



NYS Safe Streets Coalition

Pass Sammy's Law Now for Safe Speeds and Local Control

What is Sammy's Law?

Sammy's Law (S2422, Hoylman-Sigal/A7266, Rosenthal) is named for the son of Families for Safe Streets' co-founder Amy Cohen, and will give New York City the power to set speed limits in a way that is tailored to neighborhoods' actual safety needs. **The bill gives NYC the power** to lower speed limits below 25 mph where necessary and where it makes sense. Changes to a road's speed limit will go through normal City procedures. It also requires a robust public education campaign to inform residents of any speed limit changes before the bill goes into effect.

The Assembly bill has a majority of NYC Democratic co-sponsors, and 70 total sponsors.

Sammy's Law has been updated substantially for the 2024 legislative session (see below).

The Ask: Pass Sammy's Law in the Budget

Last year, Sammy's Law received a message of home rule from the NYC Council, passed in the Senate, and was supported by Governor Hochul, Mayor Adams, and numerous other New York City and State elected leaders. **Now, we need Sammy's Law to be included in the upcoming budget.** This bill includes a significant education campaign so local communities know of any proposed speed limit changes.

Traffic violence costs the New York State economy at least \$15 billion annually in combined costs from hospitalization, emergency response, legal expenses, lost wages, and lost economic activity and \$1.1 billion in hospitalization and emergency costs alone.

Local Control Saves Lives:

- Sammy's Law would give NYC local authority to save lives from traffic violence; **this is not a wholesale change of speed limits across the City.** New York City deserves the right to control its speed limits so that we can prevent dangerous behavior on neighborhood streets, particularly near schools, senior centers, and where other vulnerable communities are concentrated.

Slower speeds work:

- Researchers found that the crash rate decreases by four to six percent for every one mph reduction in speed, and the fatal crash rate decreases by 17%. 30% of pedestrians struck by vehicles at an impact speed of 25 MPH will sustain serious injury, and about 12% will die.

- In New York City's Neighborhood Slow Zones, which lowered the speed limit to 20 mph in concentrated areas, there was a 14% reduction in injurious crashes and a 31% reduction in injuries for both drivers and passengers.

New Yorkers agree:

- 72% of New York City residents believe the City should have the authority to set its own speed limits, and 68% of residents said they would support seeing the speed limit lowered from 25 to 20 miles per hour near their homes.
- A super majority of City Council members passed a home rule resolution in support of Sammy's Law.

New Bill Changes for 2024:

- **Major thoroughfares are exempt:** Language has been clarified to target *neighborhood* streets outside Manhattan. Roads with three lanes or more in either direction outside Manhattan will be exempt from speed limit changes under Sammy's Law.
- **A robust education and notification campaign is included:**
 - A public notification process will occur prior to changes being made, *including notification of local elected officials, community boards, and other institutions.*
 - A six month education period will be rolled out when speed limit changes are made. As part of this more robust education **notification will be given to local elected officials, community boards, and other institutions.**
- **The program will be phased in:** During the six-month education period, all violations issued by speed safety cameras for vehicles up to 15 mph over the changed speed limit will be given warnings rather than tickets. The usual process of 10 mph+ fines will go into effect after the six-month education period lapses.
- **Speed limit change would still require Council approval:** Upon passage in Albany, further responsibility for changing speed limits is sent to NYC Council.
- **Community boards will review and be given an opportunity to respond:** to proposed permanent speed limit changes prior to implementation
 - This does not apply to temporary speed limit changes due to construction.

CONTACT:

Thomas DeVito, Director, Families for Safe Streets, Tom@familiesforsafestreets.org,
(201) 835-6900

Additional information re]g'arding lowering speed limits in NYC:

- [Too Fast, Too Furiou??????s](#), a 2021 TA Report explains the epidemic of speeding in New York City.
- New York City has a citywide speed limit of 25 miles per hour, passed in 2014. Within a year of the change, traffic fatalities fell by more than 22% and pedestrian fatalities fell by over 25%.
- [Research shows that children cannot accurately judge the speed of vehicles](#) traveling faster than 20mph and fail to detect the speed of a fast approaching car with enough time to respond.
- Speeding kills more New Yorkers than drunk drivers and drivers on cell phones combined. [Pedestrians and cyclists](#), especially in [high-poverty neighborhoods](#), are especially vulnerable to traffic violence.
- Only 2.3% of New York City's total street length has a speed limit below 25 miles per hour, and just 35 of the city's more than 137,000 streets has a speed limit of 15 miles per hour or below.
- 30% of NYC voters have been injured in a traffic crash, and 70% know someone who has been injured or killed. [These percentages](#) are even higher for Black New Yorkers, households making under \$50,000, New Yorkers over 50, and Staten Island residents.
- A [survey](#) of speeds at five locations citywide by TA and FSS found that, of the 1,670 drivers observed, 70% exceeded the speed limit, and 14% exceeded the speed limit by 10 mph or more.
- Half of pedestrian fatalities occur at a speed of 30 mph or lower. The difference between 30 mph and 25 mph is enormous, because it takes far longer to slow down and stop. [A difference of five mph in initial traveling speed results in a difference of 25 mph in impact speed.](#)
- Control over the speed limit is especially important in residential areas, as [one in four children killed in a traffic crash](#) in New York City are killed within two blocks of their homes; for senior citizens, one and five are killed in the same perimeter.
- People are most likely to choose to ride a bike when car speeds along their route are [under 20 mph](#). More people walking and biking [improves everyone's safety](#).
- [Emissions correspond with car speeds](#): carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides emissions at a 30 mph max speed are 42 and 25% higher, respectively, than at 15mph, and 35 and 39% higher, respectively, than at 20mph.
- Slowing drivers also improves the pedestrian experience: while [drivers were found to yield only 17% of the time with 37mph speed limits, they yielded 75% of the time on 20 mph](#)

