



**House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section**

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**SPEED LIMIT NEAR SCHOOLS**

**House Bill 5847 (Substitute H-3)  
First Analysis (11-19-96)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Deborah Whyman  
Committee: Transportation**

***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

The Michigan Vehicle Code generally provides for a prima facie speed limit of 25 miles per hour in school zones while school is in session, and allows local governments to set lower speed limits on roads under their jurisdiction which may be posted at higher speeds than this. Also, school superintendents may, under certain circumstances, set speed limits in school zones that are lower than the established limit. However, the act currently provides that a "school zone" is limited to the area 1,000 feet from a school's property line in either direction. This provision has prevented officials in one southeast Michigan community from taking corrective action to have the speed limit along a county highway lowered in order to reduce what many feel is an unsafe situation for children who cross this busy road in order to attend a local elementary school. To alleviate the problem, legislation has been proposed that would provide an exception to the 1,000-foot rule in the act so that a school superintendent could request a special school crossing designation for certain busy roadways located close to his or her school.

***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to provide an exception to current law governing the boundaries of a "school zone," which at present cannot extend more than 1,000 feet from the school property line in each direction. Under the bill, if a school was located in an area that required school children, in order to attend the school, to cross a state trunk line highway or county highway that had a speed limit of 35 miles per hour or more, the school superintendent could submit a request to the state transportation commission, county road commission or local authority with jurisdiction over the roadway to have it designated as a school crossing. If, based on traffic engineering studies, the road authority determined that a lower speed limit was necessary, it could designate the crossing as a school zone. However, before submitting the request, the superintendent would have to have completed a school route plan as prescribed by the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

MCL 257.627a

***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

The Department of State Police says the bill would not affect state or local budget expenditures. (11-18-96)

***ARGUMENTS:***

***For:***

The bill would provide an exception under the vehicle code to the definition for a "school zone," which under the law constitutes the area 1,000 feet in either direction from school property lines. Apparently, this provision has hindered school officials at, and parents of school children who attend, Hulsing Elementary School in the Plymouth-Canton area in southeast Michigan from having the speed limit along a busy county highway near the school, but more than 1,000 feet away from school property, lowered to a safe speed while school is in session. Under the bill, the superintendent of a school located near such a busy roadway could submit a request to the authority having jurisdiction over the road in question to have a school crossing designated for that section of the road near the school, and before doing so would have to complete a school route plan as prescribed by the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Based on this plan and traffic engineering studies, a road authority could designate the area a school zone. While the bill is intended to correct a problem for a specific school, no doubt there are other schools in the state located close to busy state trunk line highways or county highways that cannot take similar action due to the 1,000-foot provision in the act.

***POSITIONS:***

The Department of State Police supports the bill. (11-18-96)

The Michigan Association of School Administrators supports the concept of the bill. (11-18-96)

Analyst: T. Iversen

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

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