

Legislative Analysis



ALLOW SPEED LIMIT SIGN TO INDICATE A SCHOOL MEETS YEAR-ROUND

Mitchell Bean, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4607 as enrolled
Public Act 88 of 2005
Sponsor: Rep. John Stakoe
House Committee: Local Government and Urban Policy
Senate Committee: Transportation

Second Analysis (8-23-06)

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill would allow a school to post a sign indicating that it is in session year round.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bill does not appear to have a material fiscal impact on state or local government.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The Michigan Vehicle Code requires, in general, that permanent signs designating a school zone and the speed limit in the school zone be posted at the request of the local school superintendent. Drivers must adhere to posted speed limits during the time the school is in session. For schools that are in session year round, however, there is no provision in law authorizing them to post a sign alerting drivers to their year-round status.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4607 would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to allow a school superintendent to request that a sign be erected in a school zone indicating that the school was in session year-round. The sign would have to be posted on the same signpost as the school zone sign and immediately below the school zone sign. In addition, the sign would have to read "Year-Round School" and would have to conform to the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

The code defines "regularly scheduled school session" to mean that part of a day of student instruction that is followed by a break for lunch or by a final dismissal of the student body for that day. "School zone" refers to school property on which the school building is located and the adjacent area that is designated by the required signs mentioned previously. In general, the school zone extends up to 1,000 feet from the school's property line in each direction.

MCL 257.627a

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Currently, a school superintendent must request that signs be erected indicating that a driver is in a school zone and indicating the speed limit that applies the school zone when school is in session. However, there is no mechanism in place to request a sign indicating that the school is in session year round. Year-round schools are growing in popularity with parents, students, and school districts, but are still in the minority. Therefore, drivers may not realize that the posted school speed limit is still in force near some schools during the summer. The bill would correct this oversight and allow a school superintendent to request the needed signage. To ensure uniformity, which reduces confusion to drivers, the bill would specify the wording to be used on the signs and requires that size and placement would have to conform to the same specifications as all traffic control signs.

Legislative Analyst: Susan Stutzky
Fiscal Analyst: William Hamilton

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