



Written Testimony on House Bill 2643
House Committee on Transportation

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The Kansas Highway Patrol appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding House Bill 2643. This bill will give the Secretary of Transportation the authority to increase speed limits on any highway located outside of an urban district.

The Kansas Department of Transportation establishes regulatory speed limits on state and federal highways after completing a thorough engineering and traffic investigation, as mandated in K.S.A. 8-1559. Some factors included in these investigations include but are not limited to:

- Road type and surface (curve, hill, etc.)
- Location and type of access points (intersections, entrances, etc.)
- Existing traffic control devices (signs, signals, etc.)
- Crash history
- Traffic volume
- Sight distances
- Pedestrian activity

Once the engineering study is complete, a subsequent speed study is conducted. Speed zones in Kansas are based on the widely accepted principle known as the 85 percent rule. The 85 percent rule establishes speed limits at or below the speed in which 85 percent of the motorists are traveling in the area. According to the Federal Highway Administration, most states establish speed zones using this framework. Upon completion of the two studies, the Kansas Department of Transportation establishes the fastest speed a motorist can travel in optimum conditions.

Determining the safest/fastest speed allowed on a roadway is a lengthy process. Motorists in Kansas already benefit from this process by traveling as fast as possible before the risk outweighs the benefit. We believe what little benefit resulting from the deviation of this well established process is offset by the increased risk of serious injury or fatality crashes. K.S.A. 8-1599 already has the motorist's ease of transportation and general safety in mind in its current form. Consequently, the Kansas Highway Patrol stands in opposition to House Bill 2643.

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