

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 112

BY REPRESENTATIVE STEVE CARTER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to study the safety and operational impacts of differential speed limits on interstate highways and to report the findings to the Senate and House committees on transportation, highways and public works and to the member of the House of Representatives representing House District Number 68 on or before January 1, 2018.

WHEREAS, school buses, truck-tractor, semi-trailers or any combination of these vehicles are the largest vehicles on the roadway and when these vehicles travel at increased speeds they can negatively impact driver behavior and increase traffic and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, large vehicles traveling at increased speeds in wet conditions can splash or spray significant amounts of water or mud thus impacting a driver's ability to operate a vehicle safely; and

WHEREAS, many truck drivers do not adjust to prevailing road conditions which can lead to more severe motor vehicle accidents, even if the frequency of crashes is unchanged or decreased; and

WHEREAS, reduced speed limits for large vehicles may afford drivers of those vehicles sufficient time to react when an emergency occurs on the road, which can result in a reduction in the frequency and severity of motor vehicle accidents; and

WHEREAS, a reduction in speed limits for large vehicles will positively impact fuel economy, and contribute to a decrease in fuel consumption and associated costs; and

WHEREAS, passing a large vehicle on the interstate requires other drivers to maintain a safe and steady speed and ensure there is adequate space between the two vehicles to safely pass; and

WHEREAS, reduced speed limits for larger vehicles will assist in vehicles passing efficiently and safely; and

WHEREAS, trucks and buses traveling at increased speeds have been a long standing safety concern given their larger blind spots and increased size which results in restricted maneuverability, longer stopping distances, and higher impact forces in a collision; and

WHEREAS, given the safety concerns associated with large vehicles many states have implemented differential speed limits where larger vehicles have a posted speed limit lower than passenger cars in lieu of uniform speed limits where the speed limits are the same for both passenger cars and larger vehicles; and

WHEREAS, at least seven states have implemented differential speed limits to enhance safety, including California, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, Virginia, and Washington.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development to study the safety and operational impacts of differential speed limits on interstate highways.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study conducted by the Department of Transportation and Development shall include consideration and determination of the following:

(1) What impact and to what extent do uniform speed limits and differential speed limits have on traffic safety, specifically, the type and number of accidents, the type of vehicles involved in these accidents, the severity of the accidents, and driver behavior in the state of Louisiana?

(2) Whether safety and mobility will improve as a result of adopting differential speed limits on interstate highways across the state, considering traffic volume, variability in traffic speeds, crash history, and roadway geometry?

(3) Whether requiring school buses, truck-tractor, semi-trailers or any combination of these vehicles to travel at a speed not to exceed ten miles per hour below the posted speed limit will improve traffic conditions and safety on interstate highways of the state?

(4) Whether the gross weight of the motor vehicle should determine whether differential speed limits should apply?

(5) Whether differential speed limits will yield fuel and emissions savings resulting in energy conservation and environmental improvements in the state?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation and Development shall submit a written report to the Senate and House committees on transportation, highways and public works and the member of the House of Representatives representing House District Number 68 detailing its findings regarding the safety and operational impacts of differential speed limits on or before January 1, 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE