



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

March 9, 2026

The Honorable Sandra O'Brien, Chair
The Honorable Theresa Gavarone, Vice Chair
The Honorable Kent Smith, Ranking Member
Senate Local Government Committee
Ohio Senate
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone and Ranking Member Smith:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, urges you to oppose Senate Bill (SB) 340. The measure would require municipal corporations to hold a referendum to use automated enforcement (AE) systems, an effective technology to deter speeding and red light running.

In 2024, there were an overall estimated 1,160¹ traffic fatalities in Ohio according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).² Speeding is a major factor in fatal crashes and contributed to 21 percent of Ohio traffic fatalities in 2023.³ From 2014 to 2023 fatalities among vulnerable road users (VRUs) were up 67 percent among pedestrians and rose 100 percent for bicyclist and other cyclists.⁴ In 2023, 1,086 people were killed and more than 135,000 were injured in red light running crashes in the United States.⁵ According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), half of those killed were VRUs or people in other vehicles.⁶ An analysis of four states without red light safety cameras found 3.2 violations per hour per intersection.⁷

In addition to the physical and emotional burden, traffic crashes exact a financial toll. In 2019, the estimated cost of traffic crashes in Ohio was approximately \$12.1 billion, effectively imposing a \$1,036 “crash tax” on all Ohio residents.⁸ When updated for inflation alone, in 2026, costs would equate to about \$15.6 billion.⁹ Clearly, traffic safety is a serious issue that urgently needs improvement rather than the further rolling back of an effective traffic safety countermeasure.

Small increases in speed cause serious declines in safety. Crash tests show that speed upticks of even five to ten miles-per-hour (mph) greatly escalate a driver’s risk of injury or death.¹⁰ Speed increases also immensely impact pedestrians and other VRUs. The average risk of death for a pedestrian is 10 percent at an impact speed of 23 mph, 25 percent at 32 mph, and 50 percent at 42 mph.¹¹ Further, drivers who speed have been shown to exhibit additional deadly driving behaviors; more than half (51 percent) of speeding passenger vehicle drivers in fatal crashes were unbuckled, compared to 21 percent of non-speeding drivers.¹²

Speed safety cameras are proven to deter speeding and its impact and are recommended for state and local adoption by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), among others.¹³ Most states, including neighboring Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan and Pennsylvania, permit speed safety cameras.¹⁴ A study by the IIHS found that speed safety cameras alone resulted in a 19 percent reduction in the likelihood that a crash caused a fatal or incapacitating injury.¹⁵ Similarly, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) found that AE reduces fatalities and injuries by 20-37 percent and is particularly effective in school and construction zones.¹⁶ A study by Carnegie Mellon University of speed safety cameras in Philadelphia, PA found a 90 percent reduction in speeding and an approximately 50 percent decrease in crashes and injuries relative to the most similar arterials, all arterials and local roads in Philadelphia.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58) permits use of certain federal funds for AE programs in school and work zones.

Red light safety cameras show similar safety benefits, and 23 states, including neighboring Pennsylvania, permit red light safety cameras.¹⁸ In fact, 25 percent of drivers admit to running a red light in the past 30 days¹⁹ even though 83 percent of Americans believe that doing so is “very” or “extremely” dangerous.²⁰ Red light safety

cameras are an effective tool to deter this behavior. According to the Journal of Safety Research, rates of fatal red light running crashes were 21 percent lower and all fatal crashes were 14 percent lower at signalized intersections in cities with camera programs.²¹ Conversely, cities that took down their red light safety cameras experienced a 30 percent increase in deadly red light running crashes and a 16 percent increase in fatal crashes at signalized intersections overall.²² This “spillover” effect, wherein people modify their driving habits to avoid running red lights at intersections with and without safety cameras, amplifies the benefits of such programs overall. The data are clear – red light safety cameras are successfully changing driver behavior and making intersections safer.

Law enforcement officers risk their lives when performing their duties on the roadways every day, and it is implausible for law enforcement officers to be everywhere and catch every violation. AE augments traditional enforcement without requiring a traffic stop.

Last year Ohio repealed the authority for counties and townships to utilize AE. Ohio should not compound the danger to motorists and VRUs by enacting SB 340. Instead, Ohio should take action to increase safety, such as enacting a primary enforcement all-occupant seat belt law.

With well over 1,000 annual traffic fatalities in Ohio, we urge you to reject SB 340. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Catherine Chase
President

cc: Senate Local Government Committee members

¹ Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2024, NHTSA, April 2025, DOT HS 813 710, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813710>.

² State Traffic Safety Information for Ohio, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.

³ State Traffic Safety Information for Ohio, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.

⁴ State Traffic Safety Information for Ohio, NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.

⁵ Red Light Running, IIHS, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/red-light-running#overview>.

⁶ Red Light Running, IIHS, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/red-light-running#overview>.

⁷ Red Light Running, IIHS, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/red-light-running#overview>.

⁸ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (Revised), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), DOT HS 813 403, February 2023, available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.

⁹ CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2026, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.

¹⁰ Impact of Speeds on Drivers and Vehicles – Results from Crash Tests, AAA Foundation for Safety, Humanetics, and IIHS, Jan. 2021, available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastoredocument/bibliography/2218>.

¹¹ Impact Speed and a Pedestrian’s Risk of Severe Injury or Death, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Sep. 2011., available at <https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2011PedestrianRiskVsSpeedReport.pdf>.

¹² Traffic Safety Facts 2023 Data: Speeding, NHTSA, Jun. 2025, DOT HS 813 721, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813721>.

¹³ Reducing Speeding-Related Crashes Involving Passenger Vehicles, NTSB, July 2017, SS-17-01, available at <https://www.nts.gov/safety/safety-studies/Documents/SS1701.pdf>.

¹⁴ Safety Camera Laws, IIHS, available at <https://www.iihs.org/research-areas/red-light-running/safety-camera-laws>.

¹⁵ Effects of Automated Speed Enforcement in Montgomery County Maryland on Vehicle Speeds, Public Opinion and Crashes, IIHS, August; available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2097>.

¹⁶ Speed Safety Camera Program Planning and Operations Guide, Federal Highway Administration, January 2023, available at [Speed Safety Camera Program Planning and Operations Guide](https://www.fhwa.gov/publications/2023/01/Speed_Safety_Camera_Program_Planning_and_Operations_Guide).

¹⁷ Evaluating the Effectiveness of Urban Speed Cameras on Traffic Safety in a Period of Dramatic Change, Carnegie Mellon University, July 2024, available at https://ppms.cit.cmu.edu/media/project_files/Guerra_Erick_420.pdf.

¹⁸ Safety Camera Laws, IIHS, available at <https://www.iihs.org/research-areas/red-light-running/safety-camera-laws>.

¹⁹ 2022 Traffic Safety Culture Index, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, November 2023, available at <https://newsroom.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/AAAFTS-TSCI-Technical-Report.pdf>.

²⁰ 2022 Traffic Safety Culture Index, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, November 2023, available at <https://newsroom.aaa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/AAAFTS-TSCI-Technical-Report.pdf>.

²¹ Effects of turning on and off red light cameras on fatal crashes in large U.S. cities, Journal of Safety Research, June 2017, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2121>.

²² Effects of turning on and off red light cameras on fatal crashes in large U.S. cities, Journal of Safety Research, June 2017, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2121>.