider raising speed limits on any roads at this time. Instead, we should focus on improving road safety by investing in infrastructure improvements, increasing enforcement of existing traffic laws, and promoting safer driving practices.

Thank you for considering these concerns.

Sincerely,

Stephen Nielson
Representative of the Ohio Conference of AAA Clubs