

# S A F E T Y F O C U S

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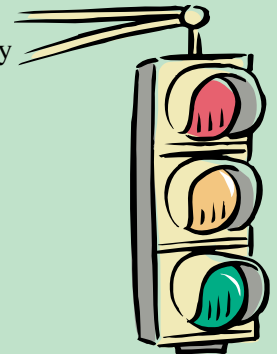
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## Philadelphia Mayor and City Council Approve Red Light Camera Pilot Program

On May 29, 2003, the hard work of many traffic safety advocates and legislators paid off when Philadelphia Mayor John Street signed a bill allowing red light cameras to be used at intersections throughout the city. The Mayor's approval followed a 15-1 vote in favor of cameras by the Philadelphia City Council at the beginning of May.



The camera bill was introduced in Philadelphia by City Councilman Frank Rizzo. Last year Pennsylvania Speaker of the House of Representatives John Perzel (R-172) and State Representative George Kenney (R-170) introduced a bill authorizing the city to use red light cameras. Two Philadelphia intersections, Roosevelt Boulevard at Red Lion Road and Grant Avenue, were named two of the most dangerous in the country by State Farm Insurance. In 2001, 20 people died in red light running crashes throughout the city.

Under the new program, cameras at nine city intersections will photograph the license plates of vehicles entering the intersection after the light turns red. Motorists receiving citations will be fined \$100 or may contest their citation through the city's Bureau of Administrative Adjudication. No points are issued against the driver's license.

National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running Executive Director Leslie Blakey, who testified at the Philadelphia City Council hearing on May 6, 2003, expressed the Campaign's support of the program: "It's a matter of saving lives. The citizens of Philadelphia are the real winners as a result of today's actions."

*The article appeared May 4, 2003 and is reprinted with permission from The Dallas Morning News.*

### **Red-light plan moving forward: Cameras for catching lawbreakers to go up despite lawmakers**

Smile: You're not on a red-light camera - for now.

A bill that would have authorized cities to use automatic cameras to catch red-light runners failed to pass (cont. on pg.4)

## **Important Developments at Campaign Advisory Board Meeting**

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running's Advisory Board met in Washington, DC on May 28, 2003. During the day-long meeting, Advisory Board members discussed the Campaign's activities over the past year, reviewed numerous new research studies on red light running prevention and enforcement and discussed plans for the next year.

Advisory Board members were joined for lunch by representatives of NHTSA and FHWA to discuss the USDOT publication *Guidance for Red Light Camera Programs*. The two agencies reiterated their strong support for red light cameras. The Advisory Board members shared their concerns and suggestions about the publication. At NHTSA and FHWA's invitation, the Advisory Board will provide formal comments on *Guidance for Using Red Light Cameras* within the next month.

The Advisory Board also approved plans for a 2003 Stop on Red Week (August 30-September 5, 2003) event with the Arizona Diamondbacks at their August 27<sup>th</sup> home game. The Campaign and The Red Means Stop Coalition will be holding a pre-game awards ceremony, staffing a community education kiosk, showing a public service announcement during the game and distributing red light running prevention posters featuring Diamondbacks player Luis Gonzalez to game attendees. Mark your calendars and come to Arizona to see the game!



### **AAA Poll Shows Prevalence of Red Light Running and Speeding**

In time for the Memorial Day holiday, AAA released a poll revealing the large number of Americans who are self-reported bad drivers. The poll results are drawn from a nationwide phone survey of 1,100 drivers. The worst offenders tend to fall in the 26-44 age range. The "Drive for Life" poll of highway habits revealed that almost one-third of all respondents say they run red or yellow lights. More than 70% of all respondents admit to speeding. Driving 10 mph over the limit is considered acceptable driving practice to one in five respondents. The poll is just one part of a new effort called "Drive for Life" which aims to refresh motorists' safe driving skills by encouraging voluntary online driving rules and skills testing. The test can be found at [www.safedrivingtest.com](http://www.safedrivingtest.com) and, along with an upcoming television special, is the first part of the multi-year campaign.

### **Point/Counterpoint**

*In this issue of Safety Focus we begin a new feature entitled Point/Counterpoint. Each month we will address one misconception of automated enforcement frequently cited by opponents. It is our hope that with more education opponents may begin to recognize the benefits of cameras.*

**Opponent Point:** There are far more obvious ways than red light cameras of dealing with the [red light running] problem – such as increasing the time of yellow lights in dangerous intersections.

**Campaign Counterpoint:** The purpose of a yellow light is to warn of an impending red light and to allow motorists too close to the light to safely stop to proceed through the intersection and those far enough away to decelerate safely. Merely extending the yellow light time allows the motorist to interpret the yellow light as an extension of the green light. In fact, no research study has proven that lengthening the yellow light time past Institute of Transportation Engineers standards further decreases crashes.

*“Any singular approach ultimately shortchanges public safety because it doesn't address a more challenging behavioral cause: people often run red lights because they can get away with it. Applying consistent consequences in the form of fines for every violation will reduce red light running. Drivers will learn the behavior is no longer tolerated. Failing to acknowledge and alter consequences of red light running behavior reduces the effectiveness of any countermeasure.” — Dr. Bryan Porter, behavioral psychologist and associate professor at Old Dominion University and a member of the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running Advisory Board*

# Legislative Update

Below please find highlights from a few of the many photo enforcement bills currently pending in state legislatures. For more information, please see the articles on specific bills in this issue and visit Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety's webpage at [www.saferoads.org](http://www.saferoads.org).

**California:** S.B. 780 was introduced by Senator Torlakson on 2/21/03. It was passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on 4/22/03 and the Senate Transportation Committee on 5/7/03. A hearing on 5/29/03 in the Senate Appropriations Committee was postponed. It is scheduled to be taken up by the Committee next week. The bill is sponsored by the California Peace Officers' Association. It requires automated enforcement system violations to be cited as civil violations, provides for owner liability, sets the fine limit at no more than \$200, and exempts those violations from a traffic violation point count process.

**Connecticut:** H.B. 6282 (Rep. Farr) was referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary where it failed to pass in time to meet the 4/16/03 Judiciary Committee's joint favorable deadline. It would have authorized local law enforcement agencies to use automated traffic enforcement devices to photograph motor vehicles that violate speeding and stoplight laws. It would also have provided that the fines received from such violations be remitted to the municipalities in which the violations occurred.

H.B. 5911 (Rep. Fleischmann) has been referred to the Joint Committee on Planning and Development where it failed to pass in time to meet the 4/16/03 joint favorable deadline. It would authorize local law enforcement agencies to use automated traffic enforcement devices and to provide that fines received from such violations be remitted to the municipalities in which the violations occurred.

**Illinois:** S.B. 173 (Sen. Cullerton) provided for statewide authorization of photo enforcement. It passed out of the Senate on April 3 by a vote of 41-17. On 5/27/03 it was passed out of the House Transportation and Motor Vehicles Committee but was defeated on third reading on the House floor.

**Indiana:** S.B. 3 (Sen. Adams) passed out of the Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee on 1/28/03 and passed the Senate on 2/4/03 by a vote of 31-19. Attorney General Steve Carter has strongly endorsed the bill. Rep. Giaquinta and Rep. Wolkins are the House patrons of the bill. It has been assigned to the House Roads and Transportation Committee which is chaired by Rep. Scott Reske, however, the Chairman did not schedule a hearing on the bill due to pressure from the Speaker of the House who opposes the legislation.

**Maryland:** The General Assembly passed S.B. 455 (Sen. Forehand) on April 7 which would have provided for statewide authorization for the use of photo radar in school zones and residential areas. The bill was vetoed by Gov. Ehrlich on 5/21/03 and advocates are assessing the possibility of a veto override.

*(cont. on pg.5)*

*(cont. from pg.1)*

## **Red Light Plan Moving Forward**

the Texas House last week. But cameras will still go up in Garland.

“I was very disappointed,” said Rep. Fred Hill, whose district includes Garland and Richardson. “I think the House did not take the issue seriously. There’s too much of a knee-jerk reaction to the government photographing citizens.”

Opponents of the bill raised privacy concerns, but Mr. Hill said he didn’t think privacy was an issue when a motorist violates the law on a public street.

Having your picture taken and a notice mailed to your home would be less invasive than being stopped by an officer and getting a ticket on the side of the road, he said.

“I think an unintended consequence of the bill’s defeat may be for every city - like the city of Garland - to take advantage of the opportunity to videotape its red-light runners showing the occupants as well as the vehicle and fine the driver, which I believe the attorney general said was permissible,” Mr. Hill said. “The invasion of privacy will be even greater under that alternative.”

Garland City Attorney Charles Hinton said that Garland, as a home-rule city, has authority to do practically anything that the Legislature has not proscribed, which includes installing red-light cameras.

“It’s unfortunate that the Legislature took the position they did,” Mr. Hinton said. “We have our ordinance in place, and we’re going to go forward. The only question is whether to levy civil penalties or pursue criminal prosecution.”

As designed now, Garland’s system would photograph violators’ license plates and levy civil fines on registered owners.

For criminal prosecution, Mr. Hinton said, the city would need to add a second camera at each intersection to take pictures of drivers.

“We are meeting with our vendor about that,” he said.

Richardson Assistant City Manager David Morgan said his city had no plans for cameras in view of the House vote.

“At this time we haven’t made any determination,” he said.

Mr. Morgan said the city of Richardson installed cameras at three test sites from 1999 through 2001.

“We found that a person ran a red light every two minutes during peak traffic hours,” he said, “and every five minutes on average on a daily basis.”

Suggestions about changing signal timing cycles offered only a temporary solution because drivers quickly adjust to the new cycles and return to their red-light running habits, according to Mr. Morgan.

“We think engineering, education and traditional enforcement are key factors in addressing red-light running,” Mr. Morgan said. “Also, as part of overall enforcement efforts, cameras have proven effective.”

# Legislative Update

**Missouri:** S.B. 90 (Sen. Kennedy) was introduced and referred to the Transportation Committee. It would allow ten cities throughout the state to establish red light camera programs, establish owner liability, set a \$50 fine limit, provide for a flat fee arrangement with the vendor, and it would contain a sunset clause (Aug. 28, 2008). Senator Kennedy successfully amended this language onto HB 327 on the Senate Floor on 5/15/03. However, it was not passed in the final version of the legislation.

**Nevada:** S.B. 220 (Senate Judiciary Committee) would have repealed the existing prohibition on the use of photo enforcement. It passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee on 3/27/03 but was defeated on 4/23/03.

**New York:** There are five bills that have been introduced. All were referred to the Assembly and Senate Transportation Committees. Only one of them (S.B. 3221) appears to have moved out of committee and has advanced to 3<sup>rd</sup> reading.

S.B. 3221 (Kuhl) would authorize municipalities with populations under one million to enact a local law or ordinance imposing liability for fines on registrants where operators of vehicles have failed to obey traffic-control devices; only applies if municipality has photo-monitoring of traffic-control device; provides affirmative defense; directs commissioner of transportation to promulgate necessary rules and regulations.

**North Carolina:** H.B. 562 (Rep. Alexander, Rep. Rhodes) passed the House on 4/30/03 and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee where the committee offered a substitute amendment. The bill now goes to the Senate Floor on 6/4/03. It would authorize a 3 year photo radar pilot program in Charlotte.

Additionally, H.B. 68 (Rep. Lucas) passed the House on 3/24/03 and was passed by the Senate on 5/27/03. It will allow the use of red light camera enforcement in Spring Lake and Newton.

**Pennsylvania:** A Philadelphia City ordinance to enact a photo red light pilot program authorized by the General Assembly in 2002 was passed on 5/15/03. Mayor Street approved the program on 5/29/03.

**Texas:** Statewide red light photo enforcement bills were introduced. H.B. 901 (Rep. King) was passed out of the House Transportation Committee 6-2 but was defeated on a House Floor vote 4/28/03.

**Virginia:** H.B. 1696 (Del. McQuigg) was passed by the Militia Police & Public Safety Committee 12-10 on 1/18/03, but the bill was re-referred to the Committee and on 1/31/03, the bill was defeated on a tie vote. On Feb. 6, Sen. Quayle agreed to conform his bill (S.B. 840) exactly to Del. McQuigg's which would have removed the sunset provision. S.B. 840 passed the Senate on 1/22/03 but was defeated by the House Militia, Police & Public Safety Committee.

**Washington:** H.B. 1324 was referred to the House Transportation Committee. The companion bill, S.B. 5369, is pending in the Rules Committee. The bills provide for statewide authorization for photo enforcement (red light, radar and railroad crossing) and owner liability. The bill will carry over to next year.

# National Campaign Member Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety is seeking **SURVIVOR ADVOCATES**



Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) is building a network of individuals who have either survived a red light running crash or lost a loved one because of a red light running crash. Advocates is an alliance of consumer, health, law enforcement and safety groups and insurance companies and agents working together to make America's roads safer. Since its inception in 1989, Advocates has worked with *survivor advocates* to advance and protect highway safety laws throughout the country. These individuals have suffered the personal consequences of motor vehicle crashes and have decided to work to protect others from the pain they have had to endure.

*Survivor advocates* can become as involved as they would like in efforts to curtail red light running. No previous advocacy experience is needed. Advocates will work with these individuals to prepare, assist and even coach them for advocacy involvement if desired. Some of the activities in which survivor advocates can choose to participate are: writing letters to legislators; testifying before state legislative committees; speaking to news reporters on the phone; writing letters to the editors of local papers; serving as a spokesperson at media events; and working with other survivor advocates throughout the country.

If you know anyone who has been involved in a red light running crash or who has a family member or friend who was injured or killed in a red light running crash and might be interested in talking with Advocates, please contact:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety  
750 First Street, NE, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20002  
202-408-1711 or 800-659-2247  
Fax: 202-408-1699  
E-mail: [advocates@saferoads.org](mailto:advocates@saferoads.org)  
Website: [www.saferoads.org](http://www.saferoads.org)

**All discussions and information will be kept confidential.**

## **Attention Campaign Members!**

Do you have friends, family or colleagues who would be interested in receiving our newsletter? Do you regularly forward the newsletter on to others who are interested? Help us increase awareness of the dangers of red light running by asking anyone who is interested to e-mail us at [bplevelich@blakey-agnew.com](mailto:bplevelich@blakey-agnew.com) to be added to our mailing list.

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