



## NORTON SHORES POLICE DEPARTMENT

4814 Henry Street, Norton Shores, MI 49441

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Emergency 911 • Telephone • Administrative (231) 733-2691

Support for HB4014

As the Chief of Police of the City of Norton Shores and a life long traffic investigator who has studied traffic crashes as an accident reconstructionist and a speed measurement instructor, I endorse HB4014. The Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police in which I am a member also endorse this Bill.

I have spoken with Chief's across the state and many have not followed the current law on establishing speed limits in our jurisdictions in Michigan for many reasons;

1. Costs associated with expensive traffic studies, new signs and roadway markings.
2. Most municipalities and townships do not have traffic engineers on staff to perform these studies. The costs associated with hiring an engineer for each roadway is an unaffordable cost.
3. Difficulty in applying the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile mandate when establishing a speed limit and rounding that number up to the nearest multiple of five.
4. Mathematical equations do not always establish a correct speed limit for a given area.

The new language in HB4014 is supported because it gives municipalities the ability to round down to the nearest multiple of five if the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is closer to the lower number. Rounding up does not always make sense when safety is the most important factor in determining the speed limit.

Most importantly is the ability to use a traffic engineer if a certain section of roadway (rare circumstance) has issues that a mathematical equation does not solve. This rare stretch of roadway may have high pedestrian counts, camping areas, schools, busy churches and blind corners and curves.

In the city of Norton Shores, we recently experienced another fatal pedestrian crash involving a driver that was traveling the speed limit but did not see a pedestrian crossing because of the high speeds set by the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. This stretch of roadway is curved and near a busy retail area. The intersection has continued to produce fatal and near fatal pedestrian crashes because of the complexity of the roadway and the speeds. We are unable to perform an objective analysis of the characteristics of the roadway using a traffic engineer to determine the proper speed limit for this area due to the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile mandate.

In summary we all understand and agree that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile traffic mandate is an important starting point for a speed limit and in most circumstances is the correct method but we cannot legislate every roadway using a mathematical number to determine the safety of our streets throughout the State. In most municipalities and townships there is a growing effort to transform cities and suburbs into places that are environmentally sustainable and safer for bicyclists and pedestrians and this has created a new push for reducing traffic speeds.

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Please vote to make our streets safer in the municipalities and townships we serve.



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