

Ina L. Silverman

March 7, 2012

To: Committee on Transportation
Re: Raised Bill 5458, An Act Concerning Municipal Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices at Certain Intersections

Dear Committee on Transportation:

I am quite sure we agree that drivers who go through red signal lights are a danger to law abiding drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. I hope we also agree that police officers' time can be better spent than sitting at intersections to catch red light runners when a useful alternative to a police presence exists to catch these traffic scofflaws in the form of "red light cameras."

Surely you know that many states already allow the use of cameras to ticket red light runners. One common argument against using cameras for issuing traffic tickets claims a right to privacy is violated. If, however, you are on public streets in public view you do not have a claim to privacy that would trump the public's expectation that drivers will abide by the law and drive safely. Public safety should outweigh a doubtful claim to privacy on a public street. Driving itself is a privilege, not a right.

Some people think this is just another way for cities to raise funds without calling it a tax. I consider this a "voluntary tax." If you don't break the law you won't get "taxed." Everyone hopes that implementing red light cameras to catch dangerous drivers changes driver behavior quickly so governments makes less and less money from fines over time.

Since so many jurisdictions are beginning to employ cameras for traffic law enforcement, the law is evolving. In the meantime, Connecticut should also allow the use of available technology to help make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. I hope that on October 1 of this year this Bill having become law, will go into effect.

Very truly yours,

Ina L. Silverman