



Testimony in support of Senate Bill 453
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee Public Hearing
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Joshua Benson
Bureau Chief for Transportation, Traffic and Parking
City of Stamford

Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, Senator Frantz, Representative Davis and members of the Finance Committee, I am Joshua Benson, Stamford's Bureau Chief for Transportation, Traffic and Parking. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 453, *An Act Concerning Remission of Revenue from Certain Traffic Fines to Municipalities*.

Stamford supports the core provision of SB 453 that fifty percent of the fines for blocking the box be remitted to the municipality in which the violation occurred. Having fifty percent of the revenue returned to the municipality would allow the municipality to enhance enforcement, especially at dangerous "block the box" intersections. At the present time, it costs the municipality more money to enforce the violation and issue the ticket than it receives back from the State.

The City of Stamford believes that the limitation in the bill to the three largest municipalities based on the population in the most recent decennial census does not align with current traffic volume and risk of violations occurring. Therefore it would not be the most appropriate way to select which municipalities participate in the program.

First, the most recent decennial census is already six years old and during those six years, Stamford's population has grown rapidly. Stamford was not one of the three largest municipalities six years ago, but is today.

Secondly, Stamford is a city with a documented history of focusing on traffic safety and traffic flow, as much as any other municipality in the state. Stamford has long focused on the importance of keeping intersections clear for safety and traffic flow reasons and has 24 existing "block the box" intersections. We believe this is the largest number in any municipality in the state, therefore with the highest probability of violations occurring.

We therefore suggest that cities should be allowed to receive revenue from certain traffic violations if they have a population over 100,000. The language of this legislation should be

amended and changed from “...the three municipalities in the state with the largest population based on the most recent federal decennial census...” to read “...the municipalities with a population of over 100,000 based on the most recent federal decennial census...”

This legislation should be supporting large, growing cities like Stamford that also may have increased traffic and congestion issues because of this growth. This revenue will provide cities like Stamford with additional funding to continue or expand safety initiatives related to that growth. In Stamford this includes pedestrian safety, curriculum related to safe walking to school and other elements of our Street Smart program.

We understand that the State may view this change as having an adverse impact on State revenue, or as an incentive to generate local revenue. However, in most cases, few tickets are written due to the lack of resources targeted toward “block the box” and other similar violations. Therefore the State receives almost 100% of (close to) nothing. If the State received 50% of these and other tickets, there could actually be more revenue, not less.

In conclusion, we applaud the Committee for considering legislation that would allow several municipalities to receive revenue from certain traffic fines. We urge the committee to reconsider which municipalities receive revenue and believe that deciding the three largest municipalities from the outdated, most recent decennial census is not the best course to choose these municipalities.