

SAFETY FOCUS

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This issue focuses on the passage of a statewide camera bill in Virginia, a preview of our new photo enforcement guidebook, the results of two new studies on cameras and a review of all pending automated enforcement legislation.

Virginia Lawmakers Vote To Bring Back Cameras

After a two-year absence, red light cameras could once again assist law enforcement agencies in enforcing red light running violations.

After an intense series of hearings and votes in both chambers, Virginia lawmakers have approved legislation that would authorize the state wide use of red light cameras, which is a significant improvement over the previous legislation that only allowed a few communities to use the lifesaving technology.

The first major hurdle was the Feb. 1st approval of House Bill 1778, a substitute bill that incorporated three different red light camera bills, by the House Transportation Committee.

The bill expanded on the previous state authorization bill by allowing any city, county or locality in Virginia the option of using red light cameras after the approval of a local ordinance. Communities would be limited to cameras at one intersection for every 10,000 residents.

The full House of Delegates took up the bill on Feb. 6th and after the defeat of an amendment designed to drastically weaken the bill, House Bill 1778 passed by a vote of 63 to 35.

After the House vote, Leslie Blakey, Executive Director of the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running said, "It is a good sign that the House of Delegates finally understands the damage that was caused by allowing the previous law to sunset."

(continued on Page 2)

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The full Senate gave its approval of the legislation by a vote of 30 to 10 on Feb. 20th, but not before the Senate added an amendment which will require Virginia communities using red light cameras to include a 0.5 second "grace period" after the light turns red before the camera can photograph a violation.

The bill has been sent to the desk of Gov. Tim Kaine, who has indicated through a spokesperson that he intends to sign it.

"While this new bill doesn't do everything we would like, it does represent a significant step forward for traffic safety in Virginia," said Blakey. "Previously, only seven communities were allowed to use automated enforcement before the sunset provision expired in 2005. Now any jurisdiction can employ red light cameras to enforce their traffic laws after their approval of a local ordinance."

Under the new law, larger Virginia localities like Charlottesville, Chesapeake, Fairfax County, Newport News, Richmond, Roanoke and Virginia Beach will all be able to cover any dangerous intersections with a red light camera.

Blakey praised the efforts of the broad coalition of organizations that banded together to urge the passage of the legislation, including: AAA Mid-Atlantic, The Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, The Virginia Municipal League and the tireless efforts of Laura Nichols Knight, a red light running crash survivor whose dedication to this cause has earned her the title "accidental lobbyist."

The latest state statistics show that in 2005, red light running caused over 7,000 crashes in the Commonwealth, which resulted in at least 25 deaths and over 3,000 injuries.

When Virginia's red light camera authorizing law was allowed to sunset, there were roughly 90 active red light camera programs in the U.S. Now, just a year-and-a-half later, there are now well over 150 active red light camera programs across the country, including programs in eight of the ten largest U.S. cities.

Blakey also credited the timely research study produced by a team of Old Dominion University researchers led by Dr. Bryan Porter, a Member of the Campaign's Advisory Board. The study* they produced was instrumental in the legislative effort (*See Page 4)

NOTABLE QUOTES

"They could make us install flashing yellow lights on every block warning people not to rob convenience stores. Is that a good use of taxpayer money?"

-- Albuquerque, NM Mayor Martin Chavez quoted in the Feb. 6th edition of *The Albuquerque Tribune*, responding to a new bill in the state legislature that would require cities using red light cameras to install warning signs with flashing yellow lights in advance of every red light camera location.

"I've been rear-ended and I've been T-boned. A Mercury Grand Marquis between the wheels hurts a lot more than than a Lincoln in the back bumper. And I was lucky - the other driver ran a stop sign and I only got hit at about 25 to 30 mph. And it was on the empty passenger side. Still totaled my car, and even my hair hurt the next day."

-- *Gwinnett (GA) Daily News* columnist Nate McCullough describing his experience in a right-angle crash in a Feb. 9th column on the growing use of red light cameras in Georgia.

New Guidebook Coming In April

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running will be unveiling its new "Focus on Safety" guidebook in April.

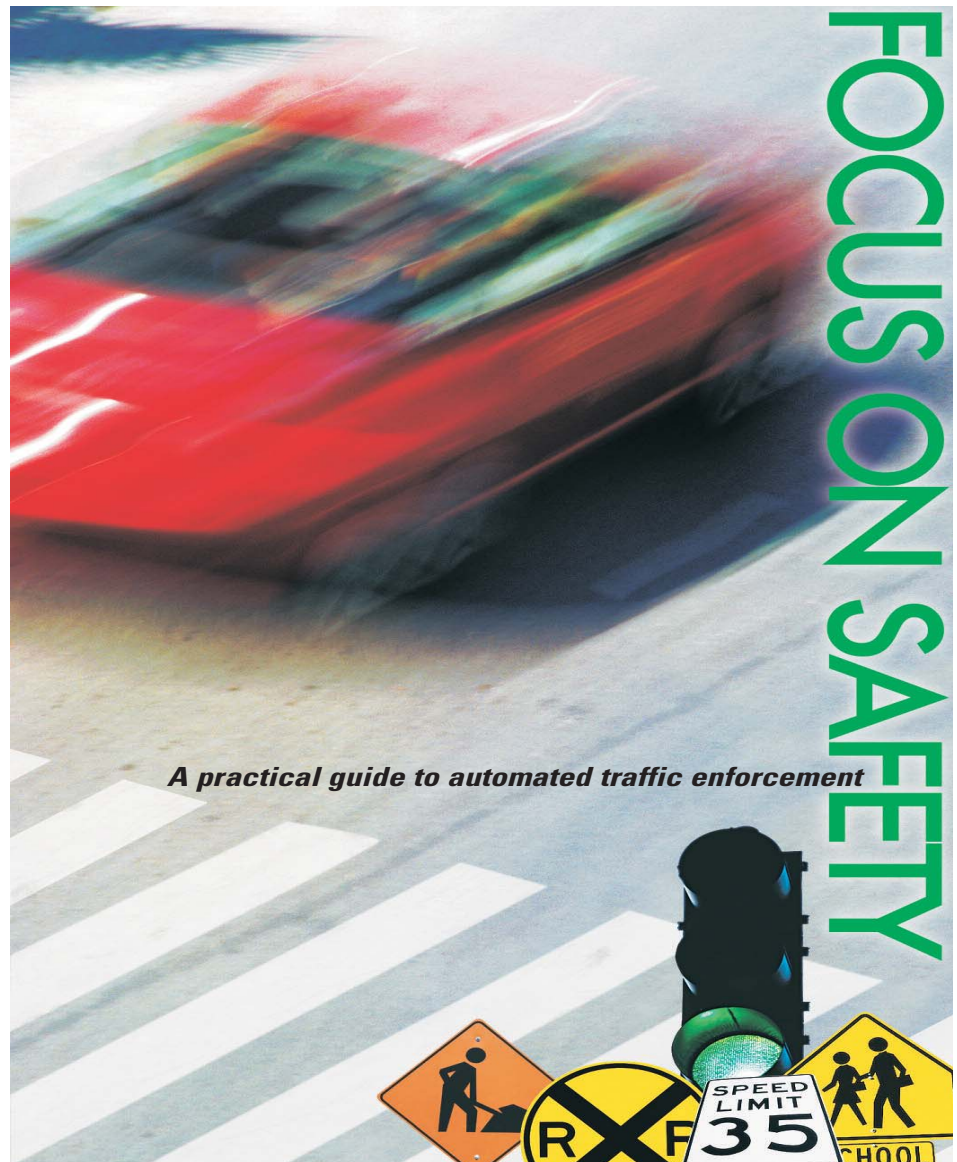
When the previous "Stop on Red = Safe on Green: A Guide to Red Light Camera Programs," was published in 2002, photo enforcement in the United States was primarily limited to red light camera programs, which were operating in about 70 communities.

During the past four years, photo technology and its application to traffic enforcement have experienced extraordinary growth in the United States and around the world.

As of February 2007, red light camera programs were operating in more than 160 U.S. communities — including eight of the 10 largest cities — and the use of photo enforcement had expanded to address speeding (including high-risk areas such as school zones and highway work zones), failure to stop at rail crossings, and tollbooth violations. Accordingly, the focus of this update of the 2002 guide has broadened to include these new emerging enforcement technologies.

"Automated traffic enforcement was once viewed as an emerging technology that showed promise as a traffic safety tool. It has matured into a well-established strategy proven — again and again — to reduce crashes and save lives. Simply stated, it works," said Campaign Executive Director Leslie Blakey.

The new guidebook offers a comprehensive resource to help state legislators and local policymakers, law enforcement officers, highway safety advocates and community groups design, operate, and support effective photo enforcement programs.



The cover of the new "Focus on Safety" automated traffic enforcement guidebook

New Studies Reinforce Positive Benefits of Red Light Cameras

ODU Study: Cameras Were A Deterrent

Over the past few years, Dr. Bryan Porter has led a team of researchers at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia in reviewing data collected before, during and after the City of Virginia Beach's six-month deployment of red light technology before Virginia's red light camera authorizing law was allowed the sunset.

The results showed that red light running violations more than tripled in just the first year after the law expired.

In fact, red light running violations at the intersections previously equipped with red light cameras are now worse than before they were installed.

The study's timing was extremely effective in refuting some of the critics in the state legislature who claimed that red light cameras were not an effective deterrent to red light runners.

IIHS Philly Study: Longer Yellows Help, But Cameras Even Better

A new review of traffic data from Philadelphia conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has shown that the introduction of red light cameras after lengthening the yellow-light phase virtually eliminated red light running violations at two problem intersections.

Researchers 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. The first step reduced signal violations by 36 percent. The cameras reduced the remaining violations by 96 percent. At the same time, violations were virtually unchanged at two control group intersections.

According to the study, while both measures reduced red light running, the introduction of the enforcement cameras made the largest difference in reducing violations. Camera opponents often claim that red light running can be eliminated by extending the yellow light sequence.

"Violations virtually disappeared at the six approaches to the two intersections we studied," said IIHS Senior Transportation Engineer Dr. Richard Retting. "This decrease in violations is all the more remarkable because the intersections were such high crash locations. In fact, they had been identified as having some of the highest crash rates in the nation."

Leslie Blakey, Executive Director of the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running, said, "Communities with a serious red light running problem should closely review this important new study. Engineering changes can help, but consistent enforcement of red light running is the best way to change bad driver behavior."

The city is hoping to expand its current red light camera program and a legislative effort is getting underway to eliminate the 2008 sunset on the state law that allows Philadelphia to use red light cameras.

A summary of study can be found online at www.iihs.org

MEDIA ROUNDUP: Editorials Continue To Support Photo Enforcement Programs

Recent red light camera legislative actions at the state and local level have prompted a flurry of positive editorials in both regional and nationally prominent newspapers. Here are some selected passages...

“Remember when Minnesota drivers actually knew how to drive? When they signaled before turning, paid heed to speed and stopped at red lights? Ah, those were the days — and they are no more. Today’s motorists seem to view traffic laws as optional — and more than a few consider a yellow light an invitation to accelerate. Such caprice is more than impolite. It’s deadly — and the sort of menace that simple technology can curb.”

Minneapolis Star Tribune

February 24, 2007

“Accident statistics show it and police know it. Pilot projects in certain Virginia localities found marked drops in red-light running as well as in accidents caused by scofflaws when cameras were in place. But those programs expired in 2005, and efforts to revive them kept running into legislative obstruction until this week, when the House of Delegates reinstated them by a solid final vote of 63 to 35.

So let the cameras go to work. Pedestrians as well as law-abiding motorists deserve all the protection they can get against reckless red-light runners.”

The Washington Post

February 8th, 2007

“The chickens haven’t hatched yet, but they’re pecking through the shell. Under the terms of the legislation that has passed both the state Senate and House of Delegates That means, most assuredly, that cameras will be coming to intersections you drive

through, such as the often-frustrating junction of Jefferson Avenue and Oyster Point Road in Newport News. Or maybe Pembroke Avenue and Powhatan Parkway in Hampton. So it might be a good idea for drivers to begin a little immediate self-assessment. Are your habits what they need to be?”

The Daily Press (Newport News, VA)

February 25, 2007

“This newspaper believes everyone has a right to privacy, and we have criticized government programs that violate that right. However, this is about public safety, not Big Brother. If you want privacy, you won’t find it in the middle of a busy intersection in the state’s third largest city. That’s about as public as public gets.”

The Republican (Springfield, MA)

February 8, 2007

“Mobile Mayor Sam Jones, Sheriff Sam Cochran and State Rep. Spencer Collier of Irvington want the Legislature to approve cameras at stoplights. They say it’s a matter of public safety. Based on what studies in Philadelphia and Virginia Beach discovered, they’re right. Drivers zooming through red lights kill more than 850 people and injure 170,000 each year across the nation. Cities can’t afford to put enough patrol officers at busy intersections to curb the dangerous practice, but cameras can help.

Using cameras to catch drivers who run red lights is an effective, relatively inexpensive, and publicly supported way to control traffic at intersections.

Consequently, Alabama legislators should give the state’s cities the option of installing them.”

Mobile Press Register

February 21, 2007

Red Light Violation Leads To Rap Star's Arrest

The rap star popularly known as Busta Rhymes is in trouble with New York City authorities for driving with a suspended license after police say he ran a red light early on the morning of Feb. 22.

According to the Associated Press, the rapper, whose hits include 'Dangerous,' was taken into custody in lower Manhattan after the traffic stop revealed that his license had been suspended. It is still unknown why his license was under suspension.

His management, Violator Management, didn't want to comment.

The 34-year-old rapper, whose real name is Trevor Smith, faces up to 15 days in jail.

Rhymes already is accused of assault in two

cases and is considering a judge's deal that would allow him to plead guilty to misdemeanor assault and perform community service instead of jail.

In one complaint he's accused of kicking and beating Edward Hatchett, his former driver, during a Dec. 26 dispute over back pay.

In the other case, Rhymes is charged with assaulting a fan for spitting on his car after an Aug. 12 performance.

Rhymes, known for wild outfits and an antic performance style, has hits that also include 'Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Could See' and 'Touch It.'

He has also appeared in several movies including 'Shaft' and 'Finding Forrester.'

Legislative Update — March 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. No further action.

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. In addition, HB 2442 would allow a person to attend Defensive Driving School (DDS) three times in a twenty-four month period for traffic violations detected by photo enforcement. Introduced on 2/15/07. Referred to the House Transportation Committee.

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. No further action.

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 — March 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. No further action.

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. No further action.

SB 125 (Carona) would redirect all 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. No further action.

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. Provisions within the bill limit the use and retention of images recorded and provide other parameters and limitations. Localities are also required to designate at least 50 percent of fines collected for transportation purposes. Pre-filed on 12/28/06. 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. Transmitted to the governor for his signature.

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.