

Dear Senator,

I am writing to you today as your constituent and as a proud member of the National Motorists Association (NMA) which represents the interests of over 9 million licensed drivers in the State of Pennsylvania. I am opposed to the passage of House Bill 1284, and Senate Bills 748 and 851 as written. These bills would expand the use of automated ticketing cameras in Pennsylvania, increase penalties, and remove legal protections currently afforded residents of this state. If these bills become law, eventually the entire state will be overrun with surveillance cameras issuing hundreds of millions of dollars in tickets to unsuspecting motorists. We can all agree that truly dangerous drivers should be penalized, and in the case of extremely egregious behavior, removed from our roadways. But automated ticketing, as currently being used in Pennsylvania and as would be expanded as contemplated under HB1284, SB748, and SB851, accomplishes none of these goals. Rather, the ticketing cameras focus on minor and “gotcha” violations, many of which would never be cited by a live police officer. My specific objections are as follows:

HB-1284

1. This bill would extend the use of School Bus Stop Arm Ticketing Cameras. The vast majority of tickets issued by these cameras are violations where drivers pass the bus just as the stop arm is deploying and no children are getting on or off the bus. Many other violations are issued to drivers who aren't given sufficient yellow light warning time or are confused by conflicting information from other traffic control devices. Worse yet, there is no demonstrated safety need for School Bus Ticketing Cameras. Data provided by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) clearly shows that serious or fatal injuries to schoolchildren caused by drivers illegally passing a school bus are, thankfully, exceedingly rare. According to the most recent data from the NHTSA, there were a total of 4 fatalities to school aged children involving a driver charged with passing a stopped school bus throughout the entire US during the past 10 years. This represents **an average of only 0.4 fatal school bus passing collisions in the entire US annually**. Since 26 million children in the US take 480,000 buses to and from school each day, there is only a **1 in 22.75 billion chance that any school child will be struck and killed by a vehicle passing a school bus** each year in the US. My objections regarding this provision of HB1284 also applies to Senate Bill 851.
2. HB1284 would make permanent the current pilot program allowing speed cameras to be used on Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia. According to the 2023 ROOSEVELT BOULEVARD AUTOMATED SPEED CAMERA ANNUAL REPORT, over 1.2 million tickets costing residents over \$17 million have been issued on this roadway since June 2020 with little to no benefit achieved. Per Appendix A, the average speeds, average issued speeds, highest speeds captured, and the number of violations issued have not changed significantly since December 2021.

Further, the vast majority of tickets issued (91%) were for violations 11 – 19 mph over the posted speed limit (the vast majority of these are likely 11 or 12 mph over the limit). It should be noted that the speed limit of 40 mph on Roosevelt Blvd (in both the inner and outer lanes) is unrealistically low based on the design of the roadway (a long straight road with 3 lanes on each roadway). This is the reason drivers “speed” on Roosevelt Blvd, not because they are a wanton group of scofflaws. If the speed limit were set more realistically or the roadway designed to be self-enforcing at lower speeds, the vast majority of violations would disappear overnight. Essentially, the government has built a road which encourages drivers to feel comfortable driving at 50 mph plus, has then under-posted the speed limit, and then installed ticketing

cameras to cite drivers \$100+ for doing exactly what the government has encouraged them to do. This is a classic example of a speed trap.

Regardless of your feelings in general about the use of ticketing cameras, there are many other solutions that are at least as effective, if not more effective, than speed cameras. In one study in Riverside, CA, speed feedback signs were not only shown to be more effective than speed cameras, they were more *cost effective*. In another series of studies, field tests utilizing Driver Feedback signs were conducted by the City of Clarksville, Tennessee and the Maine Department of Transportation. Average speeds were reduced up to 23%, 85th percentile speeds were reduced up to 18%, and vehicles traveling 6+ mph over the posted speed limit were reduced up to 62%. This is a far better result than when using speed cameras, and speed feedback signs do not bring with them all the economic and equity problems inherent in using speed cameras.

3. HB1284 would also expand the use of speed cameras in Philadelphia to other roadways with the same inherent problems and lack of effect as the speed cameras on Roosevelt Blvd.
4. HB1284 would also create a five-year pilot program for speed cameras in designated school zones in the city of Philadelphia. The answer to any real or perceived problem of speeding in school zones is engineering countermeasures, not speed trap cameras. School speed limits in PA are set at 15 mph regardless of what type of roadway the school is on. In many instances, this 15 mph is unrealistic for the roadway. Further, the location and times of school zones need only be designated by a static sign which is easy for a driver to miss. Flashing beacons are not required, yet would provide real-time notice to drivers of the lowered speed limit. However, this signage is not required by HB1284, nor are speed feedback signs. If the real goal is compliance, then there is no reason not to require this type of signage wherever speed cameras are in use.

Senate Bill 748

1. This bill makes permanent the current pilot program allowing speed cameras to be used in highway work zones. Again, the answer to any real or perceived problem of speeding in work zones is engineering countermeasures, not speed trap cameras. As shown in the studies reference above, speed feedback signs can have a significant effect on lowering excessive speeds where they are present. Although PennDOT credits speed cameras with a reduction in speeds and crashes where they are used, much, if not all, of this effect is likely due to the additional presence of speed feedback signs at these locations, not the ticketing cameras. Another likely cause of reduced crashes during the pilot program is the reduction in traffic volume and construction activities during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. Further, it's important to note that injuries to construction workers due to vehicles exceeding the speed limit in work zones is exceedingly rare. The vast majority of these injuries and fatalities are due to an accident involving construction activities and construction equipment, not passing motorists.
2. The bill also makes the first violation a fine of \$25 rather than a warning notice. From March 2020 through December 2022, PA issued over 1 million automated tickets (both warnings and citations) in work zones. 84% of violators received warning notices and did not received a subsequent citation. This proves the effectiveness of issuing warning notices. In contrast, almost 50% of violators who received an actual citation (2nd time violators) also received a third or subsequent citation. Apparently, issuing an actual monetary citation was less effective than issuing a warning notice. However, SB784 removes the warning notice provision for first time violators and replaces it with a \$25 fine, which would cost PA residents an additional \$1 million

every year. The reason for this is obvious. According to the PennDOT 2023 report on the Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement Pilot Program, the program lost approximately \$1.2 million in 2022. Clearly, the intention of making the first violation a \$25 fine is to recoup this loss of revenue on the backs of Pennsylvania residents, not as a means of improving safety. This naked money grab lays bare the true motivations behind these automated enforcement programs – revenue enhancement, not safety concerns.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that while I agree that improving safety on our roadways is a laudable goal, I do not believe that expanding automated enforcement in Pennsylvania, with all its associated problems and abuses, is the proper way to achieve it. Please do not support any legislation to expand ticketing camera programs in Pennsylvania.

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