

“Camera Enforcement – Five Big Lies”

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Summary
December 2010

On June 30, 2010, five camera promoter groups (NHTSA, IIHS, Howard County Police, Florida “Representative” Ron Reagan and PARS – the new camera company front group) testified at the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Despite usurping \$8 billion annually in 500 locations, the camera profiteers are NOT satisfied. They wanted taxpayer grant money – for more cameras – to rob more Americans during the worse recession in American history. The pro-camera testimony was a **complete pack of lies**. Truth was provided to the committee by the National Motorists Association, Representative Loudermilk of Georgia and later that day by traffic safety/camera expert Greg Mauz of the Best Highway Safety Practices Institute, who should have been invited to the meeting.

Having analyzed ALL committee testimony, the following refutation deals with the **5 biggest LIES and their spawns**.

LIE #1. There is a national, urgent need for camera enforcement (ALL promoters). “Red light running is the #1 cause of urban crashes – 22%.” (IIHS). “Speeding causes 31% of traffic fatalities” (NHTSA).

TRUTH. There NEVER was a need, just greed. Red light violations cause a mere 1 1/2% of ALL accidents and just 2% of fatalities (762 of 37,261 in 2008, NHTSA). Urbanwise <4%. RLV is #7 or #8, NOT #1. Improper right on red (deceptively not mentioned) causes a microscopic 0.037% of crashes (“The Right on Red Scam”).

NHTSA’s 31% speed – related fatality figure is a 40 year old, many times refuted, BOLD FACE LIE! True speeding – excessive, over limit – causes <2% of ALL crashes and <5% of fatalities [“Speeding Crash Statistics” and “Speed – Related Fatalities Grossly Inflated by NHTSA” @ www.bhspi.org/mauz]. Arizona DOT (2006) says 3% (56 of 1,767 fatal speed factors).

LIE #2. “Acceptance of cameras has always been strong,” says IIHS (Public Support, page 4). Reagan desperately tried to convince the committee that Florida wants cameras. For proof, he provided a puny, ludicrous 800 person biased survey. Florida’s population exceeds 20 million.

TRUTH. Ticket cameras are internationally abhorred. Cameras are being disabled, smashed, burned, and destroyed all over the world.

In the U.S., speed ticket cameras were rejected in over 20 cities from 1987 – 1994, hence the switch to RLTC’s (Mauz book, 2001, pages 45-46).

A biased, pro-camera MSNBC.com survey of 40,596 people STILL recorded 62% against red light ticket cameras (7/2008). And, as pointed out in the NMA testimony, cameras have NEVER survived a voter referendum (16 cities). Camera companies have spent millions (of our money) trying to prevent citizens from voting!

LIE #3. "Photo enforcement is Constitutional." PARS (camera companies) and most promoters claim this nonsense. IIHS says our rights (their insurance paying customers) are irrelevant.

TRUTH. State Attorney Generals (MI, MN, MO, IN and FL – 1997 and 2005) and court decisions (FL, SD, TX, CA, MO, etc.) agree that photo enforcement VIOLATES our Constitutional Rights to due process, face accusers, be presumed innocent and receive a fair trial (5th, 6th and 14th Amendments). The 14th guarantees Federal protection against states violating our due process rights. ALL camera states violate this right.

The AG's and courts declare, "Red light cameras are ILLEGAL!" Camera enforcement is a criminal enterprise. Furthermore, ticket cameras are NOT approved by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, hence illegal. See: "Red Light Camera and Speed Camera Crimeline" <http://www.thenewspaper.com/news/26/2649.asp> for over 30 camera promoter crimes.

LIE #4. There is an epidemic of dangerous red – light runners, speeders and scofflaws (ALL). "Habitual, thoughtless, reckless drivers" (Reagan testimony, page 3). Cameras target [only] deliberate, dangerous drivers.

TRUTH. There is an [admitted] EPIDEMIC of traffic engineering MALPRACTICE (not dangerous drivers) pervading our Country. Camera programs require illegally/unethically short yellows (26 examples in this report) and dangerous under posted speed limits to entrap enough marks for all cohorts to prosper (Camera companies, city/county/state governments, politicians, police, engineers, IIHS, NHTSA, phony researchers, trauma centers, etc.). Cameras extort \$8 billion annually.

By 1994, just in time for RLTCs, minimum yellow times were lowered (Institute of Transportation Engineers) making the interval too short for 47% of drivers. Between illegal yellows, unethical "proper" yellows, invisible violations and ticketing legal right turns on red, who can escape this entrapment? Nobody. In addition, over 30% of tickets are mailed to innocent vehicle owners who are still coerced to pay.

Only 5% of Americans crash annually (10.5/205 million drivers, NHTSA 2007) but cameras target everyone. Most camera cities issue way more tickets than they have drivers (Washington, DC; Cary, NC; Houston, TX; Duncanville, TX). Everyone is a dangerous, reckless criminal??

Honest yellows are Kryptonite to dishonest cameras. One added second of yellow to any signal reduces violations 40-80% and , unlike cameras, actually reduces crashes 25-50% (AAA Detroit, Texas, San Francisco, etc.). Honest yellows Killed RLTCs in 12 Georgia cities, Dallas and Mesa.

Every driver knows about speed traps. Well over 90% of speed limits are posted too low (Federal Highway Administration Speed Limit Survey – 27 states over 5 years). Even most interstate limits are too low. Lower limits (like short yellows) CAUSE MORE crashes, injuries and fatalities (ITE, FHWA, Mauz, Dornsife, etc.).

Setting a speed limit is suppose to be a scientific, democratic process. Therefore, there is NO SUCH THING as a “speeding problem” only dishonest, arbitrary limits for profit. A proper, lawful (MUTCD 2B.11, 2000; 2B.13, 2010) speed limit is suppose to be “the 85th percentile speed of free flowing traffic, rounded up.” Decades of research prove the 85th %ile – the speed at, or below, which 85% of drivers travel – is the SAFEST speed to post the speed limit. A side benefit is almost total compliance.

LIE #5. “Cameras save lives” (ALL) is a heinous, contemptible LIE.

TRUTH. Ticket cameras cause fatalities. There remain over 40 studies (including over 12 camera promoter ones) proving red light ticket cameras and speed ticket cameras CAUSE serious increases of crashes (all kinds), injuries and deaths. Control sites (no cams), statistics (10 years), photos and common sense also prove cameras cause fatalities [“Camera Enforcement – Charting a Catastrophic Failure” and “Camera Enforcement – A Picture of Fraud”].

Promoters keep parroting that Oxnard (2001) and FHWA (2005) are red light camera “safety” success stories. More LIES. When objectively interpreted, both are FAILURES. Ditto for Texas DOT (2008) mentioned by camera company PARS. See details in report.

Charted results of 10 random cities in this report found that rear-end collisions average +100% increases, angles rose +41% and ALL crashes increased on average +55% with about a +79% rise of injuries. All total, red light ticket cameras caused approximately 1500 additional crashes, 500 injuries and 11 deaths.

Serious injuries/deaths also result from speed ticket cameras. See “Arizona Ticket Cameras Cost 28 Lives,” (Mauz) for 13 charted examples proving over-zealous speed enforcement CAUSES more fatalities and 10 studies proving higher speed limits (closer to 85th %ile) REDUCE fatalities!

CONCLUSION.

Camera promoters are chronic liars endorsing a known fraudulent product that injures and kills people. Violating rights, fraud and manslaughter are crimes. Conspiring to do these things – CRIME. No less than 10 state courts (2 Supreme) have correctly declared, “Cameras are illegal!”

Congress, FBI, U.S. Attorney General and all leaders, DO YOUR JOB!
You work for us NOT corrupt corporations/local governments. Honor GOD and Country.
Defend the Constitution. Enforce our laws. REMOVE THE CAMERAS AND SAVE LIVES!!

How many more people (including children) have to die?

Yellow times must be lengthened (1 – 1 ½ seconds), lights synchronized, yield on red and proper, safe 85th % ile speed limits must be established. This will SAVE time, gas, money and lives.

Greg Mauz is an honest (no \$\$\$ conflicts) traffic safety researcher with 24 years experience and volunteer Activist with the Best Highway Safety Practices Institute. This is his 8th Camera Enforcement Report. See complete report and other research @www.bhspi.org/mauz or call 325-896-2595.