

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY, JUSTICE, AND  
PUBLIC SAFETY

11/12/2024 - AMENDED AND REPORTED OUT TO THE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JUDICIARY

**BILL NO. 35-0271**

**Thirty-Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands**

**May 31, 2024**

An Act amending title 20 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 43, subchapter I by adding a section 494b establishing school speed zones, signage, and enforcement measures to promote student and pedestrian safety near schools

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**PROPOSED BY:** Senators Angel L. Bolques, Jr., and Milton E. Potter

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1       **WHEREAS**, the safety of students and pedestrians is of the utmost concern in school  
2 zones where there is traffic from motorcars, trucks, motorcycles, and busses;

3       **WHEREAS**, the single primary cause of accidents is vehicles exceeding speed limits in  
4 the school zones;

5       **WHEREAS**, a collaboration between the Virgin Islands Department of Education and  
6 the Virgin Islands Police Department can establish speed limits for each school, to promote  
7 safety to be known as school speed zones;

8       **WHEREAS**, the proper signage in the school zones can alert drivers of the appropriate  
9 speed limits and establish a school speed zone;

10       **WHEREAS**, the Virgin Islands Police Department shall enforce the proper speed limits  
11 in the school speed zones;

1           **WHEREAS**, the Department of Education and the Virgin Islands Police Department  
2 shall initiate a public education campaign to promote school speed zone safety; Now,  
3 Therefore,

4 ***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

5           **SECTION 1.** Title 20 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 43 is amended by adding a  
6 subchapter III to read as follows:

7 **“Subchapter III. School Speed Zone and Enforcement Act**

8           **§ 531.** This subchapter may be cited as the “School Speed Zone and Enforcement Act.”

9           **§ 532. Definitions**

10           As used in this subchapter, unless the context requires otherwise:

11           (1) “School Speed Zone” means a designated area within a specified distance from a  
12 school property boundary where vehicular speed limits are reduced below the standard limits  
13 for the road to enhance safety. These zones are active during specified hours that correspond  
14 to school operations, including but not limited to student arrival and departure times, and any  
15 other times when children are likely to be present.

16           (2) “School Zone Signage” means official signs erected by the Virgin Islands  
17 Department of Public Works after consultation with the Virgin Islands Police Department.  
18 These signs indicate the beginning and end of a school speed zone, the applicable speed limit  
19 within the zone, and the hours of operation. The design, placement, and maintenance of these  
20 signs shall adhere to the standards established by the Virgin Islands Department of Public  
21 Works and any applicable federal guidelines.

22           (3) “Pedestrian” means any person traveling on foot, wheelchair, bicycle, riding on an  
23 electric personal assistive device or similar means of non-vehicular movement, who may be  
24 using the roadway, sidewalks, crosswalks, or any paths adjacent to a school property within a  
25 school speed zone.

1 **§ 533. Establishment of School Speed Zones**

2 The Department of Education in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Police Department  
3 shall establish the boundaries for each school to determine its school speed zones. School speed  
4 zones must:

5 (1) be established in proximity to schools to enhance the safety of students and  
6 pedestrians during school hours and other designated times; and

7 (2) be established based on assessment that considers the following criteria:

8 (i) The proximity of school buildings to adjacent roadways;

9 (ii) Pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns, including peak times coinciding  
10 with school hours;

11 (iii) Historical accident data and reported near-misses involving students and  
12 vehicles; and

13 (iv) Road geometry, visibility, and existing speed limits in the vicinity of schools.

14 **§ 534. Enforcement Measures**

15 The Virgin Islands Police Department, along with all P.O.S.T. certified peace officers,  
16 are responsible for enforcing the reduced speed limits within school speed zones. But law  
17 enforcement officers who are authorized to issue citations may issue a citation to a motorist  
18 who violates the school speed zone limit. The Virgin Islands Police Department shall provide  
19 adequate personnel for school speed zones as part of its traffic and monitoring duties.

20 **§ 535. Penalties**

21 (a) Any person found to be in violation of the provisions of this section is subject to a  
22 civil penalty of \$500 for each infraction.

23 **§ 536. Fines; collection**

24 Thirty-three and one-third percent of the fines collected from school zone speeding  
25 violations must be allocated to the Virgin Islands Police Department for traffic safety education

1 programs, and improvements in school zone safety infrastructure and the remaining 33.3  
2 percent of the fines shall to the Department of Education to be used exclusively for career  
3 technical education schools, programs, or courses and 33.4 percent must be deposited into the  
4 District Public Road Fund.

5 **§ 537. Department of Education and Virgin Islands Police continuing obligations**

6 The Virgin Islands Police Department shall use all available technology to enforce school  
7 zone speed limits. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Virgin Islands  
8 Police Department, shall conduct periodic reviews of school zone safety measures and propose  
9 adjustments as necessary and shall disseminate communication with the public about the  
10 penalties for speeding in school zones.

11 **SECTION 2.** Title 20 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 43, subchapter I, section 512 is  
12 amended by adding a new provision to the Schedule of Fees as follows:

13 (a) Schedule of Fees for Speeding Violations in School Zones:

VIC	Violation Description	1st Offense Fee	2nd Offense Fee	3rd Offense Fee
T.20, 535	Exceeding speed limit in school zones	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00

14  
15 **SECTION 3.** (a) The sum of \$500,000 is appropriated in the fiscal year ending  
16 September 30, 2025, from the Transportation Trust Fund to Virgin Islands Department of  
17 Public Works to implement and administer the provisions of this act, including signage  
18 installation and public education campaigns.

19 (b) The funds must be exclusively used for the purchase and installation of signage to  
20 designate school speed zones at all public, private and parochial schools and early learning  
21 centers within the Virgin Islands, to include speed limit signs, pedestrian crossing signs,  
22 flashing warning lights, and any other signage necessary to effectively implement the “School  
23 Speed Zone and Enforcement Act.”

1 (c) The Department of Public Works, in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Police  
2 Department are responsible for determining the specific signage needs for each school based  
3 on the criteria established.

4 (d) The Virgin Islands Police Department shall determine speed limits for school speed  
5 zones. Reduced speed limits must be established during designated hours, such as arrival and  
6 dismissal times. The timeframes during which the reduced speed limits are enforced must be  
7 clearly communicated through signage and other public outreach efforts.

8 (e) School speed zone signage must:

9 (1) be installed in a visible and conspicuous manner to indicate the presence of  
10 school speed zones;

11 (2) include the designated reduced speed limit and any additional information  
12 necessary to inform motorists of the school zone boundaries; and

13 (3) must comply with applicable traffic regulations and standards for size, color,  
14 and visibility.

15 (f) Not later than nine months after the Department of Public Works receives the  
16 appropriation, it shall submit a report to the Legislature of the Virgin Islands and the  
17 Department of Education outlining:

18 (1) The progress of the signage installation project, including the number of  
19 schools outfitted with new signs;

20 (2) A breakdown of expenditures to date; and

21 (3) Any challenges encountered during the implementation phase and the  
22 measures taken to address them.

23 (g) The Department of Education in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Police  
24 Department shall conduct public education and awareness campaigns to inform the community  
25 about school speed zones, reduced speed limits, and the importance of adhering to the

1 regulations. These campaigns may include distributing educational materials, holding  
2 community meetings, conducting school outreach programs, and utilizing other effective means  
3 of communication.

#### 4 **BILL SUMMARY**

5 This bill establishes comprehensive measures to enhance the safety of students and  
6 pedestrians in school zones across the Virgin Islands by establishing the “School Speed Zone  
7 and Enforcement Act.” It appropriates \$500,000 from the Transportation Trust Fund to the  
8 Department of Public Works for the procurement and installation of necessary signage, thereby  
9 clearly delineating school speed zones. The bill also outlines a collaborative framework  
10 involving the Department of Education and the Virgin Islands Police Department to establish  
11 and enforce reduced speed limits during specified hours, along with promoting road safety  
12 through public education campaigns. Additionally, the bill revises the Schedule of Fees to  
13 include penalties for speeding violations within these zones, with the dual aim of deterrence  
14 and raising awareness about the importance of adhering to speed limits to protect school  
15 communities.

16 **BR23-0615/April 4, 2024/CBM**

17 [S:\AMENDS\35th Legislature\BOLQUES, JR, ANGEL L\Amendment 35-977\35-977-](#)

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