

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF H.B. 6393

FOR THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING ON 3/6/09

BY THE CONNECTICUT CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION LOBBY

The Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby strongly supports the installation of road safety cameras on state highways.

Highway safety is greatly enhanced when photo enforcement is employed. These cameras have been in use since the 1970's in about 40 foreign countries and in various locations in the USA for 10 years. The results are striking. In England there are over 6000 road safety cameras and at the installation sites speeding has been reduced by 30% and fatalities by 42%. In Australia after installing photo radar, within three months the number of drivers triggering the cameras was cut in half. In an Arizona program average speed was cut by 9%, single-vehicle collisions by 63%, and injuries reduced by 48%.

The State Police and the Governor argue strongly in favor of these cameras as being a "force multiplier", freeing officers to enforce other infractions such as tail-gating and illegal lane-changing. The number of vehicles on the road and the number of miles traveled increase yearly, while the number of state police does not increase at a rate that results in effective enforcement of our speed limits. Crowded, dangerous conditions combined with other competing duties of the troopers have resulted in blatant disregard of our laws, and extremely unsafe highways.

The issue of privacy seems to us a red herring raised by opponents. For good or bad, cameras are everywhere in our lives: on city streets, in convenience stores, banks, airports. It is true that it is not illegal to drive on our highways; it is illegal to speed on them. If you do not speed, your license plate will not be photographed.

The final argument to be made is of course, a financial one. In England over \$200,000,000 yearly is raised from fines, and it is estimated that Connecticut would raise from thirteen to 20 million dollars in the first year of a pilot program.

In terms of public acceptance of the cameras, an educational campaign explaining the procedure and its benefits will accelerate and increase acceptance of photo enforcement. Revenues collected should be deposited in the transportation fund. We hope that the program will be administered by the state, and not by an outside company whose main interest would be in collecting fines, and not in providing a safer driving environment for Connecticut citizens.

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