



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Megan Jones, Chair
House Transportation Subcommittee
Iowa Legislature
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Chair Jones:

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 File (SF) 378. This legislation would increase the default speed limit five miles per hour (mph) to 60 mph, unless otherwise provided for, endangering state residents and visitors.

In 2024, an estimated 358 people were killed in traffic crashes in Iowa,¹ a 12 percent increase since 2015.² Speeding is a major factor leading to traffic fatalities, contributing to 23 percent of traffic fatalities in the state in 2023.³ Moreover, speeding related fatalities in Iowa increased 93 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 Iowa 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 Iowa was approximately \$2.8 billion, which is equivalent to a "crash tax" of \$885 per resident each year according to a 2019 analysis.⁵ When updated for inflation alone, in 2026, costs would equate to approximately \$3.6 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 SF 378 and keep Iowa families and visitors safe. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: House Transportation Subcommittee members

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- 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 Iowa, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/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 Iowa, 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/datastore/document/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/datastore/document/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.