

SAFETY FOCUS

Published by The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running



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Volume Six, No.3

April 2007

This issue focuses on the approval of the statewide camera law in Virginia, the start of Maryland's first speed camera program, the results of a new UK driving study and a review of all pending automated enforcement legislation.

Virginia Governor Signs Camera Bill Into Law

Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine has signed legislation that will bring red light cameras back to the Old Dominion after a two-year absence.

Kaine signed the bill into law on March 23rd, ending a whirlwind legislative session in which enabling legislation circumvented a House subcommittee which had killed all previous red light camera-related bills.

The new law improves upon the previous red light camera law by expanding the authority to use cameras to almost every city and county in the state. Previously, only a handful of communities were allowed to use the lifesaving technology.

Any locality in Virginia can now install cameras at one intersection for every 10,000 residents. While this may restrict the ability of rural counties and smaller towns to use the technology, it will allow virtually all larger jurisdictions like Fairfax County, Richmond and Virginia Beach to install as many cameras as needed to effectively enforce red light running.

The new law allows cameras to be set up as early as July 1st, but local governments that previously had cameras believe it will probably take longer to finalize new contracts and lease or buy the equipment.

Virginia Beach City Councilman Jim Wood recently told *The Virginian-Pilot* that he wants to use the maximum number of cameras allowed, but he acknowledged that the cost may force the city

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Georgia Camera Ban Defeated

A handful of legislators in Georgia who hoped to shut down the state's growing number of red light camera programs have failed.

In recent years, over a dozen Georgia communities, including Atlanta and Savannah, have installed red light cameras. However, in January, a few lawmakers tried to make it impossible for localities to continue using them by diverting all revenue generated by them to the state government. This would have forced the localities to completely cover the costs of the programs.

A compromise measure will divert a small percentage of revenue after program costs to the state's emergency trauma care fund.

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to phase in the equipment over several years.

Virginia Beach previously spent over \$197,000 on camera leases, signage, citation review and processing and other program costs in the six months the cameras were operational before the camera law was allowed to sunset.

"I want everybody to think every intersection is monitored so they'll think twice about running a light," Wood told the newspaper. The full Senate gave its approval of the legislation by a vote of 30 to 10 on Feb. .

Approval of the new law also led to a flurry of interest in red light cameras from cities across the state that had never before expressed much interest in the technology.

A recent report in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* found widespread support for red light cameras among the police agencies in the greater Richmond area.

Chesterfield County Administrator Lane B. Ramsey told the newspaper, "I believe it would be sort of irresponsible if we didn't take a strong look at this. Obviously, we've got to go through the full process and understand all the implications and have our board consider an ordinance before we can do it."

According to various news articles, other localities that have now expressed an interest in red light cameras include: Albemarle County, Bluefield, Charlottesville, Henrico County, Martinsville, Petersburg, Prince William County and Richmond.

NOTABLE QUOTES

"I expect sooner or later that a member of my family will receive a 'red light' ticket. I will give them the same advice I give everyone else: Review the video. If it does not show a violation, then set it for a hearing. Please!.... A \$50 red light ticket is a gentle yet meaningful reminder to a young driver to pay better attention to the traffic laws. Who knows, it may save a life one day."

-- Red Bank, TN City Judge Johnny Houston discussing the city's new red light camera program from a March 21st article in *The Chattanooga*.

"Intersections are dangerous places for accidents, and you can't have a police officer at every intersection. If people will obey the law, they don't have to worry about getting a ticket. It (the new law) gives the police officers more of a safety net to police those intersections without having someone there."

-- Bluefield, Va., Police Chief Harry Cundiff quoted in a March 26th article in the *Bluefield Daily Telegraph* (VA) on the approval of the new red light camera law in Virginia.

Maryland Speed Cameras Activated

On March 12th, Montgomery County launched the *Safe Speed* program, Maryland's first automated speed enforcement effort. City and county officials were joined by traffic safety experts and members of law enforcement in front of Meadow Hall Elementary School in the City of Rockville.

Montgomery County was granted the authority by the State of Maryland in 2006 to conduct a pilot automated speed limit enforcement program in residential areas and school zones with speed limits of 35 mph or less. Similar automated speed enforcement programs also are being initiated in Chevy Chase Village, and the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg.

"Our goal is safer streets," said Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett. "Speeding is a serious traffic problem that increases the risk of crashes, injuries and deaths. With the introduction of the *Safe Speed* program, we intend to make Montgomery County safer for both pedestrians and motorists."

The *Safe Speed* program will initially involve six mobile speed enforcement vans equipped with radar cameras. The mobile



A car passes one of the new Safe Speed mobile speed camera units deployed in a Montgomery County school zone.



Montgomery County Police Chief J. Thomas Manger talks about the new Safe Speed program. Police officials from Chevy Chase Village, Gaithersburg and Rockville are standing behind him.

units will rotate through designated speed enforcement zones which meet the location and speed requirements. Special signage is being placed at every county gateway road and at each enforcement zone.

The cameras will photograph vehicles traveling more than 10 mph above the posted speed limit. March 12th marked the beginning of a 30-day warning period during which violators will be issued warnings by mail. At the end of the warning period, violators will receive citations.

Citations will be reviewed to verify the violation and processed to determine the registered owner. The owner of the vehicle will receive a citation in the mail and a \$40 fine. No license points will be assigned and insurance companies will not be notified.

Locations of the cameras — and more information about the program — can be found on the new *Safe Speed* webpage, which can be accessed through the Montgomery County Police Department website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/poltml.asp?url=/content/pol/ask/speed.asp

Former Judge In Hot Water Over Camera Ticket Dodge

Allegedly Blamed Sydney Speeding Ticket On Dead American Friend

Reprinted from *Reuters News Service*

A former Australian judge, who blamed a dead woman for a speeding offence in his car, has been charged by police and could face a hefty jail sentence over his attempts to avoid a A\$77 (\$62) traffic fine.

After a long-running investigation that has attracted nationwide publicity, police laid 13 separate charges of perjury, perverting the course of justice and other offences against former judge and human rights advocate Marcus Einfeld.

A Sydney newspaper last year sparked the massive police investigation into the use of statutory declarations to avoid speeding fines after revealing a woman blamed for driving Einfeld's car had died three years before the offence.

"It will be alleged that the offences relate to four separate camera detection infringement notices," chief police investigator Colin Dyson told reporters.

The police investigation found 240 people had also used a scam to blame another dead person, or a man living in another state, after their cars were photographed speeding or committing traffic offences.

A Sydney court last August dismissed a speeding charge against Einfeld when he provided a declaration that he had loaned his car to an old friend from the United States on the day of the offence.

A Sydney newspaper which attempted to verify Einfeld's story later found the woman had died in a car accident in 2003 — three years before Einfeld's car was photographed speeding in Sydney.

Einfeld, who has previously denied any wrongdoing, was bailed to appear in court in April. The offences he is now charged with carry sentences of up to 14 years in jail.

New UK Study: Loud Music A Big Problem For Drivers

A new study conducted by a UK traffic safety organization found that decibel-loving drivers aren't just risking their hearing, they are also risking their own safety and the safety of the driving public.

The RAC Foundation reports that "drivers who were listening to loud music with a fast beat were twice as likely to go through a red light, and that they have twice as many accidents."

Foundation research has also shown that, while improvements in technology mean car engines are 50 percent quieter than they were ten years ago, factory-fitted car stereos have become more powerful and after-market units more affordable.

The study findings also showed:

- a typical car stereo can produce 110 dB — well above the 85 dB range that can cause hearing loss.
- noisy cars are the second most irritating neighbourhood noise in the UK.

Police Officers Are Victims Of Recent Crashes

They take oaths to "serve and protect" but a series of red light running crashes have sent police officers to the hospital in four different states.

All four incidents occurred within days of each other, and despite conventional wisdom, all occurred to officers who were either on non-emergency calls or off-duty.

The first incident occurred in Denver, CO on March 22nd, when a driver blew through a red light and struck an officer on a motorcycle. Luckily, the officer was not seriously injured.

The very next day, a Houston, TX officer was driving home in his personal vehicle around midnight when a suspected drunk driver ran a red light and struck his Jeep.

He is also expected to fully recover.

On March 26th, two Chicago, IL police officers were hospitalized when a minivan driver lost control of his vehicle, ran a red light and plowed into their patrol car. The driver was cited for running the red light and several other charges.

The most serious crash occurred in Tucson, AZ on March 27th just after 26-year-old Officer Jason Wilhelmsen finished his late-night shift.

The officer was headed home when an empty gas tanker ran a red light and struck his vehicle.

Wilhelmsen had to be extricated and was listed in critical, but stable condition according to the latest media reports.

Legislative Update — April 2007

If there is legislation pending in your state that is not listed here, please contact the Campaign at (202)828-9100 or info@stopredlightrunning.com.

RED LIGHT RUNNING SAFETY CAMERAS

Alabama: HB 145 (Collier) would authorize the City of Mobile to use red light cameras. Referred to the committee reviewing Mobile County Legislation on 3/06/07. Second reading held 3/29/07

Arizona: HB 2442 (Adams) would exempt law enforcement officers from red light and speeding violations that are detected by photo enforcement devices while the officer is on duty. HB 2442 would also prohibit an agency from using a photo enforcement citation to impose sanctions on a person's driving privilege if the citation is paid within sixty days from the court's entry of a finding of responsibility or conviction. Introduced on 2/15/07. Referred to the House Transportation Committee where it was ordered held.

Georgia: HB 77 (Loudermilk) would prohibit the use of red light cameras. Introduced on 1/20/07 referred to the House Committee on Motor Vehicles. Approved on 3/1/07 after an amendment was added to allow cities to recoup program costs and keep 25 percent of any revenue collected and distribute the rest to the state trauma fund. Approved after amendment by the House on 3/20/07. Approved by the Senate and referred to the governor on 3/27/07.

Missouri: SB 192 (Crowell) Allows municipalities to use automated traffic control systems to enforce traffic laws under certain conditions. Introduced on 1/17/07, Referred to the Committee on Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence. No further action.

SB 280 (Griesheimer) would establish enforcement standards for red light violations detected by automated photo red light enforcement systems. Introduced on 1/18/07, Referred to the Committee on Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence. No further action.

Legislative Update — April 2007

New Mexico: SB 861 (Payne) would require any New Mexico city using red light cameras to install warning signs with flashing lights at every vehicle entry point. Approved by the full Senate on 2/23/07. Amended by the House Committee on Transportation and Public Works to reduce any red light camera fine to match the \$10 state criminal penalty for running a red light. Approved as amended by the full Senate and transmitted to the governor on 3/14/07.

Texas: HB 55 (Isett) would prohibit any Texas community from using automated enforcement technology to enforce traffic citations. Would repeal the section of the Texas code that allows for the civil enforcement of traffic violations. The legislation was pre-filed on 11/13/06. Referred to the Committee on Urban Affairs on 1/29/07. No further action.

SB 125 (Carona) would redirect a portion of the revenue generated by Texas red light camera programs to the state general fund for distribution to the state's trauma centers. The legislation was pre-filed on 11/29/06. Referred to the Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security on 2/14/07. Favorably reported on 3/12/07. Placed on the Senate intent calendar on 3/28/07.

Utah: HB 470 (Seelig) would authorize Salt Lake City to use red light cameras. Introduced on 2/5/07. Referred to the House Law Enforcement Committee where it was sent to an interim study committee for further review.

Ohio: HB 30 (McGregor) would require any community using red light or speed limit enforcement cameras to post signs at every community entry point. Introduced on 2/20/07. Referred to the House Committee on Infrastructure, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs. No further action.

Virginia: HB 718 (McQuigg) would authorize the statewide use of red light camera systems by any county, town or city after a public hearing and approval by local elected officials. Cities could place cameras at up to 25 intersections. Pre-filed on 12/10/06. The bill was referred to the House Transportation Committee, where it was added to HB 1778 as part of the substitute bill.

HB 1778 (Cosgrove) would grant localities the authority to operate traffic signal enforcement systems. Localities may install photo-monitoring systems at no more than one intersection for every 10,000 residents at one time. The bill was referred to the House Transportation Committee and approved by a voice vote on 1/22/07. Approved by the Transportation Committee on 2/1/07 and by the full House on 2/6/07. Referred to the Senate and approved by the full Senate on 2/20/07. **Signed into law by Gov. Kaine on 3/23/07,**

HB 1762 (Purkey) would grant localities the authority to operate traffic signal enforcement systems. Localities may install photo-monitoring systems at no more than 25 intersections at one time. Provisions within the bill set the maximum fine, limit the use and retention of images recorded, and provide other parameters and limitations for localities. Pre-filed on 12/27/06. The bill was referred to the House Transportation Committee. No further action.

SPEEDING SAFETY CAMERAS

New Jersey: A2064 (Gusciora) would give the authority to use photo radar to police agencies in localities that have passed authorizing ordinances. Automated violations would be treated the same way as traffic violations issued by patrol officers. Drivers would not be identified in the photographs. The bill was introduced on 1/26/06, approved by the Law and Public Safety Committee on 5/11/05 and amended on the Floor of the Assembly on 5/22/06.

Pennsylvania: Rep. George Kenney has announced he will reintroduce his legislation from 2006 to authorize First Class cities in Pennsylvania to establish speed camera programs on state and local highways. The legislation would immediately authorize the placement of speed cameras on Roosevelt Blvd. in Philadelphia. Revenue from fines would be used to construct pedestrian bridges over the boulevard.