

April 3, 2018

Honorable Cale Keable
Chairman, House Judiciary
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Keable and Members of Rhode Island House Committee on Judiciary:

We write to express concerns with H 7760 which would repeal the state's law enabling localities to use automated enforcement relating to speeders and red-light runners. This would relieve some of the burden on police officers so they can concentrate on serious crime. Safety cameras have a proven track record for making roads and intersections much safer. Moreover, the withdrawal of the technology leads to roads that are far less safe.

Safety Cameras Make Roads Safer

- **Boulder:** 67.5% reduction in the number of collisions at eight photo-enforced intersections.
- **Aurora:** a 26% reduction in the number of collisions at photo-enforced intersections in Aurora from 2010-2013.
- **Denver:** a 27% reduction in the number of collisions at four photo-enforced intersections.

Taking Out Safety Cameras Increases Risk

- **Houston:** a 117% increase in collisions, from 4,100 to almost 9,000. There was a 30% increase in fatal crashes since safety cameras were turned off in 2010.
- **Albuquerque:** a 584% increase in speeding and red light running after five months.
- **Garfield Heights, Ohio:** a 214% increase in speeding after safety cameras were turned off.

It is more important than ever that we give communities every viable tool to improve road safety. Motor vehicle fatalities have increased significantly over the past few years, with National Safety Council preliminary estimates showing that 40,000 or more people died in crashes in 2017 for the second year in a row. Rhode Island has seen significant increases in fatalities over the past 3 years, increasing from 961 in 2015, 1,042 in 2016 and 1,040 in 2017.

At Safe Kids, we are alarmed about the spike in pedestrian fatalities. The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) recently released a report stating that almost 6,000 pedestrians were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2017. For two consecutive years, we are seeing fatality numbers not experienced for 25 years.

Just as GHSA supports legislation that enables states and localities to use automated enforcement, so does Safe Kids. For example, research tells us that the faster a car is going, the more likely a child will die. However, if the Committee decides that the freedom of localities to utilize automated enforcement should be removed for cameras as a general enforcement/safety tool, we strongly urge the Committee to retain Section 31-41.2-4 which allows their use in school zones. Kids are at great risk to drivers who are speeding, running red lights and passing school buses.

We agree with the legislature when it expressed deep concern about "ever-increasing violations of the state's school-zone speed laws and regulations place both motorists and students using the state's streets and roadways within school zones in danger. . . . [T]he the use of technology to reduce aggressive and dangerous speeding is in the best interest of public safety and therefore adopts a policy of authorizing the use of automated traffic-speed-enforcement systems in school zones within the state of Rhode Island." The legislature should not step back from this commitment to child road safety. Respectfully, we ask you to please allow this law to stand.

Sincerely,



Anthony Green
Director, Public Policy