

# NEWS



# NEWS

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**For Immediate Release:** May 29, 2003

### MAYOR JOHN F. STREET ANNOUNCES DECISION TO SIGN RED LIGHT CAMERA BILL

**PHILADELPHIA, PA** — At a City Hall press conference this morning, Mayor John F. Street announced his support for Bill 0000682, which authorizes the use of photo cameras at certain intersections to enforce red light violations pursuant to Pennsylvania Act 2002-123 ("Act 123"). Pennsylvania Senator Vincent Hughes, Councilman Frank Rizzo, Secretary of Public Safety/Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson and City Managing Director Phil Goldsmith were on hand to show their support.

Bill 000682 provides for civil liability – similar to a parking ticket – for red light violations cited *via* a photographic monitoring system and was passed by City Council on May 15, 2003.

"I have weighed the consequences of this Bill with extreme prudence, in particular the privacy issues that may arise from photographic surveillance," said Mayor Street. "After thorough and careful examination, I have determined that there is ample evidence from the Federal Highway Administration, the US Department of Transportation and other related entities proving that red light camera legislation will help to protect Philadelphians by deterring the number of car accident related deaths, injuries and costs associated with these tragic disasters. I understand photos will generally be taken of the rear of the car, focusing on the license plate area and not the driver or the occupants. I am pleased with the potential good that this bill can create in our city and feel it outweighs any negative aspects that may arise."

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Mayor Street praised the work of Councilman Rizzo and Senator Vincent Hughes who originally introduced the Red Light Photo Enforcement Technology as Senate Bill 1010 to the Senate Transportation Committee on June 27, 2001. The bill was later amended and passed into law by the General Assembly in June 2002.

Councilman Frank Rizzo was delighted to have overwhelming support of his bill, “I am grateful for Mayor Street’s support of the legislation and pleased that together we are addressing issues of primary concern to our citizens.”

“The purpose of this legislation is to identify traffic law violators and to enforce the law with the assistance of technology. It’s very simple—it’s about the safety of our children, our community. City streets should be and can be safer,” stated Senator Hughes.

Running a red light generally is a criminal offense under the Pennsylvania Traffic Code. Therefore, before Act 123, the City was not permitted to adopt and enforce a local provision for civil liability for running a red light. Act 123, however, allows Philadelphia to approve by ordinance the use of cameras at intersections to enforce civil liability penalties for running a red light, pursuant to a fairly detailed program outlined by the Act.

Under Act 123, the Philadelphia Parking Authority and the Commonwealth Department of Transportation must approve the intersections at which cameras may be placed. Bill 000682 provides that Council approval of implementation of a camera program is subject to authorization of their use only at nine specific intersections (if use at those intersections is approved by the Parking Authority and DOT). Further locations can be added by City Council. The nine specific intersections include:

- Roosevelt Boulevard, at Grant Avenue, Red Lion Road and Cottman Streets
- Kensington Avenue and Clearfield Street
- Richmond Street and Allegheny Avenue
- Richmond Street and Castor Avenue
- Aramingo Avenue and York St.
- Thompson Street and Lehigh Avenue
- Broad Street and Washington Avenue

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Mayor Street noted the legislation would aid the City's aggressive efforts to petition the State Insurance Commissioner to address the disparities and inequities in the Philadelphia insurance market.

“While our primary concern is for the safety of our citizens, the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety reports that red light camera enforcement programs have garnered a 42% reduction in red light running, therefore we anticipate a substantial drop in auto related insurance claims that arise from this unlawful activity. This will just be further evidence that the City of Philadelphia is serious about its aggressive campaign to reduce auto insurance rates for its citizens.”

Senator Hughes, also a proponent of the campaign to lower insurance rates said, “We are working aggressively to make a significant dent on the high auto insurance rate issue and with this legislation in place, we can take a strong stance to make auto insurance affordable in Philadelphia.”

### **About the Bill:**

#### **Who Administers the System**

Philadelphia police officers would have to swear to the accuracy of tickets that are issued. In all other respects, the Parking Authority will control the administrative process of issuing, tracking, collecting payments for, and scheduling hearings regarding, tickets.

#### **Penalties, Hearings and Appeals**

The penalty for a violation is \$100. A ticket recipient can request an administrative hearing. If a hearing is not requested within 30 days of issuance of the ticket, the violator is considered to have admitted liability. Appeals from hearing determinations would be heard by Traffic Court.

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