

Definitions

Vehicular Access Points: The number of entrances on the road. This determines likelihood of congestion and road users.

Highway Segment: A particular stretch of highway where the speed limit is being adjusted.

Limited Access Highways: The stretch of highway or road that has a low number of access points, which allows large and commercial vehicles to drive at 70 mph.

History

Unless otherwise posted, the current speed limits for specific kinds of roads or environments are:

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| -County highways: 55 mph | -Parks: 25 mph. | -Most highways: 70 mph |
| -Residential areas: 25 mph | -Work zones: 45 mph | -Commercial vehicles on |
| -In the vicinity of a mobile home: 15mph | -School zones: 25 mph | most highways: 65 mph |
| -Business districts: 25 mph | -Gravel or unimproved surface: 55 mph | |

Section 627 of the Michigan Vehicle Code (MCL 257.627) states that a driver must observe the conditions of the road, weather, sight distance, and posted speed. The restrictions change depending on the type of vehicle that is traveling on the road. A large commercial vehicle, semi-truck, or truck carrying over 10,000 pounds may be required to travel at a lower speed limit than what is posted.

Summary

HB 4423 would change several of the posted speed limits in accordance to how many access points there are on that given segment of the road. For example, on a highway that has limited access and has been deemed “rural” in nature, the speed would be 80 mph if not posted otherwise. This act would also deem that on all urban limited access highways, the general speed limit for all vehicles would be 70 mph if not otherwise posted.

Arguments - Key debate of safety vs. efficiency

Supporting Arguments

- Semi-trucks/commercial vehicles will travel the same speeds as other smaller vehicles on most highways (70 mph). This will help with congestion in traffic and keep drivers from getting frustrated and driving dangerously.
- The bill would allow drivers to exercise more freedom and would place more concern on the operator’s needs. This bill recognizes areas where traffic would be heavier or lighter to determine the speed limit. This allows police time (and thus taxpayer dollars) to be focused on more pressing concerns.

Opposing Arguments

- Even though this bill addresses the speed difference on regular highways, it raises the speed limit of the regular car on rural highways to 80 mph while commercial vehicles would be raised to 70 mph. This would lead to a 10mph rather than our current 5 mph speed difference. Large vehicles moving much more slowly than the other vehicles on the road raises the likelihood of an accident.
- Higher speeds reduces the reaction time a driver has and would lead to more severe accidents.
- The idea that raising the speed limit will fix the issue of speeding is fallacious and irresponsible. Drivers will simply continue to drive 5-10 mph above the posted speed limit. Cars are one of the leading causes of death and we should recognize the dangers of raising the speed limit.