



Testimony on Raised Bill 388

Submitted by Joe Horvath, Director of Legislative Outreach

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I would first like to thank the committee for taking this testimony. My name is Joe Horvath. I am the Director of Legislative Outreach for the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, a Connecticut-based free market think tank. I am submitting comment in opposition to SB 388.

Introducing speed-detecting cameras into Connecticut is, simply put, a poor idea. Even a small pilot program should not be implemented. The practical relationship between speed cameras, government, and taxpayers raises questions of due process and privacy.

This proposal creates a serious concern for the privacy of Connecticut residents in municipalities that can install speed-detecting cameras. There are no safeguards, or even guidelines, contained within the proposal relative to retaining and disposing of data collected by speed-detecting cameras. The Yankee Institute would request that the committee reject this proposal on those grounds alone.

Additionally, the typical enactment of speed-detecting cameras conflicts with our judicial principles, particularly due process. While this pilot program does not yet have a specific process laid out (which is concerning), this committee should consider the due process implications of speed cameras. In practice, speed-detecting cameras often flip the burden of proof to the individual, rather than the state or municipality. While shifting the burden of proof is necessary in certain, limited circumstances, handing out traffic tickets is not one of them.

The protection of citizens is important, as is the enforcement of our laws. However, as anyone who has any driving experience can attest, speed limit enforcement is inconsistent. Often times, drivers who are traveling at the speed of traffic, rather than the posted speed limit, are not subjected to a stop or ticket, presumably because they do not pose a credible threat to themselves or other drivers. This logic is sound. Speed-detecting cameras, however, are incapable of exercising judgment and determining whether someone who barely and temporarily exceeds speed limits is producing any harm. If the police can, and do, make this determination routinely and for good reason, the committee should consider allowing them to retain that amount of discretion.

Because speed cameras violate due process and create privacy concerns, the committee should reject this proposal.