



CCM 2012 Testimony

900 CHAPEL STREET, 9th FLOOR, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-2807 PHONE (203) 498-3000 FAX (203) 562-6314

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 6, 2012

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

CCM supports House Bill 5458 "*An Act Concerning Municipal Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices at Certain Intersections.*"

Similar to proposals from previous legislative sessions – H.B. 5458 would allow towns and cities the option of using automated traffic control signal enforcement devices (i.e. cameras) at local intersections for the purposes of enforcing red light violations. Allowing our hometowns this option would be consistent with current law enforcement practices in various other states. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), in the U.S., red light cameras are used in approximately 556 communities.

CCM supports this proposal as a reasonable means of making local streets safer. No resident has the right to run a red light. **Yellow means slow down – not speed up. This enabling legislation would simply seek to restore this often neglected, yet extremely critical traffic law throughout our neighborhoods.**

It is no secret that our local police officers cannot be at every intersection at all times therefore, allowing the option to use cameras at red lights would enable departments to more efficiently deploy already limited resources. Furthermore -- enforcing traffic laws in dense, community centers by traditional means poses special difficulties for police, who in most cases must follow a red light violator through an intersection in order to stop it. This added risk can endanger motorists and pedestrians, as well as police officers.

A 2011 IIHS study comparing large cities with red light cameras to those without found the devices reduced the fatal red light running crash rate by 24 percent and the rate of all types of fatal crashes at signalized intersections by 17 percent.¹

Photographic enforcement has been proven an effective tool in reducing intersection accidents in many U.S. locations. According to research conducted by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR), "An IIHS evaluation of a red light camera program in Oxnard, California, published in 1999, found that camera enforcement reduced

¹ Hu, W.; McCartt, A.T. and Teoh, E.R. 2011. Effects of red light camera enforcement on fatal crashes in large US cities. Arlington, VA: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

the red light violation rate by about 42%. Increases in compliance were not restricted to the camera sites, but occurred at other intersections as well. Another Oxnard study, published in 2002, showed a significant citywide reduction in intersection crashes, with crashes reduced by 7% and crashes where an injury occurred reduced by 29%; right-angle crashes were reduced by 32%, while right-angle crashes involving injuries were reduced by 68%.²

Last year, Transportation Committee members favorably reported H.B. 6449, *An Act Concerning the Safety of Persons Entering or Exiting a School Bus*, which was later codified into statute (P.A. 11-255) to enforce the laws requiring drivers to stop at least 10 feet from a school bus displaying flashing red signal lights.

P.A. 11-255 allows municipalities and school boards the option to install cameras on school buses in order to record motor vehicles that violate the law. This new public safety option allows police officers to then issue a summons based on the recorded images, and permits such images to be used as evidence against vehicle owners. HB 5458 would mirror this concept and be a logical progression for local public safety efforts into the 21st century. **“But what if someone (a relative or friend) borrows my car and runs a red light?” – a common question that is simply answered: it would be the same scenario as if that friend or relative borrowed a car and received an ordinary parking ticket.**

Trepidation should not be the enemy of advancement when it comes to public safety. Whether it is cameras on school buses or “shot-spotter” devices that detect gunfire in neighborhoods – Hometown Connecticut has a history of embracing technology in order to improve our quality of life, without unnecessary infringements on civil liberties. Its time has come. Give your hometown the option to decide for itself what best fits its own community.

CCM urges the Committee to **favorably report H.B. 5458.**



If you have any questions, please contact Donna Hamzy, Legislative Associate of CCM
via email dhamzy@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 843-0705.

² “Red Light and Speed Cameras” OLR Report, 2010-R-0073; Paul Frisman 2/17/10.