

# SAFETY FOCUS

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*This issue focuses on the Campaign's new February awareness effort, a comparison of how two cities approach traffic enforcement and a review of all pending state red light running and speed limit photo enforcement legislation.*

## *French Cameras Credited With 50% Drop In Fatalities*

A new report by the Government of France's Transport Ministry has credited the country's new network of over 280 mobile and fixed photo radar units with a staggering 50 percent reduction in fatalities and an 85 percent drop in crashes at targeted areas of dangerous roadways.

The French government installed the devices, which combine digital camera and radar technology to record data and images of speeding vehicles, in targeted areas across the country early in 2004. Crashes at the camera locations have dropped 85 percent, from 446 in 2003 before the cameras were installed to 60 this year.

"The use of photo radar in speeding enforcement is not a new concept, but the French government is to be applauded for quickly establishing such a comprehensive traffic safety program," said Leslie Blakey, Executive Director of the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running. "France is seeing the wide-scale positive results of photo enforcement that have only been seen at the city-wide level in the few North American cities with similar programs."

Colonel Jim Champagne, Chairman of the Governors Highway Safety Association and Executive Director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, said, "This report is remarkable in that such a dramatic drop in speed-related crashes and fatalities has been achieved by using photo enforcement technology. Traffic engineers on some of our most dangerous roadways

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should take a very close look at what the French have achieved in a very short period of time.”

In 1987, Paradise Valley, Arizona, became the first town in the U.S. to install photo radar. Other U.S. sites that have used speed photo enforcement include Mesa, Scottsdale and Tempe, Arizona; Portland and Beaverton, Oregon; Denver, Boulder and Fort Collins, Colorado; Campbell, San Jose, and National City, California; Sandy,

Utah; Washington, D.C.; and Clark County, Washington. Illinois approved legislation last year to allow speed limit enforcement cameras at select highway construction work zones.

In 2003, 13,380 lives were lost in U.S. speeding-related crashes and speeding was a contributing factor in 31 percent of all fatal crashes. The estimated economic costs associated with speeding-related crashes is \$40.4 billion per year.

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## This February Is... STOP IN THE NAME OF LOVE MONTH

In 2003, Stop on Red, Orange County (California) began a February outreach effort designed to increase awareness about the dangers of red light running that takes its theme from the romance associated with Valentine’s Day.

The group asked all Orange County cities to proclaim February of 2004 as “Stop in the Name of Love Month” playing off of the lyrics of the 1965 hit by The Supremes. Over 20 Orange County cities approved proclamations and invited members of the group to speak to their councils about the dangers of red light running.

This year, the group has adopted the logo developed by the Campaign (at right) to again approach their cities for new proclamations.

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running is expanding this effort, and is inviting any interested groups to further expand on the success achieved by Stop on Red, Orange County.



**STOP In The Name Of Love Month Logo**

The logo can easily be adapted for poster, buttons, bumper stickers and other promotional items. Schools and youth organizations in particular may have ideas for using this concept to spread safety awareness with young people.

Please share any thoughts or suggestions by phone or email at 202-828-9100 or [info@redlightrunning.com](mailto:info@redlightrunning.com).

# Virginia Media Urge Support For Cameras

Three key Virginia regional newspapers have recently written editorials supporting the use of red light cameras in Virginia and extending their use past the July, 2005 sunset of the state enabling legislation. Here are some key excerpts:

## ***The Virginian-Pilot***

"Supporters of red-light cameras in the commonwealth have gained another key ally: the residents of Virginia Beach.

Police officials in the Beach this week released a survey of 300 residents showing that a whopping 84 percent approved use of the cameras. Sixty-two percent thought red-light running was an "extremely serious" problem in the Beach... The opinions of Beach motorists should weigh heavily in the deliberations over the fate of the red-light cameras at the General Assembly.

More than 100 communities nationwide use photo-red systems. Opponents say the cameras are an invasion of privacy and a back-door tax, and that they wouldn't be necessary if the yellow light were lengthened at many intersections.

Proponents, including this editorial page and many police officials, think the cameras improve safety. And lawbreakers aren't entitled to privacy on a public street — especially when they endanger the lives of other motorists.

State legislators should remember that and extend the program."

## ***The Washington Post***

"Of all the thin arguments for opposing red-light cameras at intersections, the catchiest but weakest

is 'privacy,' as if reckless drivers have a right to blow through intersections and threaten lives unobserved... For several years, the Militia, Police and Public Safety Committee has rejected efforts to extend or expand the use of cameras on the pretense that photos of cars clearly breaking the law on public roads erode some nonexistent "right" to privacy.

The expiring law is hardly cruel; it was drawn to ensure that a violation does not go on a driver's record, is not used in insurance cases and does not draw more than a \$50 fine. Only certain urban jurisdictions were authorized to use the equipment — so why not let these willing jurisdictions stick with better public safety protection?"

## ***The Daily Press (Newport News)***

"This one's not about Democrats and Republicans. Or even conservatives and liberals. No, this one's more about highway anarchists and those who fear intersection obliteration.

On Monday, the anarchists prevailed. The House Militia, Police and Public Safety Committee - a misnomer in this case - struck a proposal to expand the use of photo-monitoring, or "photo-red," as a means for nabbing drivers who think a yellow light means "step on the gas."

These cameras enforce the law. They help save lives. They discourage aggressive driving.

"This is a hard-shell committee," said Del. Marian Van Landingham, D-Alexandria. Hard-shell? Hard-headed. And, for those drivers crippled or killed by those who ignore red lights, hard-hearted."

# Campaign Addresses Ontario Traffic Seminar

Campaign Executive Director Leslie Blakey recently addressed an automated enforcement seminar held by the Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE)-Hamilton Section in Ontario, Canada.

Blakey was invited by the group to share her insights on the future of photo enforcement during the seminar's luncheon.

Blakey centered her remarks on the continuing growth of photo enforcement technology in North America, particularly in the effect red light cameras have had on reducing violations and crashes at intersections.

Blakey encouraged the attendees to review the positive successes U.S. and Canada communities have had with photo enforcement technology, especially now that the Province of Ontario has given the approval for communities to establish their own photo enforcement programs.

A recent Canadian study showed that 29 percent of intersection crashes were attributed to red light violations.

ITE is comprised of designers and traffic managers from the public and private sectors, consultants and suppliers.

# A Tale of Two Cities

The Tallahassee Democrat recently published a two-part feature on the local problem and prevalence of red light running. The Tallahassee Police Department's 11 traffic enforcement officers wrote 2,230 tickets for red light running in 2003. A police official said that to double the number of annual citations they would likely need six more officers. As a comparison, the Raleigh, North Carolina Police Department which has 17 officers dedicated to traffic enforcement, but also has 12 intersections with red light cameras, processed almost six times as many violations for a similar period. Raleigh has also seen total red light running crashes drop by 22 percent since the cameras were introduced.

## Tallahassee, FL



Tallahassee Area CVB

*Florida State Capitol Complex*

Population: 255,000  
Area: 100 sq. miles  
Local university: Florida State University (33,951 students)  
Intersections with red light cameras: **0**  
(prohibited by state law)  
Red light running violations issued in 2003: **2,230**  
Patrol officers detailed to traffic enforcement: **11**

## Raleigh, NC



NC Division of Travel and Tourism

*North Carolina State Capitol*

Population: 276,093  
Area: 114 sq. miles  
Local university: North Carolina State University (28,619 students)  
Intersections with red light cameras: **12**  
Red light running violations issued from 8/2003 to 8/2004: **Approximately 12,700**  
Police officers detailed to traffic enforcement: **17**

## Are You A Risky Driver?

Insure.com recently convened a focus group of 30 Boston drivers who had collectively been in 84 recent crashes, and received over 130 speeding and parking tickets.

87 percent of the group felt that it was fine to speed and run stop signs and other traffic signals as long as nobody got hurt.

77 percent frequently or occasionally talk on a cell phone while driving.

60 percent frequently or occasionally eat while driving.

93 percent say they listen to the radio while driving.

## 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? Help us increase awareness of the dangers of red light running by asking anyone who is interested to e-mail us at [info@stopredlightrunning.com](mailto:info@stopredlightrunning.com) and be added to our mailing list.

# Legislative Update — January 2005

*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**

**Minnesota:** The Minneapolis City Council's Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee recently approved a request for proposals (RFP) to purchase red light cameras, computers and citation processing systems to run the program. The city plans to select a vendor by Jan. 19 and begin installation by April 25. Police would start a 30-day test on May 25, offering a grace period during which violators would receive a warning, not a fine.

**Nevada:** Bill Draft Requests: 1. City of North Las Vegas — Repeals the prohibition against use by governmental entities of photographic, video or digital equipment to gather evidence for issuance of traffic citations. Filed 8/31/2004

2. Nevada Supreme Court — Authorizes the issuance of traffic citations electronically. Filed 8/31/2004

3. Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security — Revises provisions governing the installation of traffic control and safety devices. Filed 12/14/2004

**New York:** S 139 (Trunzo) authorizes the governing body of Suffolk county or of any municipality within Suffolk county which utilizes traffic-control signals to establish a program imposing monetary liability on the registrant of a vehicle for failure of an operator to comply with traffic-control indications; provides for the installation of red light cameras. Filed on 1/6/2005

**Texas:** HB 259 (Elkins) would repeal language that allows civil enforcement of red light running violations. Bill filed on 12/21/2004

**Virginia:** S.B. 780 (Mims) renews the state red light camera program for another two years. Filed 12/27/2004

S.B.721 (Edwards) would expand photo-monitoring systems for traffic signal enforcement to Roanoke, eliminate the sunset and limit how vendors and governments could enter into contracts. Filed 12/27/2004

S.B. 732 (Colgan) expands photo-monitoring systems for traffic signal enforcement to all of Virginia instead of specified localities. Filed

H.B. 1868 (Brink) extends the red light camera sunset until 2006. Filed 1/6/2005

H.B. 1558 (Tata) eliminates 2005 sunset, but limits red light cameras to those communities where programs are already operating. Filed 12/5/2004

## **SPEEDING SAFETY CAMERAS**

**Maryland:** S.B. 1388 (Bronrott) would permit the placement of speed monitoring systems on specified highways in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The legislation was referred to the Environmental Matters Committee without a final vote until 2005. There was a working group session on the legislation on Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>. The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running presented information on behalf of the legislation.