



ADVOCATES  
FOR HIGHWAY  
& AUTO SAFETY

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Chuck Younger, Chairman  
The Honorable Rita Potts Parks, Vice-Chairwoman  
Senate Highways and Transportation Committee  
Mississippi Legislature  
400 High Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

Dear Chairman Younger and Vice Chairwoman Parks:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, urges you to oppose House Bill (HB) 74. This legislation will increase the speed limit to 70 miles per hour (mph) on highways and 75 mph on interstate highways and access-controlled highways with four or more lanes, endangering state residents and visitors.

In 2023 an estimated 715<sup>i</sup> people were killed in traffic crashes in Mississippi, an 18 percent increase over the ten year period since 2014.<sup>ii</sup> Speeding is a major factor leading to traffic fatalities, contributing to 20 percent (139) of traffic fatalities in the state in 2022, the most recent year for which this data is available.<sup>iii</sup> Excess speed contributes to both the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes and proves especially dangerous for vulnerable road users such as motorcycle riders, work zone workers and roadside first responders who lack the protective structure of a vehicle.

Speeding reduces a driver's ability to react to emergencies created by driver inattention, unsafe maneuvers of other vehicles, roadway hazards, vehicle issues (such as tire blowouts) or hazardous weather conditions. Higher speeds will result in more preventable fatalities as well as serious and expensive injuries. Traffic crashes are not only devastating to individuals and families, but they are also costly. In 2019, the economic cost of motor vehicle crashes in the Magnolia state exceeded \$2.5 billion, which is equivalent to \$851 per resident.<sup>iv</sup> If these costs were updated for inflation alone, in 2025 they would equate to \$3.2 billion and \$1,074 respectively.<sup>v</sup> During the same year, crashes in which at least one driver was speeding cost our nation more than \$46 billion.<sup>vi</sup> In 2025 dollars that would be \$58 billion.<sup>vii</sup>

Research and statistics consistently and convincingly show speeding is a major safety problem and raising speed limits increases traffic fatalities. Even seemingly modest speed limit changes can have huge impacts on overall traffic safety. Crash tests conducted in 2019 showed that five to 10 mph increases in speed can have a severe impact on a driver's risk of injury or even death.<sup>viii</sup> According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), "Raising speed limits leads to more deaths. People often drive faster than the speed limit, and if the limit is raised, they will go faster still. Research shows that when speed limits are raised, speeds go up, as do fatal crashes."<sup>ix</sup> A study found that from 1993-2017, a five mph increase in state speed limits led to 37,000 more traffic deaths.<sup>x</sup>

Advancing HB 74 will cause more death and destruction on Mississippi roads. We urge you to reject this legislation and prioritize the safety of Mississippi families.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: Senate Highways and Transportation Committee members

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- i Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2023, NHTSA, April 2024, DOT HS 813 561, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813561>.
- ii State Traffic Safety Information for Mississippi (2022), NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.
- iii Ibid.
- iv The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, December 2022, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- v CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2025, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- vi The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, December 2022, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- vii CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2025, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- viii Impact of Speeds on Drivers and Vehicles – Results from Crash Tests, AAA Foundation for Safety, Humanetics, and IIHS, Jan. 2021, available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastore/document/bibliography/2218>.
- ix “Speed.” Topic Overview. IIHS, available [here](#).
- x Farmer, Charles M., The effects of higher speed limits on traffic fatalities in the United States, 1993–2017, IIHS, April 2019; available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastore/document/bibliography/2188>.