



Senate Bill 11

Motor Vehicles – Speed Limits – School Zones

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: January 25, 2023

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 11. This bill would shrink the current allowable and enforceable size of a school zone in all counties, undermining public safety programs in those targeted areas.

There are three major concerns this bill represents for counties: high cost to adjust existing infrastructure for school zone boundaries, the severe safety implications that come with a mandated loss of protected radius around a school, and the overlay of these factors onto an already challenging labor market for providing bus service.

This bill would effectively require the adjustment of speed cameras, traffic easing mechanisms, signage, and other enforcement tools around all existing school zones, which represents a significant cost to county governments. Specifically, reducing the use of speed cameras in neighborhood streets, a proven tool to combat unsafe driving patterns, is unwise public policy.

Currently, school bus services do not typically operate within the neighborhoods immediately surrounding a school and those students generally use these roadways on foot, by bike, scooter, skateboard, etc. The acute labor-driven bus service shortage has limited the availability of buses in neighborhoods directly adjacent to school zones and, therefore, the number of students on the streets around schools has significantly increased. *Realistically, this bill attempts to shrink the area protected as a school zone at a time when the safety demands in this area are increasing significantly.*

Counties appreciate that speed camera enforcement and penalties should be focused on the areas that matter most for pedestrian safety. Unfortunately, this bill would limit that ability at a time when these areas need an even greater level of protection. Accordingly, MACo urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report for SB 11.