

SUPPORT HB 1903

Authority to reduce speed limit
Patrons: Carr, Graves, Hope, Tyler

Reasons to support HB 1903

- **All traffic fatalities are a function of speed**, and speeding related fatalities have been shown by Governor's Highway Safety Administration, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Federal Highway Administration, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to be increasing across the country.
- According to Virginia DMV TREDs data, **speeding-related fatalities are up 25% across the Commonwealth over the past three years** in a consistent upward trend. This coincides with a 15% reduction of speeding-related crashes and injuries last year, indicating crashes are becoming deadlier.
- **Speeding related fatalities are more numerous than alcohol-related crashes, killing 400 in 2020.** Up from 318 in 2017.
- **Pedestrian fatalities hit an all time high in 2019** in Virginia according to DMV data, mirroring the trend across the nation and in the Richmond region. 126 pedestrians lost their lives to crashes with cars in 2019 after trending up for several years, and 123 have been reported so far for 2020. Several localities across the state are reporting record high numbers of pedestrian fatalities, including Henrico, Chesterfield, and Petersburg in the Richmond region.
- Most DPWs and DOTs interpret our code such that 25 is the minimum speed limit, and **to change it requires a costly speed study and perhaps a local political vote.** These are significant barriers to lowering speeds in places where people are most vulnerable to pedestrian crashes and to speeding drivers – residential and business districts.

Overview

The 25mph speed limit sets a minimum threshold for design speeds, **preventing localities from designing a street for slower car traffic** (ie. using more intense traffic calming), perpetuating the problem. A lower speed limit allows for future improvements to slow the street physically.

Numerous studies and statistics demonstrate the relationship of the speed of an impact with a car and a pedestrian's rate of survival.

- At 20mph, an average pedestrian has a 10% chance of dying.
- At 30mph, that person has a 50% chance of dying.
- At 40mph, a common speed driven on 25mph streets, that person has a 10% chance of living.

This bill is enabling legislation only, with no mandate and no fiscal impact. This bill was a supported element of the last year's Transportation Safety Omnibus bills (Del Jay Jones / Senator Lucas).

Supported by:

- City of Alexandria
- Sports Backers
- Four Chapters of Families for Safe Streets: Richmond, Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax
- Virginia Municipal League
- Virginia Association of Counties
- Virginia Bicycling Federation