

March 12, 2012

Transportation Committee, Room 2300, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Testimony in Support of Raised Bill No. 5458 - An Act Concerning Municipal Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices At Certain Intersections

Dear Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee:

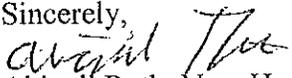
I am writing in strong support of Raised Bill No. 5458 - An Act Concerning Municipal Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices At Certain Intersections. I am traveling out of state today – I am sorry that I could not attend the hearing to tell you in person how important I believe this bill is to public safety.

Red light running is a frequent and dangerous behavior. People somehow think their need to get somewhere quickly outweighs the safety of the other drivers, bikers, and walkers who they share the road with. Because the risk of their being caught is minimal, they continue this dangerous behavior. There already have been too many accidents and deaths from red light running. Please help end these very preventable and costly (both in terms of human lives and financially) crashes by enacting this sensible, limited legislation.

I am a lawyer and characterize myself as liberal, and so the right to privacy is something I greatly value. However when a vehicle is on a public road and runs a red light – it simply does not implicate the constitutional right to privacy to take a photograph of the violation and the license plate of the vehicle. And the legislation has been carefully crafted to ensure that anyone who receives a ticket can raise affirmative defenses, thereby addressing constitutional due process concerns. I know there have been some complaints that the owner of a vehicle, rather than the driver, receives a ticket. This is a nonissue. The bill has an affirmative defense enabling the car owner to show that he/she was not the one driving the car. And if a person knows someone well enough to loan them their car, I cannot imagine the borrower would be unwilling to take responsibility for running a red light and paying the small fine.

Moreover, while I value the right to privacy, I also value the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This bedrock principle is violated when people have to constantly worry about cars running red lights. Red light cameras have been proven to change behavior and deter red light running: <http://www.iihs.org/news/rss/pr020111.html>. Moreover, while increasing yellow light timing can reduce red light running by a factor of 36%, the additional use of red light camera's reduces it by 96%. <http://www.iihs.org/research/qanda/rlr.html>. It would be a shame to not take advantage of a tool that can save lives.

Thank you your serious consideration of this legislation which will prevent costly accidents and save lives.

Sincerely,

Abigail Roth, New Haven