

**Statement of Michael J. Riley
President**

**MICHAEL J. RILEY
PRESIDENT**

**Motor Transport Association of Connecticut
Before
The Joint Committee on Transportation
March 3, 2010**

**Re: Raised Bill No. 345 AN ACT AUTHORIZING
MUNICIPALITIES TO CONDUCT A PILOT PROGRAM FOR
THE USE OF AUTOMATED CONTROL SIGNAL
ENFORCEMENT DEVICES AT CERTAIN INTERSECTIONS.**

I am Michael J. Riley, President of Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC), a statewide trade association, which represents around 1,000 companies that operate commercial motor vehicles in and through the state of Connecticut. Our membership includes freight haulers, movers of household goods, construction companies, distributors, tank truck operators and hundreds of companies that use trucks in their business and firms that provide goods and services to truck owners.

MTAC OPPOSES THIS BILL

MTAC was founded in 1920 and over the past 89 years has fought long and hard to improve the safety of the highway and road systems and the vehicles which use them. We supported the establishment of mandatory drug testing for truck drivers, creation of the Commercial Drivers License, tough safety standards for vehicles and we have always advocated for strict enforcement of traffic laws. We opposed the increase in the speed limit from 55 mph to 65 mph. We have been strong proponents of the Motor Vehicle Department's Commercial Vehicle Safety Division and the State Police Truck Squads. We have supported the construction and operation of scale houses and safety inspections and moving vehicle enforcement programs. We have been working to expand the number and quality of truck rest areas throughout the state, so that tired truckers can get their needed rest. We have supported the Governor's campaign to deal with tailgating, the "Click it or Ticket" program and the Construction Zone Safety effort. We believe in safety. We stand for safety. And, we are committed to do all that we can to improve the safety of our transportation system in this state. Our record on safety speaks for itself.

**It is not lightly that we have decided to oppose Senate Bill No. 345 AN ACT
AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO CONDUCT A PILOT PROGRAM FOR
THE USE OF AUTOMATED TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNAL ENFORCEMENT
DEVICES AT CERTAIN INTERSECTIONS.**



The proponents of this bill say that it will improve safety. However, a close look at the bill exposes several provisions, which raise serious questions which need to be considered, especially by the Transportation and Judiciary Committees.

- **The bill would charge the owner of a motor vehicle for a moving violation. This is contrary to current and past procedure where the driver is the liable party when the vehicle is operated in an unlawful manner. Often, someone other than the owner of the vehicle is driving the vehicle. Drivers, not owners, commit moving violations. It is not fair to impose a fine on a party who may not have had anything to do with the violation. Additionally, the owner of the vehicle, contrary to the constitutionally guaranteed presumption of innocence, is presumed to be guilty unless he proves himself to be innocent. This tampers with a fundamental concept of American justice.**

Additionally, it is unclear how the bill would affect violations that occur in rental or leased vehicles. If the rental company is going to be charged with the violation, there is absolutely no motivation on the part of the renter to abide by the law. Owners of rented or leased vehicles should not be fined for violations which they did not commit.

- **One of the strongest objections we have to this bill is that it replaces law enforcement officers with cameras. There is no better deterrent to hazardous moving traffic violations than visible and consistent professional police presence. Real cops are the gold standard of effective law enforcement**

We want more than pictures of vehicles going through red lights. We want the vehicle stopped. We want the driver given a ticket for running the light. We want the officer to talk to the driver and determine if he is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We want the trained police officer to check the driver's credentials such as license, registration, hazardous materials shipping papers, permits for over size loads, bills of lading, and proof of up to date fuel tax status. We want the vehicle to be inspected for physical defects, including broken, worn out or malfunctioning equipment. We want the truck to be weighed and we want to make sure that there is no contraband or improper cargo on board. You cannot get these things from a camera.

All you get from a camera is - a picture of truck driven by someone breaking the law - a \$100 fine for the owner (not the driver) and a \$100 revenue item to one of the towns authorized in this bill. Depending on the arrangements, much of this fine may be sent to the company leasing the camera to the town. That is not improving safety. That is improving revenue.

- This bill would, for the first time, allow municipalities to collect fines for moving violations and retain half of all the revenue generated in their jurisdiction. This is a major change in state policy and one which should not be implemented. Here-to-fore, all fines for traffic violations have been paid, through the Central Infractions Bureau, of the Judicial Department to the State Special Transportation Fund. Unfortunately, in 2006, the Legislature passed a bill which adds a \$10 surcharge to all traffic tickets, which goes to the town wherein the tickets are issued. It would be an unwise decision to allow municipalities to use traffic fines as an additional local revenue generator. **When the entity which issues the ticket gets the money for the fine, the incentive is obvious to use law enforcement to produce a steady, if not increasing stream of revenue for the local budget.**
- The bill purports to establish a "Pilot Program" allowing communities to install as many as 12 cameras for up to two years. Yet the bill would allow as many municipalities that want to, to install cameras. With the approval of the Commissioner of Public Safety, cameras could go up all over the state and begin to force violators of even minor offenses, such as rolling through a right turn on red, to begin to supplement municipal revenue in every town within which they operate. **A pilot program ought not to be "open enrollment" and should be launched in only one town or city.**
- The cameras used to employ photo ticketing tactics can cost as much as \$60,000 each. They are sold on a promise that they are self-amortizing in a short period of "concentrated" enforcement and then begin to turn a profit.

We are concerned that some manufacturers of electronic traffic enforcement equipment receive a kickback on all tickets which their equipment issues. This arrangement permits them to offer preferential pricing to municipalities who later become "partners". **Traffic enforcement should not be an entrepreneurial opportunity. If this bill proceeds, it should carry a provision which prohibits any "revenue sharing" with manufacturers or distributors of photo ticketing equipment.**

- **This bill recreates a type of Municipal Court, an anachronism which was eliminated in this state fifty years ago, because of its inherent abuses and corruption.** This court would be run by a hearing officer, a person with no particular qualifications or training, who is appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of the municipality. This hearing officer decides on appeals against tickets generated by the cameras. This person is authorized to conduct the hearings any way he deems fair and appropriate. This bill provides that the rules regarding the admissibility of evidence are not strictly applied.

A designated municipal official, again with no required training or experience, can represent the municipality at these hearings, as some sort of prosecutor. The hearing officer renders a decision and judgment and if payment is not made, the whole matter is referred to the Superior Court.

The bill requires the police officer who authorized the issuance of the citation to attend all hearings contesting photo tickets. We would prefer that that officer be out on patrol enforcing all traffic violations - not just red lights.

This bill creates a costly bureaucracy in order to justify the use of the cameras. This is money that can, and should be, used to hire professional policemen and to task them with dealing with traffic enforcement problems.

- We also object to the bill in that it allows municipalities to install photo-ticketing devices wherever the town wants to put them. The State Traffic Commission is merely notified as to where the device is located. We believe that the State Traffic Commission should review the necessity and justification of installing any and all electronic traffic enforcement devices. **Towns and cities ought not be allowed to install these cameras without the STC reviewing the geometry, signage and possibility that the devices could actually cause more accidents than it prevents.**
- There are other major problems with this bill. There are no provisions in this bill which limit how the pictures produced by these traffic cameras can be used. Are the pictures admissible in a criminal proceeding, a civil matter, a divorce case? What happens to the photos after they are recorded? Are they saved or are they destroyed? By whom? Who besides the officer can see them? Are they obtainable through FOI requests? Is the public's right to privacy even considered? **All implications affecting privacy and confidentiality must be addressed before this program could be implemented.**
- The bill, says that any violations "detected and recorded by electronic device shall not constitute a moving traffic violation, be reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles for inclusion on a person's driving record or cause the assessment of points against the operator's license of the person found to have violated section 14-218a or 14-219 of the general statutes." **This reinforces our opinion that this is more a revenue-raising scheme than a safety program. We want drivers who run red lights to be stopped and issued tickets, with all of the ramifications from their violation implicit.**
- Finally, on the face it seems logical that these devices would reduce accidents. **However, all across the country there have been reports of increased accident rates at intersections after installations.** Apparently, rear ending is more prevalent at intersections where photo-ticketing devices are installed.

Let me once again restate MTAC's absolute commitment to safety. If we believed that this would have a significant impact on public safety, without any other adverse impacts, we could support it. However, there are far too many problems with this bill to convince us that we could recommend its adoption.

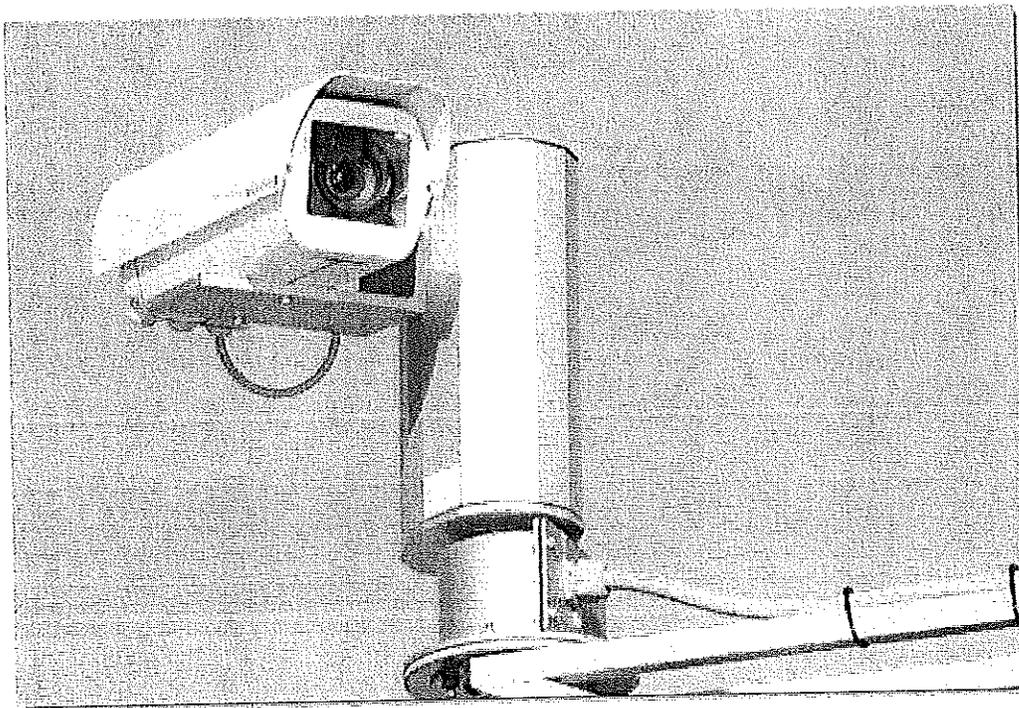
As with many issues, you must weigh the pros and cons of this proposal. The proponents promise significant improvements which passage of this bill will provide. We believe that there is more to lose than to gain if this bill passes and we urge members of this committee to reject it.

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10 Reasons To Oppose Red-Light Cameras

November 15th, 2007 Posted in [Red-Light Cameras](#)



1) **Ticket**

cameras do not improve safety.

Despite the claims of companies that sell ticket cameras and provide related services, there is no independent verification that photo enforcement devices improve highway safety, reduce overall accidents, or improve traffic flow. Believing the claims of companies that sell photo enforcement equipment or municipalities that use this equipment is like believing any commercial produced by a company that is trying to sell you something.

2) These devices discourage the synchronization of traffic lights.

Once red-light cameras start making money for local governments, they are unlikely to jeopardize this income source. Engineering improvements that lessen the income brought in by the cameras include traffic-light synchronization, the elimination of unneeded lights and partial deactivation of other traffic lights during periods of low traffic. When properly done, traffic-light synchronization decreases congestion, pollution, and fuel consumption.

3) There are better alternatives to cameras.

If intersection controls are properly engineered, installed, and operated, there will be very few red-light violations. From the motorists' perspective, government funds should be used on improving intersections, not on ticket cameras. Even in instances where cameras were shown to decrease certain types of accidents, they increased

other accidents. Simple intersection and signal improvements can have lasting positive effects, without negative consequences. Cities can choose to make intersections safer with sound traffic engineering or make money with ticket cameras. Unfortunately, many pick money over safety.

4) Ticket recipients are not notified quickly.

People may not receive citations until days or sometimes weeks after the alleged violation. This makes it very difficult to defend oneself because it would be hard to remember the circumstances surrounding the supposed violation. Even if the photo was taken in error, it may be very hard to recall the day in question.

5) Ticket recipients are not adequately notified.

Most governments using ticket cameras send out tickets via first class mail. There is no guarantee that the accused motorists will even receive the ticket, let alone understand it and know how to respond. However, the government makes the assumption that the ticket was received. If motorists fail to pay, it is assumed that they did so on purpose, and a warrant may be issued for their arrest.

6) There is no certifiable witness to the alleged violation.

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but it may also take a thousand words to explain what the picture really means. Even in those rare instances where a law enforcement officer is overseeing a ticket camera, it is highly unlikely that the officer would recall the supposed violation. For all practical purposes, there is no "accuser" for motorists to confront, which is a constitutional right. There is no one that can personally testify to the circumstances of the alleged violation, and just because a camera unit was operating properly when it was set up does not mean it was operating properly when the picture was taken of any given vehicle.

7) Taking dangerous drivers' pictures doesn't stop them.

Photo enforcement devices do not apprehend seriously impaired, reckless or otherwise dangerous drivers. A fugitive could fly through an intersection at 100 mph and not even get his picture taken, as long as the light was green!

8) Cameras do not prevent most intersection accidents.

Intersection accidents are just that, accidents. Motorists do not casually drive through red lights. Even the most flagrant of red-light violators will not drive blithely into a crowded intersection, against the light. More likely, they do not see a given traffic light because they are distracted, impaired, or unfamiliar with their surroundings. Putting cameras on poles and taking pictures will not stop these kinds of accidents.

9) The driver of the vehicle is not positively identified.

Typically, the photos taken by these cameras do not identify the driver of the offending vehicle. The owner of the vehicle is mailed the ticket, even if the owner was not driving the vehicle and may not know who was driving at the time. The owner of the vehicle is then forced to prove his or her innocence, often by identifying the actual driver who may be a family member, friend or employee.

10) Ticket camera systems are designed to inconvenience motorists.

Under the guise of protecting motorist privacy, the court or private contractor that sends out tickets often refuses to send a copy of the photo to the accused vehicle owner. This is really because many of the photos do not clearly depict the driver or the driver is obviously not the vehicle owner. Typically, the vehicle owner is forced to travel to a courthouse or municipal building to even see the photograph, an obvious and deliberate inconvenience meant to discourage ticket challenges.

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OpEdNews

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November 5, 2009

Southland city removes red light cameras after 'rear end collisions have actually increased'

By Martin Hill

Red light cameras were removed for financial and safety reasons.

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<http://www.examiner.com/examiner/x-27692-LA-County-Libertarian-Examiner~y2009m11d5-Southland-city-removes-red-light-cameras-after-rear-end-collissions-have-actually-increased>



Two

southland cities have terminated their contracts with red light camera vendors and removed the cameras in recent months, after internal reports acknowledged that the use of the cameras were neither effective nor fiscally responsible.

Sgt Matthews of the Upland Police Dept. said they terminated the contract with Redflex and removed the cameras at the end of June. "They were not effective in our city. What matters to us is the effectiveness in the city of Upland." The cameras were "ineffective in reducing collisions", which was the point of the cams, he said.

An [Upland City Council Committee Report](#) dated April 28, 2008 had previously recommended that the city add two more cameras:

- 12. COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. POLICE AND FIRE COMMITTEE MEETING, APRIL 28, 2008

1. RED LIGHT CAMERA PROGRAM, the committee recommended that the City Council give direction to move forward with the Red Light Camera Expansion Program which would add two new red light cameras, north and south approaches, at the intersection of 11th Street and Euclid Avenue.

However, a report to the Police and Fire Committee from Upland City Manager Rob Quincey on February 23, 2009 recommended that the city **"terminate the contract with Redflex Traffic Systems, Inc."**

The report, prepared by Police Chief Steve Adams and Sergeant Eleno Arriaga, stated that **"The proposed action will support the City's goal to provide better Police field services and be fiscally responsible to the community."**

The report outlined analysis of several issues: the financial feasibility of the cameras, the possible illegality of the contract, and the fact that rear end collisions have actually increased.

- "the contract was entered into June 2003"... "The internal review of the potential violations utilizes an officer within the Police department to issue the citations".
"The monthly revenue from the service has not covered the salary and benefits of those who review and issue potential violations. Redflex also desires to eliminate an \$8,900 credit per month, which has allowed the system to remain financially neutral at best. There is also a reduction of manpower in the field, while the officer is operating the system at the police department. Elimination of the system would free up the officer to handle eminent business and focus on other enforcement areas; therefore, making better use of resources.
- "Redflex has also proposed a change in payment plan for the contract, consisting of \$4,500 per current approach and \$6,200 for new approaches per month, currently the city pays \$89 per citation. **The contract issue is currently under court scrutiny, and, pending the outcome, has the potential to invalidate citations previously issued. The system appears to have little influence on the number of red light related collisions at monitored intersections. At times rear end collisions have actually increased.**
- "FISCAL IMPACTS
The system's monthly revenue since November 2003 has not covered the officer's salary and benefits currently billed to the system. If the current credit from Redflex is eliminated the revenue in relation would be reduced \$8900 a month, again not covering the officer's salary and benefits. The salary also does not include weekly overtime from court appearances generated by the citations. Redflex has recently proposed a change in the contract to

pay per approach, which would likely place the City in a position from which it would never attain a positive revenue flow."

Richard Eden, Chief Financial officer of Redflex, had sent a letter to Sgt John Poole of the Upland Police Dept. in December 2005 outlining changes to their agreement:

- "Redflex further agrees to provide the first 100 citations issued each month in the City of Upland at no charge for a period of six (6) months commencing December 1st 2005. At the expiry of this period, the fiscal position of the city will be reviewed again and the parties shall discuss additional amendments that may be required to satisfy both parties"

HighwayRobbery.net, which opposes the cameras and offers a vast library of information to motorists, points out that under California Vehicle Code Section 21455.5(g)(1), which went into effect effective Jan. 1, 2004, pay per ticket contracts between cities and red light camera vendors are illegal:

- (1) A contract between a governmental agency and a manufacturer or supplier of automated enforcement equipment **may not include provision for the payment or compensation to the manufacturer or supplier based on the number of citations generated, or as a percentage of the revenue generated, as a result of the use of the equipment authorized under this section.**

HighwayRobbery.net goes on to point out that "The author of 21455.5 wrote:

"Paying red light camera vendors [suppliers] based on the number of tickets issued undermines the public's trust and raises concern that these systems can be manipulated for profit."

(Official comment by Senator - then Assemblywoman - Jenny Oropeza, published in 8/27/03 legislative analysis of AB 1022 of 2003.)

The neighboring city of Montclair also recently announced that they have terminated their red light camera program, which was administered by Nestor Traffic Systems, Inc.

Sgt. Matthews also answered some questions about motorist checkpoints in the City of Upland, explaining that they don't have a set schedule for checkpoints, but issue a press release to the local paper telling when, but not where, the checkpoints will take place. DUI checkpoints are combined with drivers license checkpoints, he said, with the goal being **"deterrence and education"**. When asked if it is compulsory for the driver to show their license at the checkpoint, he said yes.

I asked him about an anecdotal story I had heard from a motorist who told me that they were once stopped by the

Upland Police and the officer asked if he could look in the driver's car. The driver said no, and the officer allegedly responded that refusal to consent to a search is probable cause. Not commenting on that particular case since he was no familiar with it, Matthew explained that **"refusal to consent to a search in and of itself does not equate to probable cause"**.

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TRIBUNE WATCHDOG RED-LIGHT WINDFALL

Red-light cameras in Schaumburg screech to a halt

Critics say Schaumburg was more interested in collecting ticket money than improving safety

By Jason George and Graydon Megan

Chicago Tribune

July 15, 2009

When Schaumburg and RedSpeed Illinois announced their intention to install red-light cameras in the village last September, both parties hoped it would be a long-term commitment -- producing safer intersections, with an added bonus of much-needed money.

Yet nine months after saying, "I do," Schaumburg has called the whole thing off, citing no improvements in safety and a flood of angry-motorist grief, after red-light cameras at the village's lone picture-snapping intersection netted more than \$1 million in tickets.

The dissolution of this once-happy union between a town and its red-light system is not a first for Illinois -- Bolingbrook turned off all its cameras in 2007 -- but it shows the red-hot debate over red-light cameras, even in cities that have already signed on the dotted line. In fact, it is often only *after* the cameras -- and their copious tickets -- arrive that the revenue-versus-safety arguments begin in earnest.

In Schaumburg, the problems started almost on Day One.

"We felt like, 'Wait, something is wrong here,'" Village Trustee Marge Connelly said before the board voted unanimously Tuesday night to terminate its contract with RedSpeed, Illinois' largest red-light camera company.

"We're not condoning running red lights, but in our case this was not the right way to handle it."

What was "wrong" in Schaumburg's case began with trying to do something right, several trustees said, recalling their unanimous vote last September. "From the outset this was all about safety," said Trustee George Dunham.



"Our board never went into this intending to collect a lot of revenue," said Ken Fritz, the village manager. "We felt that if it really improved public safety, it was good, and if it helped us with revenue, that was good too."

When Schaumburg first signed on to the red-light camera business last year, officials could hardly wait to get started, which is why they chose Meacham and Woodfield Roads as the first of their 10 planned camera locations. That intersection wasn't chosen because it had a lot of accidents -- the spot isn't even in Schaumburg's top 10 -- but because all of the intersection's approaches are in the village's boundaries and are local roads. This let village officials deploy the cameras much faster, avoiding the state approval needed for cameras on state roads.

Almost immediately, that selection paid off, literally, as cameras there flashed as fast as a paparazzi pack, mostly nabbing drivers for making right turns on red without a complete stop. In just 2 ½ months, the cameras spit out about 10,000 tickets, each a \$100 violation.

"I was shocked, frankly, that the number of violations were so high for the right on a red light," Connelly said. "A lot of people were just confused about that intersection."

And they were angry: Shoppers snared as they visited nearby Woodfield Mall vowed to take their business elsewhere. (Marc Strich, the mall's general manager, said he kindly directed shoppers to the Village Hall.) Other motorists complained too. In response, village officials told RedSpeed to stop processing right-turn-on-red violations and only forward ones when drivers turned left on red or went straight through the intersection on red.

RedSpeed did just that until May, when the company told police officials "that because it was so labor-intensive to go through all violations compared to the number sent to us for final approval, they did not feel the time spent by their personnel was justified," wrote Chief Brian Howerton in a June memo, recommending that the village terminate its RedSpeed contract.

By the end of that month, RedSpeed was forwarding only left-turn-on-red violations, which totaled just 12 for all of May. Such a small haul hardly justified the camera and ticketing system, which from start to finish cost the village about \$400,000 in fees to RedSpeed.

In that same period, "I would guess the village received about \$550,000 to \$600,000 net revenue," Fritz said.

Schaumburg officials stated Tuesday night that they terminated the RedSpeed contract because crash data, prepared by the Police Department in June, revealed that the intersection does not have a problem with running-red-light accidents nor did it have one in 2008 when the cameras were installed. That fact angers Brian Costin, president of the Schaumburg Freedom Coalition, a citizens group that campaigned against the cameras last September. "I think Mayor [Al] Larson and the board did not do their due diligence," he said.

Schaumburg getting out of the red-light camera business does not mean Illinois cities are no longer interested in signing up for the systems: On Monday, River Forest's board voted to conditionally hire RedSpeed to install two traffic cameras along Harlem Avenue.

But that board also voted 3-2 to endorse a two-tiered fine structure that would give a break to motorists ticketed for making a rolling right turn on red. Trustee Steve Hoke alluded to recent Tribune stories that found the overwhelming majority of camera-generated tickets were for making illegal right turns on red, even though traffic-safety experts say such infractions rarely lead to serious damage or injuries.

RedSpeed sales consultant Michael Lebert told the board he didn't know whether the company would agree to Hoke's plan, noting that RedSpeed operates cameras for nearly 60 Illinois municipalities, all of which charge

\$100 per ticket, the maximum allowed under the state's red-light camera law.

He also warned that such a fine structure could pose a technological challenge and lead to errors.

Jason George is a Tribune reporter and Graydon Megan is a freelance reporter. Tribune reporter Bob Sexter and freelance reporter Victoria Pierce contributed to this report.

jageorge@tribune.com

Cameras click for cop

Carol Stream's top cop endorsed Redflex, later joined firm. Page 13

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Daily Herald

Big Picture, Local Focus

Protesters signal angst over red-light cameras

By Marni Pyke | Daily Herald Staff

Published: 9/23/2009 12:01 AM

About 50 people rallied in support of banning red-light cameras Tuesday outside the Lombard offices of one the region's busiest suppliers of the devices.

The controversial cameras have rapidly gained popularity in the suburbs, and proponents say they improve safety. But the technology and the \$100 tickets they generate, mostly for right turns, have critics like Peter Breen calling the cameras cash cows.

"These cameras are unfair, unjust, and they don't make any sense," said Breen, who organized the protest outside the doors of camera company RedSpeed. "We were sold safety and we received an ATM."

A recent investigative report by the Daily Herald found the vast majority of \$100 tickets are for rolling right turns on red, a maneuver considered by experts as less dangerous than going through red lights. The newspaper also found that a number of communities have or plan to install lights at intersections with accidents unrelated to red-light running.

Breen, a Republican attorney from Lombard, is running in the 2010 primary for retiring state Rep.

Bob Biggins's seat.

He was joined by state Sen. Dan Duffy, a Lake Barrington Republican, who is proposing legislation to repeal camera laws. The devices do not improve safety and hurt drivers during a tough economy, he said, adding "it's not the time to penalize people for going 1 inch past the white line at an intersection."

Lombard has red-light cameras at two intersections. Village President Bill Mueller said police dismiss between 40 percent and 60 percent of infractions shot by the cameras.

"Our goal is to make the community safer and reduce accidents. The law says you're not supposed to turn right unless you stop," he said.

Mueller noted that the village has had the cameras for six months and will review their performance at the end of a year. "We're watching them very carefully," he said.

Activist Brian Costin, who fought red-light cameras in Schaumburg that were eventually removed, told the crowd to seek out studies and statistics on cameras. "Red-light cameras are a failure, and we must resist them locally," he said.

Among the protesters were Bill and Marianne Vivirito, who own a lighting store in Lombard. "I feel

they're an invasion of privacy," Bill Vivirito said.

Other Republican candidates seeking Biggins' job are DuPage County Board member Brien Sheahan, Elmhurst Alderman Chris Nybo and Republican National Hispanic Assembly of Illinois President Rafael Rivadeneira.

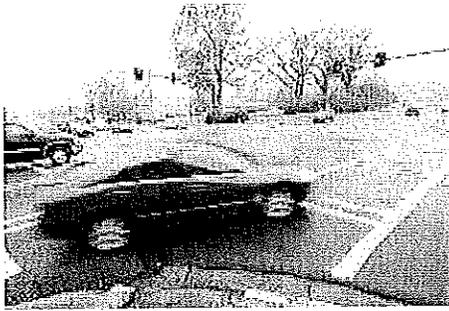
RedSpeed did not return a call seeking comment.



Communities put a halt to red-light cameras

Updated 1/18/2010 4:21 AM

By Larry Copeland, USA TODAY



By Erik S. Lesser for USA TODAY
Dalton, Ga. removed its red light cameras from this intersection.

Red-light cameras that have been gaining a foothold in many states face a growing public backlash and outright removal.

The cameras, billed as safety devices since their introduction in the USA nearly 20 years ago, are increasingly viewed by many motorists as unreasoning revenue generators for hard-up local governments.

Maine, Mississippi and Montana banned red light cameras last year, joining at least four other states, Nevada, New Hampshire, West Virginia and Wisconsin, says Anne Teigen, a transportation specialist at the National Conference of State Legislatures. State senators in Missouri and Tennessee are sponsoring legislation that would limit cameras. Elsewhere:

- Voters in three cities — Chillicothe and Heath, Ohio, and College Station, Texas— passed referendums in November banning the cameras. "Red-light cameras have never survived a voter referendum," says Greg

Mauz, a longtime camera opponent who has researched them extensively.

- Nearly 1,000 motorists in south Florida have filed 18 lawsuits against the cameras, saying the devices are unconstitutional because they force drivers to prove their innocence rather than the government to prove their guilt. "I felt as though I had no say," Beverly Baird Boothe, a retired educator, says of her appeal of a citation in Orlando. "There is no democratic process."

- An Illinois lawmaker who helped bring red-light cameras to the state in 2006 says he'll introduce bills this year to sharply limit their use. "They were sold to us in a different manner than what they're being used for," says state Rep. Jack Franks, a Democrat. "The municipalities have put them in areas where they're just to make revenue." He says that since 2006, crashes have increased at half the intersections in Illinois that have cameras, stayed the same at 25% and decreased at 25%.

GEORGIA: Mayor doubts camera's benefits

The rate of communities installing cameras slowed dramatically last year. In 2009, legislators in 30 states debated 90 camera bills, most of which would have expanded their use, Teigen says.

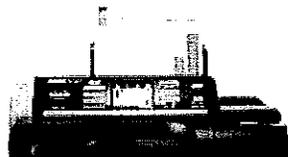
Camera supporters say cameras make intersections safer. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's (IIHS) studies in Fairfax, Va., and Oxnard, Calif., found that camera enforcement reduced red-light running violations by about 40%.

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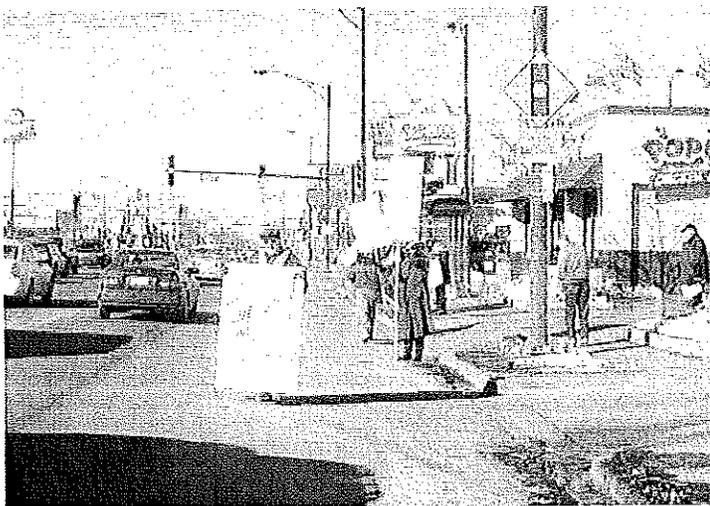
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Although Valentine's Day is normally a day filled with love and romance, neither sentiment was present Sunday afternoon on Chicago's northside, at the intersection of Western Ave. and Addison St.

This is the location of one of Chicago's notorious red light camera intersections, where approximately 30-40 anti-red light camera protesters took to the street armed with signs and *liens* to get their message out to area motorists.

Drivers coming through the intersection honked, waived and yelled out their windows in support of the protesters' message.

At some points, during the height of the rally, between 12:30 and 1:30, the volume of horn honking from cars was so loud it was difficult to communicate at a normal level of conversation.

"It was very positive as far as community support," said Barnett Fagel, who traveled from Buffalo Grove to be part of the protest. "People don't want just a reduction in cameras or reduction in fines. The cameras need to be taken out."

Protesters brought signs with messages like, "Rise Up Against the Machines," "Stop Red Light Scameras," and "Ban Them All - Pass SB 2466."

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Harlingen Votes Red Light Cameras Out



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By Mary Avila
Thursday, February 18, 2010 at 11:25 p.m.

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For over 2 years the red light cameras located at major intersections in Harlingen have been catching drivers ignoring traffic lights.

Having those cameras in place has resulted in close to 100,000 traffic tickets, from March 2007 to December 2009.

But Wednesday night Harlingen city commissioners decided the cameras would be given the red light in a vote of 3 to 2.

"I was very upset and disturbed," said Kori Marra City Commissioner for District 3. "It seemed to be more important to be right last night and to win than to win a certain vote than the safety of the citizens of Harlingen."

Marra was in favor of keeping the cameras and doesn't understand why the city would get rid of them.

"As of our last quarter we were still down by like 50 percent of where it originally had started so there is no question that it was a blessing to the city of Harlingen, actually saving lives."

Decreasing the number of accidents isn't the only thing Marra said the cameras brought to the city, according to her; they were also revenue generators for the city.

The commissioner told Action 4 News the amount of money coming in and the revenue of tickets benefits trauma centers from McAllen to Brownsville.

She also denies rumors that they're too expensive to maintain and cause more accidents.

For Marra, another plus was that officers could stay on the streets to tackle bigger problems.

"At 9 intersections in the city of Harlingen we had those manned by pretty much a computerized police officer 24-7 for people who are breaking the law anyway."

Marra says she backed the decision to keep the cameras after a meeting with her district who were all in favor.

"I represented my district properly last night," said the commissioner. "I did what they told me and what they wished to have happen and I hope the other commissioners can feel the same way."

Despite Marra's objections the red light cameras must be taken down by the end of March.

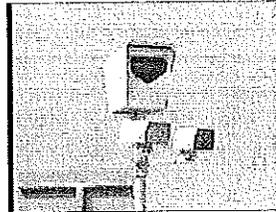


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Keep the Cameras

Posted by JT Fermottybot, Harlingen - Tuesday, February 23, 2010 at 8:18 p.m.

Why should law abiding citizens suffer because a few can't follow the rules. These cameras make reckless drivers more aware of their actions. Losing these cameras will create a hazard to motorist and pedestrians alike. This makes no sense...get a grip...keep the cameras and save lives!

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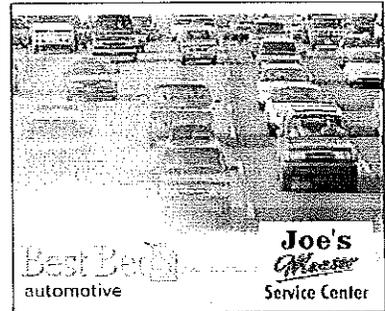
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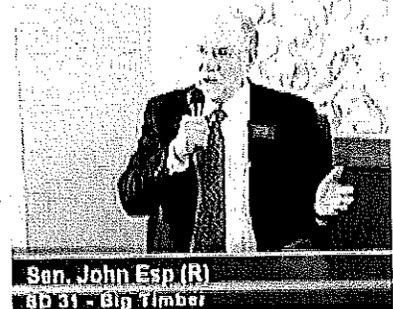
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Montana Legislature Votes to Ban Red Light Cameras

The Montana state House and Senate each approved legislation that would ban red light cameras.

The Montana state Senate yesterday gave preliminary approval to legislation that would ban the installation of red light cameras. The Senate voted 37-13 in support of the bill which must face one more vote before the modified legislation heads back to the state House for its consent.

The state House originally approved a total ban on red light cameras by a 65-35 margin (view bill). State Senator John Brueggeman (R-Polson) changed the House text to water down the bill with a special exemption for Bozeman, Darby and any other city that inks a contract with a private contractor to run a ticketing program in return for a cut of the profit before the legislation becomes law.



"I think [the ban] is a good idea because I am not a fan of red light cameras and I'm not a fan of photo enforcement of traffic laws," Brueggeman said. "What this [amendment] would do is a sort of savings clause... It would say look, if you've put the infrastructure in already we're not going to force you to take it out."

Although Bozeman's contractor, Australia's Redflex Traffic Systems, has installed some cameras in the city, they are temporary installations that are easily removed. Lobbyists for Bozeman and Redflex pressured senators hard to keep their ability to ticket motorists for good, but twelve senators opposed Brueggeman's amendment.

"I think this amendment is a kind of poison pill for this bill because... any city that wants to get around the law that we've proposed will go out and get a contract before the bill goes into effect," state Senator John Esp (R-Big Timber) said. "What I think would be more fair is that any contract in place this day could be carried until the end of the contract but not renewed."

The House sponsors of the bill made it known that they opposed the carve out for Bozeman. Unless the House agrees to accept the Senate version without changes, a conference committee will try to reach a compromise, perhaps along the lines of Esp's suggestion. Such a compromise would become law once the bill is adopted by the House and Senate and signed by Governor Brian Schweitzer (D).

Alaska, Arkansas, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin banned automated citations either through judicial or legislative action. In other cases, the public has taken matters into its own hands. Cincinnati and Steubenville, Ohio recently voted to ban speed and red light cameras. Between 1991 and 1997, voters also turned out in Batavia, Illinois; Peoria, Arizona and Anchorage, Alaska to reject photo radar.

The text of the Senate version of HB531 is available in a 20k PDF file at the source link below.

Source: House Bill 531 - Senate version (Montana Legislature, 3/31/2009)

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CORRECTION TO THIS ARTICLE

A previous version of this story incorrectly attributed a study of Montgomery County's speed cameras to the Maryland state legislature. The study was carried out by a Montgomery County agency.

Shudder speed

Rise of the stealthy traffic camera fuels drivers' disgust

By Neely Tucker
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, November 5, 2009

You rip open the envelope and there it is: Another damed photo-enforcement traffic ticket.

THIS STORY

Shudder speed

Speed cameras add more woes to commuters

POLL: Legality of speed cameras

The photograph, the zoom-in on the tag, it's you, baby. Your car. Two weeks ago. Forty-one in a 30-mph zone.

It's from your favorite municipality. You can pay \$40 now or \$80 later. You can also contest it, the infraction letter says, and that's a laugh. You remember seeing that the folks who went down to fight their automated tickets in Montgomery County got convicted 99.7 percent of the time. Like a Soviet election, you think, a sham, a joke, and you, the chump in the parade.

There's something that doesn't smell right about these tickets, but you're not quite sure what.

Is it the huge profits the government and their cohorts, the camera manufacturers, make on them? The District doubling the number of tickets it issued just two years ago, raking in \$36 million last fiscal year? The fact that Reflex, one of the big manufacturers of these cameras, posted a 48 percent jump in revenue last year while the rest of the economy tanked?

People get worked up. Put these cyborgs on a ballot, and the voters beat them to the pavement.

Three cities Tuesday -- two in Ohio, one in Texas -- voted to rip the things down. In College Station, Tex., the camera manufacturer and their subcontractors reportedly spent \$60,000 campaigning to keep them in place, more than five times the amount raised by the opposition, and lost anyway. Voters in Chillicothe, Ohio, went against the cameras at a rate of 72 percent. In Heath, Ohio, the mayor got caught removing anti-camera campaign signs from an intersection. He, and the cameras, got sent packing.



Speed cameras add more woes to commuters

All around the nation speed cameras are being put up in an attempt to protect public safety by discouraging speeding. But the public doesn't see it that way. People see these cameras as another inconvenience to their commutes and another source of revenue for cities.

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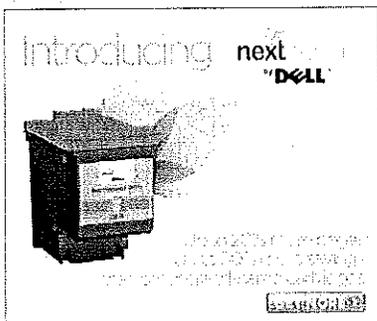
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"I'm ecstatic," Jim Ash, the guy in College Station who led the anti-camera campaign.

Nationwide, there have been something like 11 elections on automated enforcement. Your vote total: Revolting Peasants 11, Machines 0.



Yet the cameras multiply like something out of science fiction, like that robot Mr. Smith in a sequel to "The Matrix," like the red weed in "War of the Worlds."

A handful of cities used them a decade ago. Now they're in more than 400, spread across two dozen states. Montgomery County started out with 18 cameras in 2007. Now it has 119. Maryland just took the program statewide last month, and Prince George's is putting up 50. The District started out with a few red light cameras in 1999; now they send out as many automated tickets each year as they have residents, about 580,000.

"They make too much money for cities to just stop using them," says Joe Scott, a D.C. entrepreneur who has developed Phantomalert, a downloadable software for GPS units and an app for smart phones that is updated by subscribers who spot new cameras sprouting up. He started it a few years ago by logging in a couple of hundred cameras in the D.C. region. Subscribers have since uploaded 200,000 more. It's like "Terminator," humans against machines.

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City staff as well said a year's worth of study would draw a clearer picture.

But committee members said they were looking at the big picture, not small parts. The six-month report showed collisions up during 2007, compared with the same time a year before.

Spears said the cameras were intended to alter driver behavior in Lubbock and make streets safer. He said he fears the cameras have changed behavior for the worse, a situation that threatened both lives and property.

"You can't just look at little pieces of the data to suit your purpose," he said. "You've got to look at the big picture and use common sense."

The committee voted 4-2 against the cameras. Member Larry Lowe, who also is a member of the Citizens Traffic Commission, voted to leave the cameras up a year. He said after the meeting he thought the traffic commission would make its judgment "based on facts, not trying to save face."

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eric.finley@lubbockonline.com 766-8725

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Study finds red-light cameras could actually cause more accidents

Posted By [Drew Johnson](#) On March14 @ 10:37 am In [Industry/General](#) | [32 Comments](#)

While traffic-light cameras are be touted as safety devices, a new study finds that they might actually cause more harm than they prevent. A recent study by the University of South Florida Public Health shows that traffic accidents at intersections with traffic-light cameras have actually increased.

According to the study, drivers are more likely to slam on their brakes when the traffic signal turns yellow at a camera-equipped intersection, resulting in a higher number of rear-end crashes. Moreover, the study found that the cameras have not decreased the number of deaths due to red-light running accidents. "The injury rate from red-light running crashes has dropped by a third in less than a decade, indicating red-light running crashes have been continually declining in Florida without the use of cameras."

And the findings are not just limited to the roads of Florida. Similar studies have been conducted in Virginia, North Carolina and Ontario and have come up with the same results — traffic-cameras increase the number of crashes but do not reduce the number of fatalities due to drivers running red-lights.

But with traffic-cameras fines contributing more and more to municipals' bottom lines, a sudden removal of the cameras doesn't seem likely.

Article printed from Leftlane - news, reviews, and info for the auto-industry:
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