

WHAT THIS BILL WOULD DO

This bill works toward Vision Zero by reducing dangerous high-speed driving in the District, using a restorative-justice-focused approach. The legislation targets the region's most reckless drivers, requiring them to take a restorative justice education program modeled on one in New York that has reduced dangerous driving incidents among participants by up to 40 percent. To encourage participation in the program, the bill authorizes the District to boot or impound any car that has five moving violation tickets, or three tickets for speeding by more than 25 miles per hour over the speeding limit or running a red light, even if the tickets are paid. Owners can avoid the impoundment or retrieve their car from the impound lot by taking the reckless driving class.

WHY THIS LEGISLATION IS IMPORTANT

The District has adopted a Vision Zero target of zero traffic fatalities by the year 2024, but the city is clearly not on track to meet that goal. The Council has taken many steps to try to make our streets safer, which are helpful, but they only go so far without drivers also changing their **behavior** to drive more safely.

The number of people seriously injured or killed in traffic accidents in the District is once again on the rise. In 2021, there were 40 traffic related fatalities – the most since 2007. So far in 2022, 24 people have been killed in traffic accidents in DC. There has also been a tragic increase in collisions involving our youngest DC residents. Four-year-old Zy'aire Joshua was struck and killed while crossing the street on Georgia Avenue in April of last year. Five-year-old Allison Hart was killed one year ago while riding her bicycle through a crosswalk in Brookland. Five others were injured walking or riding their bikes so far this year.

Some driver behaviors we know are exceptionally dangerous. Running red lights is one. Every year, about 30-40 people die in the DC area due to drivers running red lights.

Speeding is also one of the most dangerous behaviors, and the faster the car, the more deadly the crash. According to several studies, a pedestrian hit by a car going 50 miles per hour has just a 20 percent chance of surviving. Lowering the speed of the car by just 10 miles per hour, to 40 miles per hour, *doubles* the odds of the pedestrian surviving.

This bill aims to reduce reckless driving behavior by targeting the region's most dangerous drivers, some of whom rack up tens of thousands of dollars' worth of tickets every year. It creates a new reckless driving course, based on a restorative justice model from New York City. This class, featuring small group sessions, tries to reduce reckless driving behavior by helping drivers understand the impact of their actions. In an initial study, the New York program was found to reduce rearrests for dangerous driving by about 40 percent. New York City recently expanded its program city-wide.

The bill encourages participation in the program by requiring the District to boot or impound any car, even if registered outside the District, that has at least five speeding or red-light tickets in a year. The bill again acknowledges that excessive speeding is especially deadly for both drivers and pedestrians, by requiring booting or impounding cars with only three tickets for speeding over 25 miles per hour (i.e. driving 50 MPH in a 25 MPH zone), along with running a red light.