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**Testimony of Rep. Dan Ankeles
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
Presenting LD 527, An Act to Allow Municipalities to Create Bicycle and Pedestrian Zones with
Reduced Speed Limits**

Senator Chipman, Representative Williams, and honorable colleagues on the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Representative Dan Ankeles, and I serve House District 100, a central slice of Brunswick that includes our downtown, Bowdoin College, the former naval airbase, Mere Point and a lot of roads where people drive way too fast. It's an honor to be with you to present **LD 527, An Act to Allow Municipalities to Create Bicycle and Pedestrian Zones with Reduced Speed Limits**.

The point of this bill is to empower our municipalities to lower speed limits from 35 miles per hour down to as low as 25 miles per hour on both state and town roads that see 6,000 or fewer vehicles each day. The towns would be able to do this without going through the normally required speed study - an important detail that I will get to in a minute.

But first, I want you to know that I've heard as many complaints about speeding cars and the onerous and unpredictable process for lowering speed limits as I have about all of the many high-profile issues that keep us up at night. The complaints come from every age group, from every income level and from everywhere on the political spectrum.

More people than ever are walking and biking in our state. It's been an upward trend accelerated by the pandemic, and we are not doing enough soon enough to create safer conditions. In 2021 we had the largest increase in the nation in pedestrian deaths, and then in 2022 our numbers got slightly worse.

According to a 2010 AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study, the average risk of death for a pedestrian reaches 10% at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25% at 32 mph, 50% at 42 mph, 75% at 50 mph and 90% at 58 mph. The rates are worse when you're older, and we have the highest median age in the nation.

You will hear testimony from the Maine Department of Transportation in opposition to the bill, but I do want to express my deep appreciation for Meghan Russo and Nina Fisher for their willingness to have additional conversations with me after this hearing and prior to any work session. While we are fairly far apart at this point, I think I owe it to my constituents, who feel as strongly about this issue as I do, to leave no stone unturned when it comes to seeking common ground.

But today, in this committee room, I am here to make a full-throated argument that LD 527 gets it right.

District 100: Brunswick (part)