

Testimony
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Michigan Legislature
October 6, 2015

HB 4423

Dear Chairman Pettalia and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bob Esler and I am a resident of Taylor, Michigan. I am a lifelong truck driver and I am on the Board of Directors for the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA). OOIDA is the largest trade association representing the views of more than 155,000 small-business trucking professionals and professional truck drivers, including roughly 5,200 who reside in Michigan. OOIDA's twenty-two member Board of Directors collectively has more than eight-hundred years of combined experience as professional truck drivers. My experience behind the wheel of a truck accounts for forty-seven of those years.

It is my understanding that HB 4423, in part, would increase the speed limit to 80 mph for automobiles on certain interstates, which is an increase from 70 mph. Further, it is also my understanding that HB 4423 would increase the speed limit to 70 mph for heavy trucks and other vehicles on certain interstates, which is an increase from 60 mph. In short, it appears to increase interstate speed limits for most vehicles while maintaining the existing 10 mph differential speed limit for cars and heavy trucks.

On behalf of OOIDA, I believe that our roadways are safer when all vehicles are permitted to travel at the same rate of speed. Differential speed limits create more interactions between cars and trucks, which can lead to unlawful or dangerous passing, aggressive driving, and ultimately an increase in the number and severity of accidents. They are also a contributing factor to increased congestion and inefficiencies with local, regional, and national goods movement. These are all things I have witnessed firsthand during my time on the road.

It should also be noted that some motor carriers continue to install speed limiters on their trucks that generally limit top speeds to 65 mph. In effect, if Michigan increases the speed limit to 80 mph for cars and 70 mph for trucks, the state would create a 15 mph speed differential for heavy trucks that have a speed limiting device. In my opinion, this would be a significant step backward for the safety of the traveling public.

OOIDA has long been an advocate for improving motor vehicle safety, which includes pursuing uniform speed limits. While state lawmakers and transportation officials are probably in the best position to determine the maximum speed at which cars and trucks can operate safely, speed limits should generally be the same for all motorists. I think enacting uniform speed limits must be part of any serious conversation or strategy to improve highway safety and I think that most people who have spent time in the cab of a truck would agree.

Thank you for your consideration of my views. Please contact Mike Matousek, Director of State Legislative Affairs, OOIDA, at (816) 229-5791 ext. 1603 or mike_matousek@ooida.com if you have any questions for me or the Association.

Bob Esler
Resident of Taylor, MI
Secretary, OOIDA Board of Directors