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This issue features an article rebutting a paper written to discredit the effectiveness of red light cameras; a published letter to the editor that was submitted by the Campaign regarding Florida's lack of red light camera legislation; an update on Tennessee and Iowa legislation; and much, much more.

Anti-camera paper dredged up for use by Florida activists

Two years after it was published, a controversial seven-page paper evaluating the merits of red light cameras has resurfaced as a tool for Florida anti-camera activists.

The paper, published by *Florida Public Health Review* (an electronic publication of the University of South Florida and the Florida Public Health Association), evaluated various sources of information on automated red light cameras, concluding that "*cameras actually increase crashes and injuries.*"

The authors of the paper, three professors from the University of South Florida's (USF) College of Public Health, did not perform any field studies on the effects of red light cameras (according to her biography on the university's website, the lead author's research "primarily focuses on emergency medical and trauma systems, quality improvement interventions, managed care, and hospital financial performance."). Instead, the paper drew upon sources such as blogs (theNewspaper.com), special interest groups (the National Motorists Association), and a few select studies prepared by university research centers (North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University).

Similar to the authors of this paper, the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running does not perform field studies on the effects of red light cameras. The Campaign relies on an independent, unpaid advisory board; a comprehensive, evolving collection of studies done by university research centers, state and federal agencies; and groups that share our safety goal – such as the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), which gains little from automated enforcement cameras.

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As a matter of fact, currently only two states with enabling photo enforcement legislation allow for automated enforcement tickets to be reflected on a motorist's driving history, while insurers in other states are not notified of photo enforcement violations, as they would be if the motorist were pulled over by an officer.

Based on the Campaign's years of extensive research, we have arrived at a conclusion that contradicts that of the three professors from USF's College of Public Health. It is our firm belief that traffic cameras, used in accordance with recommendations from traffic engineers, reduce life-threatening crashes. A few examples of our sources:

- A Texas A&M Texas Transportation Institute study found [traffic crashes at red light camera locations across Texas decreased by approximately 30%. Right angle crashes, which usually produce the most deaths and injuries, dropped by 43%](#) (*"Analysis On The Effectiveness Of Photographic Traffic Signal Enforcement Systems In Texas," Walden, 2008*).
- A review of 10 U.S. and international red light camera research studies, conducted by the respected Cochrane Collaboration, found ["Red-light cameras are effective in reducing total casualty crashes.... In the best conducted of these studies, the reduction was nearly 30%"](#) (*Red-light cameras for the prevention of road traffic crashes, 2005*).
- An Orange County, CA, government report found that one year after red light camera installation, [crashes at monitored intersections dropped by 46.7% in Garden Grove, 28.2% in Costa Mesa, 16.2% in Santa Ana, 12.1% in San Juan Capistrano and 5.7% in Fullerton](#) (*Red-light Cameras: Automated Traffic Cops in Orange County, Orange County Grand Jury, 2004-2005*).

Although the views of the Campaign differ from those expressed in the paper prepared by the USF professors, we do agree that the alternative engineering countermeasures listed in the paper (drawn from The Federal Highway Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's 2003 *Guidance for using red light cameras*) are effective at reducing the instance of light running and aggressive driving. Some of those include improving signal head visibility, setting appropriate yellow light time, and adding a brief all-red clearance interval.

“Notable quotes”

“Leaving regulation up to local governments won't solve the confusion cameras create nor reduce the potential for abuse. How long a yellow light lasts, how strictly infractions are interpreted and whether a law enforcement officer sign off on penalties or not all influence the fairness of cameras as traffic tools. If the state is going to allow camera use, the state should set clear, uniform standards.”

From a March 6th editorial titled “Red-light cameras: Either standardize use or ban them” by The Daytona Beach News-Journal

“The data is clear. In communities across Illinois, the use of the red-light cameras not only helps deter reckless driving, but also has resulted in a decreased number of violations, including crashes. For example, one intersection in Roselle, IL previously averaged 115 red light violations per day in a 12-hour period. Now that red-light cameras have been installed at the intersection, violations average approximately 10 per day.”

From a March 12th letter to the editor by 14 chiefs of police, deputy chiefs of police, and commanders from Illinois, titled “Red Light Cameras Address Safety Concerns,” published in the Chicago Tribune

Florida's photo enforcement debate continues

This letter to the editor by Campaign Executive Director Leslie Blakey appeared on the website FloridaThinks.Com on March 30th.

Cameras Save Lives But Florida Should Set Standards for Use

As the incidences of red-light running and speeding increase along with congestion, densely populated roadways throughout Florida and across the country are becoming prime crash locations. Rather than obey legal limits, many drivers unthinkingly race through red lights and speed to their destinations on a daily basis without regard for the safety of others on the road.

This sense of entitlement— *my time is more valuable than your safety* — combined with a low expectation of being caught is responsible for rampant disrespect for the rules of the road and an upward trend in all forms of aggressive driving, not only red-light running.

Due to an increased number of vehicles on the road and a stagnant level of staffing for law enforcement in many communities, drivers are able to exceed speed limits and run through red lights frequently without being detected by police. According to the Federal Highway Administration, in 2008, 762 people were killed and an estimated 137,000 were injured in crashes that involved red-light running.

Outspoken Minority Misrepresents Cameras' Effectiveness

The growth of automated photo enforcement has prompted a small, but outspoken minority of the public who misrepresent the effectiveness of photo enforcement. Automated enforcement technology continues to be favorably received by traffic engineers, law-enforcement authorities and the public because its proper and judicious use has reduced both the human and financial toll of crashes caused by aggressive and careless driving.

Scientific study after study shows that photo enforcement reduces crashes, injuries and saves lives. Those who chose to drive aggressively and disregard traffic laws deserve the penalties and fines they incur as a result of this behavior. Communities across our nation have experienced a reduction in red-light running following the implementation of a photo enforcement program:

- In New Orleans, red-light cameras led to an 85 percent drop in red light running.
- In Council Bluffs, Iowa, red-light cameras led to a 90 percent reduction in red-light-running crashes. Cameras led to a 40 percent reduction in red-light-running crashes in Davenport.
- A Texas A&M Texas Transportation Institute study found traffic crashes at red-light-camera locations across the Lone Star State decreased by approximately 30 percent. Right-angle crashes, which usually produce the most deaths and injuries, dropped by 43 percent.
- An Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study of the Philadelphia red-light-camera program tracked signal violation rates at intersections before and after extending the yellow-light sequence, and again after red-light-camera enforcement had been in effect for about a year. Lengthening the yellow light reduced signal violations by 36 percent. The cameras reduced the remaining violations by 96 percent.

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Furthermore, common sense and liability law tell us that the fault for rear-end crashes lies not with the driver who stops for a red light, even abruptly, but with the driver behind. Red-light cameras do not cause rear-end crashes — speeding and following too closely are the aggressive-driving behaviors that cause rear-end crashes, period.

Recent reviews of the red-light-camera programs in Columbus, Ohio; Garland and El Paso in Texas; Raleigh, N.C., and Calgary, Alberta, have all shown significant reductions in both right-angle and rear-end crashes since the installation of cameras.

Let Safety, Not Profit, Drive Camera Use

While photo-enforcement is effective when used properly, its rapid, unchecked growth has resulted in some instances of abuse across the country. In these cases, municipalities are being ill-advised to place cameras at low-crash-rate intersections or use photo enforcement to nab low-speed, right-on-red violators who pose a very small threat to safety. Sometimes, photo enforcement is being used for applications completely unrelated to safety. Safety, not profit, is both the justification for and the result of photo-enforcement programs.

The current photo-enforcement climate leaves many municipalities and law-enforcement personnel without clear-cut parameters for designing and managing programs, resulting in program inconstancies, excessive reliance on industry vendors, and ultimately, public distrust. This distrust threatens well-run, effective programs and poorly run programs alike.

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running is calling for authorities to look closely at how photo-enforcement programs are being administered, and establish guidelines through enabling legislation or otherwise. It cannot be the job of for-profit photo-enforcement technology providers to enter a municipality and dictate the violation goals, fines and placement of cameras. Unfortunately, this is often the case.

Set State Guidelines for Cities to Use Cameras

Photo enforcement is a proven technology that can greatly improve road safety when properly implemented as a supplement to traditional law enforcement, along with sound engineering and public education. It is our hope that municipalities in Florida will be given guidance by their state government on how to best implement these programs, and create standards. If the state Legislature and the governor will finally give local law-enforcement agencies the option of establishing photo enforcement, Florida will have another tool to make its roadways safer. Otherwise, it is our fear that photo enforcement's merits will be overshadowed by its abuses and Florida's citizens will pay the ultimate price.

Florida**THINKS**:com
the forum for civil debate

Photo Enforcement News Across the Country

Tennessee camera restriction bills shut down for summer study

Members of the Tennessee Senate Transportation Committee shut down a restrictive photo enforcement bill for summer study last week, noting that they did not know enough about the proposed legislation, which had been amended by Members of the House Transportation Committee following a series of hearings.

"I just know what I read in the paper," Sen. Tim Barnes, D-Adams, told the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*. "This Senate committee is asked to vote on this after we've not participated in any study."

The original legislation, SB2918, sponsored by Senator Tim Burchett (R-Knoxville), and companion bill HB3024 sponsored by Representative Bill Harmon (D-Dunlap), called for a two-year cessation of any new camera programs in the state, while the comptroller of the treasury conducts a study on existing camera programs. The study would examine the impact of traffic cameras on driver behavior and accident rates, how citation funds are being used, and other aspects of automated enforcement programs. The bill would also reduce citation fines to \$10.



The Tennessee state flag

Following the aforementioned hearings, members of the House Transportation Committee amended the legislation, making it less restrictive. The proposed amendment included several modifications, including setting citation fines to \$50, requiring warnings signs, and mandating that a professional engineer (not provided or selected by camera vendor) to survey and approve the area following Institute of Transportation Engineers standards prior to installing cameras.

The amended bill will be considered once the state's budget is finalized.

Tennessee citizen asks for help

The Campaign often receives emails from concerned individuals looking to reach like-minded individuals. Below is one man's letter to the Campaign asking for his fellow Tennesseans to write they legislator in support of photo enforcement cameras.

To the editor:

Our Tennessee legislators are trying to undermine red-light cameras statewide. Two bills are currently under consideration that would hamper municipalities using these beneficial public-safety tools and lower fines for violations caught by cameras to a measly \$10. Legislators are hearing so many falsehoods from so many violators and so little from red-light-running victims, municipal officials, and camera supporters that they're siding with the violators and whiners. It's unbelievable but true. For these important public-safety devices to survive in Tennessee, every supporter in this state must contact their state senators and representatives with strong urgings not to undermine our traffic safety. Complete contact information is available at the State of Tennessee web site: www.legislature.state.tn.us. Look under "Legislative Branch." Everyone's help is needed.

*Bill
Knoxville, TN*

Arizona allows freeway speed camera contract to expire

The state of Arizona opted not to renew its freeway speed camera contract, which is due to expire on July 15th. The state's new Department of Public Safety chief, Robert Halliday, has expressed concerns about the program since taking office in February, and has stated that ending the program was his decision. The freeway speed camera program was established in 2008, under Arizona's previous governor, Janet Napolitano.

Update: Iowa red light running bill signed into law “Jermiah’s Law” increases penalties for red light runners

In our October 2009 Safety Focus (Volume 8, No. 5), we introduced readers to Rick and Jody Dosser. On March, 22, 2007, Rick and Jody’s only child, Jermiah, was waiting at an intersection for the light to change when his motorcycle was struck from behind by a pick-up truck, killing Jermiah just days before his 25th birthday. Since then, Rick and Jody have been working tirelessly to have a bill introduced that, if enacted, would increase the severity of consequences for those who run red lights in Iowa. The pick-up truck driver who crashed into Jermiah was charged with two misdemeanor traffic citations: 1) failure to stop in a safe and sure distance; and 2) failure to respond to a steady red light.

Introduced on January 26, 2010, Senate File 2109, known as “Jermiah’s Law,” passed the senate unanimously, and was signed into law by Iowa Governor Chet Culver on April 29. Prior to Jermiah’s Law, running a red light in Iowa resulted in a \$35 fine. Violators can now expect to receive an additional \$1,000 fine and/or suspended license for 180 days if the crash results in death; for violations resulting in serious injury, the offender can expect an additional fine of \$500, and/or license suspension for up to 90 days.



*From left to right:
Representative Mark Kuhn (D-14),
Rick and Jody Dosser,
Governor Culver*

**2010
NATIONAL
STOP ON RED
WEEK
AUG. 1ST – 7TH**

