

SB 340 MUNICIPAL ELECTOR APPROVAL FOR TRAFFIC CAMERAS

OPPONENT TESTIMONY MARCH 10, 2026

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Local Government Committee, I am Sharon Montgomery and I'm here to talk about the benefits of traffic enforcement cameras.

In a nutshell, cameras

- can be in a troublesome location 24/7; peace officers cannot.
- do not put peace officers in harm's way as they stand by the side of the road talking to an offender.
- do not put peace officers in harm's way with Ohio's lax gun laws.
- do not pick and choose who they stop based on appearance of age, race, or any other irrelevant criteria.
- reduce the dangers of driver distraction of "rubber-necking" by other drivers as they drive by a traffic stop.

The sponsor spoke of the sworn officers perfectly capable of enforcing speed laws. I'm not sure why he spoke only about speed enforcement when cameras are also used for red light enforcement, but we all know two important factors in traffic enforcement:

- those perfectly capable sworn officers can't be everywhere all the time, and
- drivers who lack respect for safety and the laws will "play the odds" and break the law when they feel confident they won't be caught.

The sponsor, and other opponents of using cameras for enforcement speak of the problems related to using them. There is evidence¹ that cameras reduce violations and thus crashes. So, why are we not simply fixing the problems. Let's not throw the baby out with the bath water. Sen. Patton himself has proposed some solutions to the problems.

Please, let's also not get caught up in the sob stories of the people who got caught. The story we heard in sponsor testimony sounded on the surface like a really sad one: the grandmother had to choose between buying groceries or medicine because she got fined twice. She blamed that on the time gap between her two offenses and receiving her tickets.

Supposedly if she'd gotten stopped for the first speeding offense, she wouldn't have made the second one and her fine would have been only half as much. But, wait a minute. Who's responsibility was it to watch for speed limit signs? We all know as we drive into the part of a city with more businesses or residences, the speed limit is likely to go down. Coming into that part of the city on her way to then again on her way back home from her destination she neglected that responsibility; she failed to watch for those signs in an area unfamiliar to her that alerted her to lower speed limits.

Another popular argument against the cameras is that they are a "cash cow" because of the amount of fine money the jurisdiction using them collects. Another way to look at that amount of money is that it shows how many drivers in that jurisdiction are speeding and/or running red lights and that that jurisdiction is serious about keeping its road users as safe as possible.

Also, opponents claim that a few small villages they name use the cameras solely to raise money. Small villages have police to hire, roads to repair, snow to clear, and other services to provide just like any other jurisdiction, but fewer residents to collect taxes from to fund those services. If they can fund needed services while increasing traffic safety, what's the problem?

In 2019, the Governors Highway Safety Association recommended that "States and cities should also explore

the use of ASE (Automated Traffic Enforcement Systems) to reduce speeding-related crashes and fatalities. States in particular should remove unreasonable barriers to the use of ASE.”

I suggest you let this bill die, acknowledge the benefits of enforcement cameras, and ask Sen. Patton to re-introduce some of his previous bills that would actually solve the implementation problems. It shouldn't have to be all or nothing.

I have attached an abstract of a 2023 report by the Federal Highway Administration providing guidance on using speed cameras with reliability and accountability.

Thank you for considering some other viewpoints. I'm happy to answer any questions.

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¹An article in the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that San Francisco installed 33 speed enforcement cameras in 2025 which, according to SFMTA, reduced speeding by 78% in the vicinity.

¹In 2014 the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety compared 57 cities with populations greater than 200,000 that used cameras continuously from 1992 to 2014 with 33 that had never used them. They found 21% fewer fatal red-light crashes per capita where cameras were used. In 2016 they did sort of a follow up, comparing trends in annual crash rates in 14 cities that ended their camera programs during 2010 to 2014 with crash rates in 29 cities in the same regions that kept their cameras. In this study, they found that the cities that ended their programs has a 30% higher rate of red-light fatalities.



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16. Abstract The <i>Speed Safety Camera Program Planning and Operations Guide</i> (Guide) provides an update of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) 2008 <i>Speed Enforcement Camera Systems Operational Guidelines</i> . Speed safety cameras (SSC), formerly referred to as speed camera enforcement or automated speed enforcement (ASE), is a proven safety tool that jurisdictions may use as part of a comprehensive speed management program to target speeding-related safety problems. The purpose of this Guide is to help jurisdictions plan, deploy, and operate SSC programs to improve safety and maintain program reliability and accountability. SSCs are inherently objective in enforcing speed limits but should be implemented carefully and with significant community input. Responsible public agencies should also maintain strong oversight to ensure the program maximizes the intended benefits to the public. This update places increased emphasis on ideas and considerations for planning in States that lack current authorization for SSC, and highlights recommendations to the States and U.S. DOT from the National Transportation Safety Board. The Guide incorporates updated research and practices from the U.S. and from international jurisdictions, including information on new technologies such as point-to-point (average speed-over-distance) systems. The Guide emphasizes SSC as one component of a comprehensive speed management program to be carefully applied. The Guide provides four new case studies on how five different jurisdictions in the United States have implemented or taken steps toward implementing programs.					
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