

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 676
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State Affairs
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Engrossed

DIGEST

Currently, Texas law sets different speed limits for trucks and automobiles. Automobiles could travel at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour (mph) during the day, and 65 mph at night, but trucks are limited to speeds of 60 mph during the day and 55 mph at night. Research shows this 10 mph variance to be hazardous to drivers on Texas highways. The U.S. Department of Transportation reported in 1994 that the crash involvement rate is almost six times greater for vehicles traveling 10 mph below or above the average speed limit. Additional studies show the increased probability of being involved in an accident as the deviation from the mean speed increases. H.B. 676 would remove differential speed limits on Texas highways, and provide safe, uniform speed limits for all vehicles, except school buses.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 676 removes differential speed limits for automobiles and trucks on Texas highways.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 545.352(b), Transportation Code, to provide that the following speeds are lawful: 70 miles per hour in daytime and 65 miles per hour in nighttime if the vehicle is on a highway numbered by this state or the United States outside an urban district, including a farm-to-market or ranch-to-market road, except as provided by Subdivision (5)(C); outside an urban district 60 miles per hour in daytime and 55 miles per hour in nighttime if the vehicle is on a farm-to-market or ranch-to-market road, unless a special hazard exists that requires a slower speed for compliance with Section 545.351(b). Deletes text regarding a passenger car, motorcycle, passenger car or light truck towing a trailer bearing a vessel, as defined by Section 31.003, Parks and Wildlife Code, that is less than 26 feet in length, or passenger car or light truck towing a trailer or semitrailer designed and used primarily to transport livestock.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 1999.

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.