

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5687

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As Passed Senate, February 9, 2022

**Title:** An act relating to certain traffic safety improvements.

**Brief Description:** Addressing certain traffic safety improvements.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wilson, C., Lias, Billig, Das, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña and Stanford.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 1/18/22, 2/03/22 [DP, DNP].

**Floor Activity:** Passed Senate: 2/9/22, 25-24.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows jurisdictions to establish a 20-mph speed limit on nonarterial highways without first conducting an engineering and traffic investigation.
- Requires pedestrians, when walking upon a roadway, to exercise due care to avoid colliding with any vehicle upon the roadway.
- Expands the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations on any roadway identified in a school walk area.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Chair; Saldaña, Vice Chair; Cleveland, Das, Lovelett, Lovick, Nguyen, Nobles, Randall and Wilson, C.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Member; Fortunato, Hawkins, Holy, Padden, Sheldon and Wilson, J.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

**Background:** For a local authority to adjust a maximum speed limit, the local authority must determine on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation that the maximum speed permitted under existing law is greater or less than is reasonable and safe under the conditions found to exist upon a highway. Cities and towns may establish a 20-mph speed limit, without first conducting an engineering and traffic investigation, on a nonarterial highway that is within a residence district or business district.

Every driver of a vehicle must exercise due care to avoid colliding with any pedestrian upon any roadway. A similar duty of care to avoid colliding with vehicular traffic does not exist for pedestrians walking or otherwise moving on a roadway.

Automated traffic safety cameras may be used to detect various traffic violations, including school speed zone violations. School speed zones may extend three hundred feet in either direction from a marked school crosswalk or three hundred feet from the border of school property. The cameras may not be used to detect speed violations within a school walk area, which is an area around a school with an adequate roadway configuration to provide students non-hazardous access to school within a walking distance of less than one mile.

**Summary of Bill:** The Secretary of Transportation and local authorities, in their respective jurisdictions, may establish a 20-mph speed limit on nonarterial highways without first conducting an engineering and traffic investigation, regardless of whether the highway is in a residence district or business district.

Pedestrians, when walking on a roadway, are required to exercise due care to avoid colliding with any vehicle on the roadway.

Expands the use of automated traffic safety cameras to detect speed violations on any roadway identified in a school walk area.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill helps improve traffic safety for drivers and pedestrians around schools in particular. The bill provides more discretion, and tools, for adopting local traffic safety measures. The bill should be expanded to include lowering speeds without a traffic study on arterials and highways within 300 feet around parks and hospitals. Speed is a huge factor in traffic safety accidents and this bill would

help reduce speeds and enforce speed violations. Slowing speeds helps to reduce collisions. Automated traffic safety cameras provide for more equitable law enforcement by removing officer discretion. The bill provides a multifaceted approach to traffic safety. Lowering speeds makes transportation accessible for nondrivers. Our state needs walkable communities. Lower speeds make vulnerable users of the highway more comfortable.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Briahna Murray, City of Tacoma, contract lobbyist; Josh Diekmann, City of Tacoma Traffic Engineer; Chris Covert-Bowlds, MD, WA Physicians for Social Responsibility; Brandy DeLange, Association of Washington Cities; ANNA ZIVARTS, Disability Mobility Project, Disability Rights WA; Lee Lambert, Washington Bikes; Lori Kinnear, Councilmember, City of Spokane; Luke Esser, City of Spokane.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.