

S A F E T Y F O C U S

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Arizona Governor Proclaims March Red Light Running Awareness Month



On average, a motorist in Phoenix runs a red light every 12 minutes and during rush hour, every five minutes.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) statistics released in 2000, Phoenix is the worst city in the nation for red light running fatalities. The Red Means Stop Coalition (RMSC), a nonprofit organization formed by victims of red light running, points to the data in the IIHS study and reflects that Arizona could improve by 50 percent and still be ranked worst in the nation.

Governor Janet Napolitano and a number of Arizona mayors have brought attention to this deadly issue by proclaiming March as "Red Light Running Awareness Month."

To launch Red Light Running Awareness Month, law enforcement officials, State Farm Insurance, and victims of red light crashes joined the Red Means Stop Coalition at an 11 AM press conference on Saturday, March 1, 2003 at the northeast corner of 19th and Northern Avenues. This intersection was identified by State Farm as the second most dangerous in Arizona and one of the top ten most dangerous in the nation.

(cont. on pg.2)

Upcoming Events -- Lifesavers Conference

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running will be attending the Lifesavers Conference at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago from March 9- 11, 2003. Campaign representatives will be at our conference booth to educate visitors on the dangers of red light running and sign up new members for the Campaign. The Lifesavers Conference is the premier national highway safety meeting in the U.S. and expected to have a record-breaking attendance of over 1,500 traffic safety advocates this year. If you are in Chicago, please stop by our booth and say hello.

(cont. from pg. 1)

Red Light Running Awareness Month

In addition to the reading of the Governor's proclamation, RMSC unveiled preliminary 2002 red light crash statistics, including the number of fatalities and total crashes. The press conference attendees included Roberta Voss, former state Senator who supported legislation that stiffened the penalties for persons who cause crashes by running red lights, representatives from the governor's office and the cities of Chandler and Phoenix and survivors whose lives have been forever changed by another's decision to run a red light.

State Farm Insurance presented a grant to RMSC for \$102,000. This grant represents State Farm's continuing partnership and support of the RMSC educational awareness campaign to promote intersection safety and reduce red light running. In 2001, State Farm announced its list of the 10 most dangerous intersections in the nation, two of which are in Phoenix. State Farm also made available grants of up to \$260,000 to the City of Phoenix to both study and improve those intersections.

Red Means Stop Coalition was founded in 1999 by three families who were touched by the tragedy of red light running. RMSC's goal is to increase public awareness of red light running and intersection vehicle crash consequences. RSMC can be reached at 602-323-9163 or at www.redmeansstop.org.

Letters to the Campaign

All letters are reprinted with the author's permission. If you have a viewpoint you would like to share with the Campaign's Executive Director, please e-mail lblakey@blakey-agnew.com.

Dear Leslie,

I was amazed to find there is a national organization to work on the problem of red light running. It would seem so simple for everyone to just obey the laws and exercise sensible safety measures when behind the wheel.

I have watched with growing alarm the practice of red light running in Las Vegas. Drivers used to take the yellow at the last moment, but now it is common to see, daily, drivers entering our six lane intersections well after the light is red, and travelling at high rates of speed.

I wrote a letter to the editor of our local newspaper a few months ago on the subject. I have teen drivers, and the scariest thing about teaching a young driver to drive in this city is to instruct them how to run the yellow safely. By this I mean teaching them how to determine who is behind you, how far back are they, how fast they appear to be going, and, hardest of all, how to sense if they will run the light. Because, if that is the other driver's intent, and you stop, you will be rear-ended, so you may need to run that yellow light even if you are inclined to stop. It gives me a sick feeling to do this. It sends new drivers the wrong message. But more than that, it angers me immensely that I have to even address that.

(cont. on pg. 5)

Legislative Update

California: S.B. 780 was introduced by Senator Torlakson on 2/21/03. It 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.

Illinois: Sen. Cullerton has introduced a shell bill, S.B. 96, and is drafting language pertaining to photo enforcement.

Maryland: H.B. 694, sponsored by Del. Bronrott was introduced on 2/7/03 and has been referred to the House Environmental Matters Committee. It will be heard on March 11 at 1 p.m. The companion bill (S.B. 455 – Sen. Forehand) was heard in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on 2/13/03 and is awaiting a vote. S.B. 456, sponsored by Sen. Mooney, would repeal red light camera enforcement and is also in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee pending a vote.

A Montgomery County delegation bill (H.B. 385) has been passed by the Montgomery County House Delegation and is being considered next week by the Senate Delegation. It would authorize the use of photo radar in Montgomery County only. A Baltimore County bill has been introduced to place photo radar enforcement on Liberty road.

Texas: Statewide red light photo enforcement bills have been introduced. H.B. 901 (Rep. King), H.B. 282 (Rep. Marino) and H.B. 200 (Rep. Berman) are pending in the House Transportation Committee. ACS state consultants: Christian & Hubble, The Messer Group.

Washington: H.B. 1324 was referred to the House Transportation Committee and S.B. 5369 passed out of the Judiciary Committee on 02/21/03 and was referred to the Ways and Means Committee.

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. The challenge will be in the House where it has been defeated in previous years. Rep. Giaquinta and Rep. Wolkins will be the House patrons of the bill. After March 7, the bill will go to the House Public Policy, Ethics and Veteran Affairs Committee.

Pennsylvania: The Campaign is supporting the passage of a Philadelphia City ordinance to enact a photo red light pilot program authorized by the General Assembly in 2002.

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.

(cont. on pg. 4)

(cont. from pg. 3)

Legislative Update

Connecticut: H.B. 6282 (Rep. Farr) has been referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. It would authorize local law enforcement agencies to use automated traffic enforcement devices to photograph motor vehicles that violate speeding and traffic signal laws, and to provide 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 and will have a public hearing on 02/26/03. 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.

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, establishes owner liability, sets a \$50 fine limit, provides for a flat fee arrangement with the vendor, and it contains a sunset clause (Aug, 28, 2008).

New York: There are five bills that have been introduced and referred to the Assembly Transportation Committee. They are:

AB 48 (Lafayette)/SB1367 (Trunzo) would authorize the counties of New York City, Nassau and Suffolk, the Long Island Rail Road and the Metro-North Commuter Railroad to implement demonstration programs imposing monetary fines on the registrant of the vehicle for the failure of the operator of such vehicle to obey railroad grade crossing signals indicating the approach of a train; authorizes the use of remote-control photo radar equipment for use in such program.

AB 599 (Hoyt) 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 device; only applies if municipality has photo-monitoring of traffic-control device; provides affirmative defense; directs commissioner of transportation to promulgate necessary rules and regulations.

AB 766 (Hoyt) would authorize municipalities in Erie County to implement a program imposing monetary liability on vehicle owners for failure of an operator thereof to comply with traffic-control indications in such municipality; provides said program shall empower a municipality to install and operate traffic-control signal photo-monitoring devices at intersections and highway-railroad crossings.

AB 772 (M. Cohen) would authorize a photo radar demonstration program in cities of one million or more imposing civil liability upon vehicle owners for maximum speed limit violations.

The legislative update portion of the newsletter is a synopsis of recent bills pertaining to automated enforcement. For a more comprehensive list, please see Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety's webpage at www.saferoads.org.

(cont. from pg. 2)

Letters to the Campaign

When I learned to drive, yellow meant slow down and stop, period.

So, my comment is this: how do parents of all the new 15-16 year old drivers teach their teens to be safe, to obey the law, to push the law to the limit in order to be safe, and to read the mind and intent of the idiot behind them? And why is there not an absolute outcry in more communities about this problem? Our metropolitan police are apparently too short-staffed to do more than monitor an intersection now and then. And the “norm” here is changing to what appears to be greater tolerance of this practice, and more people doing it. There is acknowledgement of the issue (“Oh yeah, gotta watch all those red light runners”) but no solutions that I see, and too much indifference.

Whatever you are doing, please keep doing it. The word needs to get out, and changes need to be made. I am tired of the violators’ rights to privacy. My greatest fear is losing a loved one to a crash that results from a red-light runner. Thank you.

**Carolyn
Las Vegas**

News summaries from across the nation

Red light bill hits one green light February 5, 2003 *South Bend Tribune*

The Indiana Senate passed a bill allowing red light cameras in jurisdictions statewide by a vote of 31-19. Indiana is 10th in the nation in terms of red light running fatalities. Under Senator Kent Adams’ bill, police officers would review citations and fines would be a maximum of \$100. The bill also provides that warning signs be placed wherever the cameras are used and no points would be issued against a driver’s license unless there were aggravating circumstances. This is the third year the bill has been heard in the Senate and the first time it will get a House hearing. In previous years, the House had refused to hear the bill due to privacy concerns with cameras. The bill hearing in the House could take place as soon as the second week in March.

Red light camera begins clicking today: Pictures at Smithville and Patterson could lead to ticket February 14, 2003 *The Dayton Daily News*

Dayton began camera enforcement at one intersection on February 14. The city plans to place 17 more cameras at high crash intersections. The fine for red light running is \$85 with no points imposed. Motorists may avail themselves of an appeals process for disputed citations. The first thirty days of operation will be a grace period with warnings sent instead of citations. City officials will evaluate the cameras’ impact on crash reduction before deciding to add or remove cameras in the future.

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
Website: 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 to be added to our mailing list.

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