

S A F E T Y F O C U S

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New Study Shows Benefits of Cameras

A new study of red light camera enforcement in Fairfax County, Virginia was presented at the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting last month. The study provides further proof of the overwhelming benefits red light cameras bring to communities.



The study assessed Fairfax County, Virginia's ten red light cameras and evaluated violation and crash rates at camera intersections. The Fairfax County program takes two rear photographs of vehicles running red lights, and violation notices are then sent to the registered owner. The fine for red light running is \$50 and no points are assessed. A Virginia law allowing the use of red light cameras by local authorities was enacted in 1995. A bill to expand the program to more jurisdictions in the Commonwealth is currently pending in the legislature.

The study found that within the first three months of camera use there was a 36 percent decrease in red light violations at camera intersections; after six months, there was almost a 69 percent reduction in violations. Additionally, photo enforcement reduced crashes at camera intersections by 40 percent.

Researchers also conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the red light camera program in Fairfax County. Their results illustrate the devastating economic toll these crashes take and the substantial financial benefit of crash reductions.

(cont. on pg.2)

News Summary

Legislature revisits red light camera bill: City endorses the measure, says issue is a problem; lawyers statewide discuss its impact

January 7, 2003 Corpus Christi Caller Times

House Bill 200 is making its way back onto the legislative agenda in Texas. The bill would allow cities to install cameras and photograph red light runners' *(cont. on pg.5)*

(cont. from pg. 1)

New Research

The sum of the savings from projected reduction in crashes was calculated and the overall cost of the camera program was deducted from this figure. The calculation did not factor in any revenues from fines. The savings to residents from the red light camera program was projected to be approximately \$12.8 million over the next eight years.

This study is the latest in a growing body of research proving the lives and dollars saved by automated photo enforcement programs in our communities.

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running welcomes information on new research. Please contact us at bplevelich@blakey-agnew.com.

Survivor Stories

The following is a new special feature for *Safety Focus* highlighting the stories of survivors and the aftermath of red light running. All stories are printed with the survivor's permission. Survivor Stories are meant to share the human toll of unsafe driving and remind us just how much is riding on our regard for the rules of the road.

Dear Ms. Blakey,

On Oct. 20, 2001 my daughter was involved in a terrible car crash. My grandson, her nephew, was also in the car. The crash occurred at a T intersection. My daughter was turning left at a traffic light and was hit broadside by a car. The car was hit on the left side. The impact was so great that the car was pushed across the other side of the road and was stopped by a guard rail. My daughter faced serious injuries including a head injury, broken ribs, a broken pelvic bone and a smashed ankle. My grandson suffered a serious head injury.

Luckily they both had very good health care insurance, and we had good car insurance. Our car was totaled. The other person involved in the accident suffered a serious knee injury which required surgery. Both my daughter and my grandson were wearing seat belts. The other person was not. At the time of the crash the police were not certain which driver was at fault. Six weeks passed and the insurance company had only contacted us one time. They inquired about my daughter and grandson and asked if we had received the police report. We had not yet received it. That was the only contact we had with them.

The police did not determine who was at fault, and we decided to let things go. When the other person sued our insurance company I was very upset at his gall. But I had faith that our insurance company would investigate and do the right thing.

To my utter dismay, our insurance company awarded the other person \$100,000. They had investigated the fact that he wasn't wearing a seat belt and if that could be the reason that his knee was injured. They determined that because of the speed at impact he would have received the knee injury whether or not he was wearing a seat belt. They had determined that he was going at a speed of 46-52 miles per hour. He only had a maximum of \$15,000 insurance and said he had the green light.

We then decided to hire a lawyer. I was disgusted with both insurance companies for not doing a better job of investigating and was bewildered at the way my insurance company was paying out money without trying to determine who was responsible for this terrible crash.

(cont. on pg.5)

Legislative Update

In **Connecticut**, House Bill 6282 and House Bill 5911 were introduced and referred to the Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Planning and Development, respectively. Both bills would allow for local municipalities throughout the state to establish red light camera programs.

Indiana Senate Bill 3 passed out of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security on 1/28/03. It is now waiting to be heard on the Senate floor. SB 3 would authorize local municipalities to pass ordinances allowing the use of red light cameras.

In **Maryland**, Senate legislation for photo radar enforcement was introduced by Sen. Jennie Forehand last week. House legislation will be introduced this week by Del. Bill Bronrott. The bills will be assigned to the House Environmental Matters and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committees.

In **Missouri**, Senate Bill 90 was introduced and referred to the Transportation Committee. SB 90 would allow ten cities throughout the state to establish red light camera programs.

In **Texas**, H.B. 200 was pre-filed in November by Rep. Berman. It would authorize the statewide use of red light cameras.

In **Virginia**, H.B. 1696, sponsored by Del. Michèle 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. S.B. 840, sponsored by Sen. Fred Quayle passed the Senate and is pending in the House Militia, Police & Public Safety Committee.

In **Washington**, statewide enabling legislation was introduced in both the House and the Senate. House Bill 1324 was referred to the Transportation Committee and Senate Bill 5369 was referred to the Judiciary Committee.

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.

Inside the Indiana State Legislature: Bringing a Bill to Fruition

National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running Spokesperson Ann Sweet shares her experience

On Tuesday, January 28, I took the trip to Indianapolis as I had for the past two years to convince the Indiana legislature to pass a bill that would prevent other families from experiencing tragic losses like the one my family has endured. I was giving testimony to the Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee in support of S.B. 003, a bill that would allow the use of red light cameras throughout Indiana.

When my daughter Shawnee was killed by a red light runner five years ago, I wanted to do something constructive with my grief that would reduce red light running deaths and injuries. I researched red light running and possible countermeasures and, with much support from other concerned individuals, began to speak out on the topic. I met Senator Kent Adams (R-Warsaw) who agreed to sponsor a bill to bring lifesaving red light cameras to our home state.

For two years, I have testified and advocated in favor of the bill, telling the legislature about the day Shawnee died and sharing the body of research that supports the lifesaving benefits of red light cameras. However, both years the bill was defeated for political reasons. Despite my disappointment, I believe the bill is worth fighting for and I will keep coming back to the legislature until it becomes law.

I am optimistic this year because the bill has gained momentum in the form of new supporters. I spoke to our Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter last summer and asked that he support the legislation. His response has been very enthusiastic. He not only spoke in favor of the bill at the Senate hearing, but he also held press conferences in Elkhart, Fort Wayne and Warsaw on the same day of the Senate hearing. His office carries a considerable influence in Indiana, and I am hopeful that his support will bolster our opportunities in the House of Representatives this year.

At the Senate hearing, only two speakers spoke in opposition of the bill. Supporters of the bill included the superintendent of Warsaw Public Schools, Warsaw Mayor Ernie Wiggins, Warsaw Police Lt. Richardson, Attorney General Steve Carter, Ft. Wayne City Council member Tom Henry and Mike Chrysler from Indiana Insurance Institute for Highway and Auto Safety. Committee members also watched a video on the effects of red light running from Amherst Safe Intersections in New York.

The bill passed through the Indiana Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee last week on a vote of 8 to 1. The bill will now go before the full Senate this week. If passed, it then goes to the House of Representatives and is assigned to a House committee on March 7th. The new Speaker of the Indiana State House of Representatives represents the South Bend district where the mayor and police chief are strong supporters.

The passage of legislation often takes years and is most certainly a long road, but I know the end result will be worth it. In the meantime, the bill moves forward and members of the public are educated to the extreme danger at intersections. Perhaps the public awareness that results from the debate on this legislation will also save lives.

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running can assist red light camera supporters wishing to have legislation passed in their states. Please contact us at 202-828-9100 or visit our website at www.stopredlightrunning.com.

(cont. from pg.2)

Survivor Stories

From reading the police report, I was convinced that the other party was at fault. I was outraged at how easily my insurance company was passing out money. Our lawyer decided to investigate. He informed us at one point that the other person had been involved in two crashes previous to the one with my daughter. The other driver had also had two moving violations prior to the crash.

I think that insurance companies need to take a hard look at the way they handle these cases and the effect insurance settlements have on the safety of people. I applaud you for your efforts to stop red light running. Since so many people don't respect the rules of the road, there is a need to do something about this terrible problem. I personally have seen too many incidents of people blatantly running red lights at great speeds putting others in danger and it has to stop.

My daughter and my grandson are doing very well considering what they went through. We feel truly blessed that they survived and that our lives are back to normal. I support your efforts to stop red light running. I don't want other families to go through what we did, especially my daughter and grandson.

Our lawyer said that he was sending the results of his investigation to the DMV. The person who hit my daughter had a very poor driving record. My daughter has decided to settle with his insurance company. It was amazing to see how fast they were ready to settle when they found out that their client was responsible. To her it wasn't about the money. It was about getting him off the road because we felt that he was just another accident waiting to happen. And hopefully we accomplished that.

I am troubled that our insurance company didn't do more to accomplish this instead of just handing out money. My daughter is going to send the report from the investigator to our insurance company and let them know that in her opinion and ours they handled the situation badly. In my opinion if the person who hit my daughter were to be involved in another crash, the insurance company would be partially responsible. Good luck in your efforts to stop red light running. I truly hope that my story does some good and helps others.

Sincerely,
Roberta
San Diego, California

(cont. from pg.1)

News Summary

license plates. The bill provides for registered owner liability.

Corpus Christi Police issued 421 citations last year for crashes involving red light running. The bill has support from city officials but not from the head of the police department's traffic division who feels the violations are not serious enough to warrant cameras. Two council members dispute this claim, saying red light running is a frequent topic of concern.

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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