

# Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5328

AN ACT CONCERNING AUTOMATED TRAFFIC SAFETY ENFORCEMENT IN

**Title:** WORK ZONES AND MUNICIPALITIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/18/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/4/2024

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Transportation Committee

## **CO-SPONSORS**

Rep. Geraldo Reyes

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

In 2021, Governor Ned Lamont authorized a pilot program to operate speed safety cameras in work zones for the purpose of addressing the large number of crashes and injuries in those zones. During the enforcement period, nearly 25,000 warnings and 750 violation fines were issued. The effectiveness of the program resulted in this bill, which seeks to expand the pilot into a permanent work zone camera program.

## **PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE**

In line 65 replaced "the" with "At least seven days prior to a work zone speed control system becoming operational" to clarify the timeline to notify when the department must notify the Division of state police.

In line 69 replaced "certify" with "provide written notice of the date such system will be operational" to clarify in what form the Division of State police must be notified

In line 67 replaced "when a work zone speed control system is operational" with "and the chief executive officer of the municipality where such system is located" because the previous language became redundant, and so as it clarifies the need to inform the chief executive officer as such information is pertinent to their duties.

In line 89 added "or subsequent violations" to clarify the fine does not merely apply to a second violation

Amended section 6 to require the Commissioner of Transportation to submit a report to the joint standing committee on data collected pertaining to work zone speed control systems no later than February 1, 2026, so as it evaluates the effectiveness of the law.

Added a section to repeal subsection (i) of general statutes 13a-264, to be replaced effective July 1, 2024, to provide certain legal defenses for the owners of motor vehicles identified by a work speed control system

Added a section to repeal section general statutes 13a-265, to be replaced effective July 1, 2024, to grant the Department of Transportation and any vendors with information of the owner of a motor vehicle identified by a work speed safety system so that they may aid in the enforcement of this law.

#### **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

##### **Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation**

The commissioner provided testimony in support of this bill. His testimony begins by explaining the rationale for its proposal. He goes on to express that the passage of the bill will make enforcement of safety precautions around work zones much easier through the presence of speed safety cameras. The commissioner believes that cameras will dissuade drivers from reckless behavior around work zones and protect road workers from harm. The commissioner concludes with his hopes that work to continue working with the committee to keep work zones and roadways safe.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

##### **Carl Chisem, President, Connecticut Employees Union Independent**

Provided testimony in support of lines 35-104 of the bill on grounds that data resulting from the speed control pilot program demonstrated overwhelmingly that highway speed cameras are effective deterrents to reckless driving in work zones. He went on to share that the data collected showed that work zones subject to the pilot program saw declines in motorists' speed during enforcement, as well as implying a low percentage of repeat offense due to the difference between warnings issued and violation fines issued. Chisem ends his testimony by asserting the bill will serve to significantly reduce the risks encountered in road work zones.

##### **Gara Betsy, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns**

Provided testimony in support of the bill on grounds that the expansion of work zone speed control systems will enhance road safety. Measures must be taken on account of the number of accidents on state roadways and especially in work zones. The portion of the bill which permits municipalities will also allow for the punishment of habitual offenders.

##### **Alec Slatky, Managing Director, Public and Government Affairs, AAA Northeast and Tracy Noble, Manager, Public and Government Affairs, AAA Club Alliance**

Provided testimony in support of the bill, while offering suggestions to strengthen its effectiveness. AAA endorse the use of automated traffic enforcement on grounds that speed cameras have been shown to improve compliance with speed limits and reduce speed-

related injury. They provide three suggestions which they believe will aid in the achievement of the bill's goals of ensuring safer roadways. The first is to only allow for one warning for the first offense, even if subsequent offenses take place more than a year later. While a warning for a first violation is reasonable, the language of the bill implies a driver could only be fined if two violations occur within one year. AAA recommends only a warning for the first offense and issuing tickets for every subsequent offense regardless of when it occurs. The second suggestion is that states be allowed to keep license plate data for longer than one year, which would serve to make the prior suggestion enforceable. Thirdly, AAA suggests annual reports be published and made available to researchers so that policymakers in other states can study the effects of Connecticut's program.

**Ed Hawthorne, President, Connecticut AFL-CIO**

Provided testimony in support of the bill. Hawthorne lauds the General Assembly for steps taken over the last several years to prevent death and injury in work zones, however notes that lack of state police presence created a persistent difficulty in enforcing work zone protections. The effectiveness of the speed safety camera pilot program demonstrated a method of overcoming those difficulties by providing a means of monitoring work zones for violation. Hawthorne endorses the passage of HB5328 in the interest of protecting road workers by encouraging motorists to mind their speed in work zones.

**Keith Brothers, President and Joseph Toner, Executive Director, Connecticut Building Trades Council**

Provided testimony in support of the bill. CBTC asserts the necessity of the bill due to the inherently dangerous nature of road work and the difficulty of stationing state police at work zones. The data compiled from the speed safety camera pilot program demonstrated it to be an effective method for mitigating difficulties in the enforcement of work zone traffic violations and transforming the program into a permanent initiative will enhance safety for workers.

**Abigail Roth**

Provided testimony in support of the bill, expressing belief it will make roads safer for workers and motorists.

**Travis Woodward, President, CSEA-SEIU**

Provided testimony in support of the bill, expressing belief it will make roads safer for workers and motorists.

**Les Archer, Transportation Maintainer, Department of Transportation**

Provided testimony in support of lines 35-104 of the bill, expressing belief it will make roads safer for workers and motorists.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Nicholas Amatos**

Provided testimony opposing the passage of this bill.

**Reported by: Garrett Smith**

**Date: 4/3/24**