

***Editorials & Information  
In Support of  
Intersection Safety Cameras***

*In support of*

***\*Proposed S.B. No. 706 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL  
INTERSECTION SAFETY SYSTEMS.***

***\*Proposed S.B. No. 822 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE USE OF  
PHOTOGRAPHIC TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT TECHNOLOGY.***

***\*Proposed H.B. No. 6178 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE USE OF  
TRAFFIC CAMERAS BY MUNICIPALITIES.***

***\*Proposed H.B. No. 6179 AN ACT AUTHORIZING  
MUNICIPALITIES TO OPERATE INTERSECTION SAFETY CAMERA  
SYSTEMS.***

***Transportation Committee  
February 14, 2011***

# New Haven Register

## **EDITORIAL: Cameras at red lights have saved lives; legislature should approve them**

Sunday, February 13, 2011

By Register Editorial Staff

New Haven is in its seventh year of trying to persuade the legislature to pass a law allowing it to install cameras at intersections where drivers routinely run red lights.

With a boost from a new study from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety about the effectiveness of the cameras and a heightened concern about tight municipal finances, this may be the year the legislation gets the green light.

The study examined accidents in 99 cities. It found that the cameras cut fatal accidents by 24 percent in 14 cities that had installed them. Further, the study found an overall drop in accidents at intersections with traffic signals. The drop in deaths caused by drivers running red lights translated into 159 lives saved in five years, the study estimated.

The study is the most recent to support the effectiveness of the traffic cameras in increasing public safety.

When New Haven first proposed the traffic camera legislation in 2005, it cited a study of three of the city's most dangerous intersections for red light violations. In 24 hours, 426 cars ran the red light at Grand and Blatchley avenues; in 19 hours, 364 cars ran the light at Whalley Avenue and Orchard Street; and in three hours, 80 cars ran the red light at Columbus and Washington avenues. The traffic violations are just as flagrant today, according to police.

The version of the legislation proposed last year would allow cities to use the cameras only after approval of their legislative bodies. The cameras' location would be determined by the history of violations at an intersection and would need approval of the State Traffic Control Commission. The fine would be \$100.

Opponents of the legislation have cited privacy issues and fear of government spying. But, there is no expectation of privacy on a public street, where anyone can take a picture.

Public safety is the principal reason to approve red light cameras. Further, the legislation, which has been endorsed by the Connecticut Association of Police Chiefs, allows police departments to deploy their officers more efficiently. And, the fines generated from the red light cameras would be welcomed new revenue for cities, such as New Haven, that are facing significant budget difficulties.

For all these reasons, this should be the year the legislature allows New Haven to save lives and prevent accidents by installing the red light cameras at its most dangerous intersections.

# WestportPatch

Police & Fire

## Connector Crash Sunday Results In Fatality

### *Police: Investigation Shows Car Ran Through Red Light*

By Harold F. Cobin  
January 17, 2011



*One of the vehicles at Sunday's crash on the Sherwood Island connector after firefighters cut off its roof.*

A passenger in a two-car collision on the Sherwood Island connector Sunday afternoon died later in Norwalk Hospital.

In a news release, Capt. Sam Arciola said the deceased, Westport resident Edith A. Cameron, 92, of 130 Old Rd., was in the front seat of a car when another car passed a red light at Greens Farms Road.

Arciola said a preliminary investigation has found Olga Hyman, 84, of Edgewater, N.J., was driving a 2000 Nissan eastbound on the connector when she "ran a red light" and collided broadside with the Honda Cameron was in.

In a phone interview, Arciola said the woman driving the Honda is being treated in Norwalk Hospital. He declined to identify her.

Norwalk Hospital records show Hyman was also transported there and was released later on Sunday.

The accident was reported at 4:05 p.m.

A Fire Department official said it required an extensive effort by firefighters to cut apart the severely damaged Honda to free its two occupants.

# The Washington Post

## Red-light cameras get results

Editorial - February 5, 2011

THE EVIDENCE is incontrovertible that red-light cameras save lives and could save many more if they were in wider use. They do so mainly by deterring and reducing the number of side-impact accidents, known as T-bone crashes. The rancorous, misguided debate over the cameras, which capture images of vehicles as they run through red traffic lights, is now settled. The District and other cities are well justified in expanding the deployment of such life-saving equipment.

A definitive new study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety shows that in 14 big cities where the cameras were in use, including the District, the rate of fatalities stemming from red-light crashes fell three times faster than in 48 cities that did not install the cameras. What's more, the institute, a nonprofit group funded by the insurance industry, found that the cameras saved 159 lives in the 14 cities over five years starting in 2004. If the cameras had been in use in every big American city, 815 lives would have been saved during the same span, the researchers concluded.

Those findings will be discomfiting to the scofflaws and libertarians who have long believed they have a God-given right to run red lights without the nuisance of risking a fine. They have felt put upon that the government is somehow invading their privacy by training cameras on intersections or "profiting" from the resulting fines. Never mind that in the great majority of cases, the real victims are not the drivers who ignore the red lights; rather, they are the pedestrians, cyclists and drivers of other vehicles who are run over, rammed, maimed and killed by the red-light runners.

The rationale for red-light cameras is firmly grounded in common sense. Police can't be everywhere, and officers should not be diverted from high-crime areas to police every high-risk intersection. As practically anyone who travels in and around the District can see for themselves, drivers tend to decelerate and exercise caution in red-light and speed-camera zones - which are listed on the police department's Web site. The result: slower-moving traffic and fewer fatal accidents.

Gnashing their teeth at Big Brother's supposed intrusion, opponents of the cameras have argued that the cameras violate their privacy or that local governments use them simply to generate revenue. But there are plenty of examples of government levying fines to promote public safety - think of hunting violations, or unsafe job-site conditions - and there's no greater reason to impugn officials' motives in deploying the cameras than any in other areas of public safety administration.

Opponents have also cited studies linking the installation of red-light cameras to an increase in rear-end collisions. But the more important point is that the cameras have sharply reduced T-bone crashes, which are far more dangerous and cause more deaths.

The real question for those who continue to complain about the cameras is: What is the alternative? Do they really want to remove the cameras and accept hundreds more deaths in order to save red-light runners from paying fines of \$50 or \$100? By that calculus, opponents of red-light cameras must value life very cheaply indeed.



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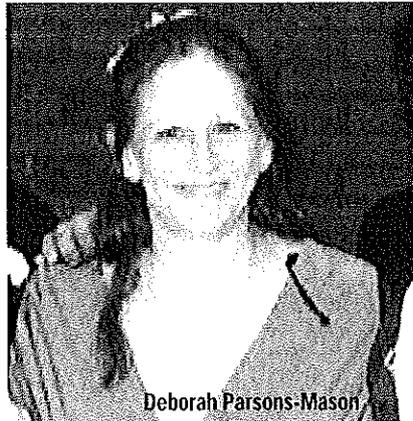
of red light runners in fatal crashes in 2009 had blood alcohol concentrations 0.08 percent or higher.

Deborah Parsons-Mason, second from right

**DEBORAH PARSONS-MASON, 47**  
**SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA**

Deborah Parsons-Mason worried about walking in her San Jose neighborhood, especially on weekend nights when the nearby bars were full. Drunk driving was a problem in the area, and the family had seen cars totaled just outside their window. The 47-year-old mother warned her 4 kids to use extra caution crossing the street.

But on a Friday 6 days before Christmas 2008, Parsons-Mason would have had her mind on other things. She had just been out shopping, and her mother was flying in the next day.



Deborah Parsons-Mason

That night, Parsons-Mason walked to the corner store with her 14-year-old son, Jimmy, to buy some candy bars. On the way home, a pickup truck blew through a red light, striking Parsons-Mason in the crosswalk. As her horrified son watched, she was thrown in the air, landing in her next-door neighbor's driveway. Her husband and her other son heard the crash from inside the house and ran outside to see what had happened.

The driver, Gilberto Vasquez Reyes, 63, had a blood alcohol concentration of 0.21 percent, more than 2 1/2 times the legal limit. He pleaded no contest to vehicular manslaughter but died 5 days before sentencing. He was facing 4 to 6 years in prison.

Parsons-Mason worked as a cashier at Lucky supermarket and was heavily involved in her children's schooling, says her sister Kimberly Sabino. During their own childhood in southern California, Debi, the oldest of 3 girls, was like a second mother, says Sabino, who was the youngest and 5 years her junior.

Two years on, the family's grief is still raw. Jimmy constantly replays that night in his head, wishing he had seen the truck coming and pushed his mother out of harm's way, says Parsons-Mason's mother, Diane Courtney.

Sabino says it's hard for her to accept that Reyes, who had several prior convictions for driving under the influence, didn't face a more serious charge than manslaughter. "She wasn't just hit. She was slammed into," Sabino says.

"The way my sister was killed was murder."