

Testimony

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members, thank you for your time today. My name is Jeff Rogers, I live in Manchester.

I almost died in a bicycle crash in 2015.

Though I wore a helmet, I received a traumatic brain injury that prevents me from recalling the crash. Medical records tell me I received fractures to my skull, ribs, and pelvis, suggesting a high-speed impact, but no vehicle remained on the scene. I spent 10 days in a medically induced coma; I was hospitalized for six weeks; I was out of work for six months.

Doctors initially told my wife I would not live through the weekend. Imagine being told that about your spouse. During my recovery I had to learn how to walk again and how to feed myself again.

My firsthand experience tells me that higher speeds increase the severity of crashes on our roads.

Let me be blunt. No one's need to shorten their trip justifies increasing the risk to my life, nor yours, nor anyone's.

Furthermore, the biggest driver of longer trip duration is not the speed limit in neighborhoods, but the presence of stop lights, stop signs, yield signs, plus entering and turning vehicles. Those factors are present today and will not be altered by speed limit changes.

This bill changes NO speed limits anywhere in the state. It merely allows towns, where they judge it safe, to lower neighborhood speed limits to 20 mph, just as they can already do today to accommodate seasonal traffic changes. (RSA 265:63)

Employers in Manchester such as ARMI, which has received over 1/4 billion federal dollars in funding since it began, know the employees they need to hire will want to live in neighborhoods with good schools and safe streets. Safe streets means calm speeds.

NH communities are already embracing slower speed limits.

In Portsmouth, a 2023 report from their Parking and Traffic Safety Committee cites several streets as having posted limits of 20 mph today.

- Cottage Street
- Farm Lane
- Greenleaf Avenue
- Kearsarge Way
- Marcy Street

The same report cites the city's Complete Streets Policy, adopted by their City Council in 2013, as including two classes of street with a speed limit of 20 mph: Neighborhood Slow Street, and City Core Slow Street. They explicitly recommend changing several streets to the class of Neighborhood Slow Street.

- Farm Lane
- Ranger Way
- McKinley Road
- Hoover Drive
- FW Hartford Drive

They clearly foresee a future including 20 mph speed limits.

In closing, I implore you to give higher priority to the safety of citizens and grant towns the freedom to choose their neighborhood speed limits.

Thank you.