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House committee proposes review of 30kph speed limit near schools

By BEATRICE OBWOCHA

A parliamentary committee is seeking to review the 30kph speed limit near schools clause in the Traffic Bill.

The amendment on the Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2014 introduced by the Parliamentary Committee on Transport, Public Works and Housing chaired by Maina Kamanda has raised the proposed speed limit near schools from 30kph to 50kph.

The Bill was aimed at protecting children from rogue drivers.

The amendment seen by Nation.co.ke also revised downwards the fine to be charged on those who flout the speed limit from Sh50,000 to Sh20,000.

The Bill was to be tabled before the National Assembly last week but was withdrawn. It expected to be tabled before the House this week.

The move by the House committee has raised concerns among members of the civil society.

According to Ms Stephanie Aketch, the road safety coordinator at Handicap International, the 30 kilometre per hour rule will not affect highways and other major roads.

SAFETY MEASURES

She said the speed limits was proposed for roads near schools located in residential estates and connector roads.

“Other safety measures such as footbridges, speed bumps and rumble strips will be introduced on highways and major roads,” she said.

Ms Aketch said the 30kph speed limit near schools is a proposed global standard as children are more vulnerable to road crashes caused by speeding motorists.

“Survival rate for a child hit by a vehicle driven at 30 kilometres per hour is about 90 per cent and this reduces to 45 per cent if the vehicle is driven at a 50 kilometres per hour,” she said.

Association for Safe International Road Travel-Kenya (ASIRT) director Bright Oywaya said police statistics show at least 300 children under the age of 16 are killed in crashes annually.

She said the 30kph limit will save kids by increasing the chances of their survival in case they are hit.

“Children are hit on the head or upper body by cars because of their small sizes unlike adults who get injuries on the legs or lower body part. This exposes kids to life threatening injuries,” she said.

She said the proposed limit was based on research and international standards.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), controlling speed can prevent crashes from happening, reduce the impact when they do occur and lessen the severity of injuries sustained by the victims.

WHO’s report on road traffic injury prevention states that pedestrians have a 90 per cent chance of survival when hit by a car travelling at 30kph or below.

According to the report, a road crash victim’s chance of survival reduces to less than 50 per cent if the vehicle is driven at 40kmph.

“A car travelling at 50 km/h will typically require 13 metres in which to stop, while a car travelling at 40 km/h will stop in less than 8.5 metres,” the report states.