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This issue features an article on the U.S. Conference of Mayors endorsing photo enforcement; the results of an IIHS poll gauging driver support of red light cameras; a summary of a study weighing the cost-benefit of red light cameras; and updates on the statuses of Los Angeles and Houston photo enforcement programs.

U.S. Conference of Mayors Endorses Red Light and Safety Cameras

The U.S. Conference of Mayors announced during their 79th Annual Meeting that the group now “strongly supports the use of red light and speed safety cameras to help reduce red light running and speed-related injuries and fatalities.”

The group, which is headed by Los Angeles’ Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, passed a resolution in support of the use of red light and speed safety cameras. Villaraigosa endorsed red light cameras as a traffic safety tool.

Although Villaraigosa has shown support of photo enforcement, the Los Angeles Police Commission recently voted to allow the City’s red light camera contract to expire at the end of July, citing doubts about its effectiveness and cost. The Commission said motorists who receive red light camera tickets face no risk in their credit rating, their car registrations or their driver’s licenses if they refuse to pay.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors’ official resolution cited a February Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) analysis, which found that 676 people were killed and 113,000 were injured in crashes that involved red light running in 2009. The official resolution also quoted several of the analysis’ statistics confirming the safety benefits of photo enforcement, including:

- Red light cameras saved 159 lives from 2004-2008 in 14 of the largest U.S. cities where cameras were used;
- Up to 815 deaths could have been prevented had cameras been used in all large U.S. cities; and
- Red light running fatalities were reduced by 24 percent in cities where cameras were deployed.

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The resolution also cited the Federal Highway Administration's findings that communities with red light cameras experience a 20-87 percent reduction in red-light running violations within 18 months of implementation.

Like the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running, the U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages communities to consider all options when addressing the issues of speed and red light running including engineering, education and enforcement.

To read the resolution in full, please see [79th Annual Conference of Mayors Adopted Resolutions](#).

IIHS Poll: Many Drivers Favor Red Light Cameras

A recent survey from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) indicates that two-thirds of drivers in 14 big cities with longstanding red light camera programs support using the technology.

"Most drivers don't buy the argument that it's somehow wrong to enforce the law just because you're using a camera to do it," said IIHS Senior Vice President for Research, Anne McCartt. "They understand that this technology is preventing crashes in their cities."

More than 3,000 people were interviewed by phone between February 19 and March 29 in the 14 cities being studied. Two-thirds of respondents favor red light cameras, and 42 percent strongly favor the devices. More than 9 out of 10 drivers believe that red light running is unacceptable and more than 8 out of 10 believe red light running is a serious threat to personal safety.



Of the 89 percent of drivers who are aware of their city's red light camera program, a majority believes that the devices have made intersections safer.

About a quarter of respondents opposed cameras, citing beliefs that cameras increase crashes, are an invasion of privacy, and camera use is motivated by money as opposed to safety.

Respondents showed a decreased level of support for the use of red light cameras to ticket motorists making illegal right turns on red. In fact, a fifth of drivers say they support cameras but are against right on red enforcement.

"Right-on-red violations usually aren't associated with T-bone crashes, but they make intersections much more dangerous for pedestrians in particular," McCartt says. "The survey results show cities need to do a better job explaining this issue to drivers."

This poll was conducted on the same 14 U.S. cities examined in IIHS' study "Effects of Red Light Camera Enforcement." The study, which was released February 1, 2011, showed that red light cameras in those 14 U.S. cities **reduced the rate of fatal red light running crashes by 24 percent**. The 14 cities in the poll and the study had red light cameras in 2004-08, but did not have them in an earlier comparison period. The research showed that red light enforcement saved 159 lives in the 14 cities.

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Although the City of Houston was not eligible to participate in the poll of 14 cities because their red light camera program began in 2006, IIHS conducted additional research to learn more about Houston citizens' feelings on red light cameras. IIHS contacted 300 people in the city due to the city's recent vote to shut off the cameras (see "*Houston Red Light Cameras Go Live...Again*"). While 53 percent of Houston voters cast ballots to end the city's red light camera program in November, 57 percent of drivers polled by IIHS favor the cameras, with 45 percent strongly favoring the technology. Results also showed 28 percent strongly opposed cameras, which is a 10 percent increase over the other 14 cities polled, which had only 18 percent of drivers in strong opposition.



“ “ Notable Quotes ” ”

“People in society are used to multitasking. In the past that meant adjusting radios or sliding a disc in the CD,” said Joe Kubicki, transportation director. “Today people are talking on the phone or texting, which requires taking their eyes off the road. Red-light cameras, because of the monetary impact, are going to help bring driving their car back into first place in their list of tasks.”

From a June 23 article titled “St. Petersburg identifies intersections for red-light cameras” by Stephen Nohlgren (tampabay.com, St. Petersburg Times)

“We still have thousands of people who die,” said Adrian Lund, the Insurance Institute’s president. “We look at where and how that’s happening, and one of the most dangerous (locations) is intersections.”

From a June 24 article titled “Challenges to red light cameras span US” by Alex Johnson (msnbc.com)

Arnold Mayor Ron Counts said, “The truth is, it’s not about money. It can’t be. We’ve got to deal with the safety issue and to me when you can drop this down to 20 people running stop lights, I think that’s what we really need to be looking at. We’ll adjust the budget. We have to.” He added, “It’s going to affect your budget no matter how you look at it.”

From a June 23 article titled “Could Longer Yellow Lights End Red Light Camera Tickets?” by Chris Hayes (KTVI-FOX2now.com)

“There is a substantial change in behavior. People slow down ahead of time and stop,” said Brick police chief Nils Bergquist Jr. “People stopping, that’s the intent of the program.”

From a June 23 article titled “Survey: NJ drivers give green light to red light cameras” by Larry Higgs (DailyRecord.com)

Los Angeles Police Commission Votes Against Traffic Camera Renewal

The Los Angeles, California Police Commission voted 5 to 0 to reject renewal of the city's red light camera program on June 7, citing that the cameras have failed to make the city's streets safer.

Despite sentiment of the Police Commission, some data shows that the cameras have increased safety: an internal review of the city's accident data shows the cameras have led to a 62 percent decrease in red light collisions. These figures are better than the 22 percent decrease in red light collisions at all city intersections.

In California violations do not go on driver's record and many ticket challenges that make their way to court are dismissed by a court system that has not been supportive of the program. This makes the possibility of getting caught less threatening to motorists. "If more and more people realize there are no consequences, more and more people aren't going to pay," said Councilman Dennis Zine.

The vote to end renewal of the city's photo enforcement contract with American Traffic Solutions (ATS) means the red light cameras installed at 32 intersections will be taken down unless the City Council overrides the Police Commission's authority on the issue. The contract is set to expire on July 31.

At a recent Los Angeles City Council meeting, the council voted 7-5 to overturn the Police Commission's decision and keep the program, but the motion needed at least eight votes. If the council receives the required votes before July 31, the decision can be overturned.

"The program has many flaws," Councilman Zine, who is a former traffic officer, told ABC News, "Los Angeles loses about \$1 million annually to keep the cameras up. Tickets which are issued cost drivers about \$500, but for each ticket the city receives less than \$150."

A September 2010 audit of Los Angeles' Photo Red Light Program revealed some worrisome flaws. Namely, the 32 cameras have cost taxpayers \$2.6 million over the past two years, and even more disturbing: the cameras were not installed at all of the city's high risk intersections.

"If public safety is the number one priority of the Photo Red Light Program, then the most dangerous intersections should be selected, period," said Los Angeles City Controller Wendy Greuel in a November press release put out by her office. "Regardless of the reasons, the cameras are only effective if they're placed at the most dangerous intersections. If we don't use them effectively we're putting Angelenos lives in danger."

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Some of the most accident-prone intersections in L.A. do not have photo enforcement. This is partly due to a 2006 decision by the City Council to place at least one camera in each district. In doing so, two accident prone intersections, with a combined 24 accidents and two fatalities from 2003-2005, did not receive cameras, while an intersection with only two accidents and no fatalities in the same period received a camera.

Study Finds Safety Benefits Outweigh Potential Abuse

A University of Missouri report shows that the safety benefits of red light cameras outweigh the potential for their abuse as revenue generators. Research for the report, titled *Is Robocop a Cash Cow? Motivations for Automated Traffic Enforcement* was done by Carlos Sun, an associate professor at the University of Missouri.

“Red-light running cameras could improve safety if deployed properly and should not be categorically ruled out for fear of misuse,” commented Sun.

The study is broken into two pieces: one examining the legalities of photo enforcement, the other reviews revenue generation by photo enforcement.

“It appears the accusations of rampant revenue generation are mostly overblown,” Sun writes in the report. “There are checks and balances in the existing system, and the political process offers the ability for state legislators to uniformly regulate automated enforcement systems. This is not to say that there is absolutely no potential for abuse.

Sun’s research cites statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, other sources of recent U.S. national traffic accident data, and various automated speed and red light enforcement studies from around the world.

Sun, who holds a law degree and is a member of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Transportation Law Committee, says that he is interested in legal issues related to transportation.

“My desire to look into this topic started when I was teaching a transportation safety class,” said Sun. “I asked two teams, one pro-red light cameras and another anti-red light cameras, to do papers and presentations on the topic. Their papers and presentations were very interesting and motivated me to look further into this issue.

To read the study in full, please click [here](#).

Houston Red Light Cameras Go Live...Again

After eight months of being turned off, the City of Houston reactivated its red light cameras on July 9. The camera program ended in November of 2010 when 53 percent of voters approved a ballot referendum to turn the cameras off. On June 17, 2011, U.S. District Judge Lynn Hughes ruled that November's referendum was invalid because it was not filed 30 days after the ordinance allowing red light cameras was passed, per Houston's city charter regarding the repeal of an ordinance.

Following Judge Hughes' ruling, the City of Houston asked the judge for permission to appeal his decision – this request was denied by Judge Hughes.

"I have a responsibility to represent the interests of the voters, but I also have a responsibility to abide by the judge's ruling," Houston Mayor Annise Parker said in an official statement. "We simply don't have the millions they claim we would owe for violating the court decision and our contractual obligation to American Traffic Solutions (ATS). Therefore, I have decided the fiscally-prudent path to take is to turn the cameras back on while also seeking a second chance for the voters in the courts."

According to a statement from the Mayor's office, a pre-trial conference to discuss disposition of remaining issues in the case is set for July 19 in Judge Hughes' court. Final disposition of any remaining issues at the district court level would clear the way for the City to proceed with an appeal to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals without need for Judge Hughes' permission, which is exactly what the City is seeking.



Originally installed in 2006, the cameras are currently monitoring 50 intersections throughout the city. According to the Houston Chronicle, the cameras have issued over \$50 million in civil fines since they began operating.

National Stop On Red Week is upon us

August 7th - 13th

If your community is interested in participating in National Stop on Red Week, please feel free to use the sample proclamation below. Should your community issue a 2011 proclamation, the Campaign would appreciate receiving a copy. Copies can be sent electronically to intern@blakey-agnew.com.

Sample 2011 National Stop on Red Week Proclamation

Whereas, **(Name of Municipality/ Organization)** is building broad, community-based partnerships to increase awareness on the widespread problem of red light running; and,

Whereas, in 1997, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and the American Trauma Society established National Stop on Red Week to set aside one week of every year to raise public awareness about this completely preventable and deadly form of aggressive driving; and,

Whereas, in 2009, 676 people were killed and an estimated **113,000** were injured nationally in red light running crashes; and,

Whereas, intersection crashes account for more than 45 percent of all reported crashes and 21 percent of fatalities; and,

Whereas the financial cost to the public is estimated to be in excess of \$14 billion each year; and,

Whereas according to a survey done by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the American Trauma Society estimates 63 percent of Americans see someone running a red light at least a few times a week and one in three Americans knows someone who has been injured or killed in a red light running crash;

Now, therefore, I, **(Name of Mayor/public official)**, do proclaim that the week of August 7th through August 13th is hereby designated as 2011 National Stop on Red Week in **(Name of Municipality/ Organization)**. I urge everyone to reduce crashes, injuries and the tragic loss of life by stopping for red lights.

Let us all spread this important message within our community. By doing so, we can save many lives. I call on citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, business and hospitals, and schools in **(name of city or community)** this year to focus on this preventable problem with appropriate ceremonies, efforts and programs.

PSA

This is a sample Public Service Announcement for radio use. Law enforcement and municipal officials are encouraged to use this to get the word out about Stop on Red Week.

Did you know that traffic crashes are the single most significant cause of preventable death and injury in North America? Hi, I am name, of affiliation reminding you that August 7th through the 13th is National Stop on Red Week.

In 2009 alone, 676 people were killed and an estimated 113,000 were injured in crashes that involved red light running in the United States. Too often the yellow light has come to symbolize “hurry up” instead of “slow down” across the nation. Red light running is the leading cause of all urban automobile crashes in the United States.

When you see a yellow light, please slow down – you could save a life. Remember, Red Means Stop!

To learn more about National Stop on Red Week, please visit www.stopedlightrunning.com.

