

By: Raney

H.B. No. 509

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the process for establishing speed limits on roads near certain schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 545.355(b), Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The commissioners court of a county may declare a lower speed limit of not less than:

(1) 30 miles per hour on a county road or highway to which this section applies, if the commissioners court determines that the prima facie speed limit on the road or highway is unreasonable or unsafe; ~~or~~

(2) 20 miles per hour in a residence district, unless the roadway has been designated as a major thoroughfare by a city planning commission; or

(3) 15 miles per hour on a county road or highway located within 500 feet of an elementary, secondary, or open-enrollment charter school or an institution of higher education, if approved under Section 545.357.

SECTION 2. Section 545.357, Transportation Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 545.357. CONSIDERATION OF ~~[PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER]~~ SPEED LIMITS WHERE CERTAIN SCHOOLS ARE LOCATED. (a) The governing body of a municipality in which a public or private elementary or

1 secondary school, an open-enrollment charter school as defined by  
2 Section 5.001(6), Education Code, or an institution of higher  
3 education as defined by Section 61.003(8) or (15), Education Code,  
4 is located shall, on request of the governing body of a school or  
5 institution of higher education, hold a public hearing at least  
6 once each calendar year to consider prima facie speed limits on a  
7 highway in the municipality, including a highway of the state  
8 highway system, near the school or institution of higher education.

9 (b) If a county road outside the state highway system is  
10 located within 500 feet of a public or private elementary or  
11 secondary school, an open-enrollment charter school, or an  
12 institution of higher education that is not in a municipality, the  
13 commissioners court of the county, on request of the governing body  
14 of a school or institution of higher education, shall hold a public  
15 hearing at least once each calendar year to consider the prima facie  
16 speed limit on the road near the school or institution of higher  
17 education.

18 (c) A municipal governing body or commissioners court, on  
19 request of the governing body of a school or institution of higher  
20 education, may hold one public hearing for all public and private  
21 elementary and secondary schools, open-enrollment charter schools,  
22 and institutions of higher education in its jurisdiction.

23 (d) The Texas Transportation Commission, on request of the  
24 governing body of a school or institution of higher education,  
25 shall hold a public hearing at least once each calendar year to  
26 consider prima facie speed limits on highways in the state highway  
27 system that are near public or private elementary or secondary

1 schools, open-enrollment charter schools, or institutions of  
2 higher education.

3 (e) The municipal governing body, the commissioners court,  
4 or the Texas Transportation Commission, as applicable, may not  
5 reject a request for a prima facie speed limit by a public or  
6 private elementary or secondary school, an open-enrollment charter  
7 school, or an institution of higher education without first making  
8 a written finding stating a reasonable basis for the rejection.

9 (f) The governing body of a school or institution of higher  
10 education may appeal a rejection of a request for a prima facie  
11 speed limit under this section to the district court of the county  
12 in which the school or institution is located not later than the  
13 90th day after the date the written finding is made. If the  
14 governing body shows by clear and convincing evidence that the  
15 rejection of the request was not based on accepted traffic  
16 management principles, the district court may grant the requested  
17 prima facie speed limit.

18 (g) The governing body of a school or institution of higher  
19 education may consult with the Texas Department of Transportation,  
20 the Texas Transportation Commission, and local transportation  
21 authorities on the feasibility of a prima facie speed limit during  
22 the acquisition and design of property for a public or private  
23 elementary or secondary school, an open-enrollment charter school,  
24 or an institution of higher education.

25 (h) In this section, "governing body of a school or  
26 institution of higher education" means:

27 (1) the board of trustees of the school district in

1 which a public elementary or secondary school is located;

2 (2) the governing body of a private elementary or  
3 secondary school;

4 (3) the governing body of an open-enrollment charter  
5 school; or

6 (4) the governing board of an institution of higher  
7 education.

8 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.