ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

February 20, 2026

The Honorable Cindy O'Laughlin, President Pro Tem
The Honorable Tony Luetkemeyer, Majority Floor Leader
The Honorable Doug Beck, Minority Floor Leader
Missouri State Senate
Missouri General Assembly
201 W. Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear President Pro Tem O'Laughlin, Majority Floor Leader Luetkemeyer and Minority Floor Leader Beck:

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 Senate Bill (SB) 1408. This legislation would increase the speed limit to 75 miles per hour (mph) on rural interstates and freeways, up from 70 mph, endangering state residents and visitors.

In 2024, there were an overall estimated 965[1] traffic fatalities in Missouri according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), which is a 11 percent increase since 2015.[2] Speeding is a major factor leading to traffic fatalities, contributing to 37 percent of traffic fatalities in the state in 2023 which ranks among the 10 highest states and is a higher proportion than all neighboring states.[3] Moreover, speeding related fatalities in Missouri increased 39 percent from 2014 to 2023.[4] 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. The data shows Missouri needs less speeding, not more people traveling at high speeds.

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 estimated cost of traffic crashes in Missouri was approximately $6.8 billion, effectively imposing a $1,104 "crash tax" on all Missouri residents.[5] When updated for inflation alone, in 2026, costs would equate to nearly $8.8 billion.[6]

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.[7] 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."[8] A study found that from 1993-2017, a five mph increase in state speed limits led to 37,000 more traffic deaths.[9] Moreover, speed limit increases do not reduce travel times as an analysis by the American Automobile Association (AAA) found.[10]

We urge you to reject SB 1408 and keep Missouri families and visitors safe. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: Assistant Majority Floor Leader Trent, Majority Caucus Chair Brown, Majority Caucus Secretary Crawford, Majority Caucus Whip Carter, Assistant Minority Floor Leader Roberts, Minority Caucus Chair Mosley, Minority Caucus Whip Williams

[1] Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2024, NHTSA, April 2025, DOT HS 813 710, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813710.

[2] State Traffic Safety Information for Missouri, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm.

[3] Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Speeding, NHTSA, Jun. 2025, DOT HS 813 721, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813721.

[4] State Traffic Safety Information for Missouri, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm.

[5] The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (Revised), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT HS 813 403, February 2023, available at: https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403.

[6] CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2026, available at https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl.

[7] 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/datastoredocument/bibliography/2218.

[8] "Speed." Topic Overview. IIHS, available here.

[9] 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/datastoredocument/bibliography/2188.

[10] A Multi-site Examination for the Impact of Changes in Posted Speed Limit on Traffic Safety, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, July 2023, available at https://info.oregon.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023_Speed-Limit-Impact_Brief.pdf.