



1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20004

May 12, 2015

The Honorable John W. Hickenlooper
Governor
State of Colorado
Denver, CO 80203-1792

Dear Governor Hickenlooper:

We write with concern about the legislation that was passed in the last hours of the legislative session which would remove power from municipalities to better ensure the safety of citizens, especially children, safer by using red light camera safety devices. The hurdle of a referendum should not be required. We urge you to veto both bills and strongly encourage the legislature to come back to you with a bill consistent with your letter that would allow municipalities to use the red light safety devices in areas near schools.

The legislation which would require municipalities to ask voters for permission to continue to use the cameras is being portrayed as a way to give voice to the people, but make no mistake that the result would be the same--the removal of these proven safety devices.

It is ironic that the bills were passed by the legislature during Global Road Safety Week, when the U.S. and the world were taking time to examine how to make roads safer because motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of kids in the U.S. and the world.

It is also ironic that the bills were passed just days before there was a near tragedy involving 16 students of the Remington Elementary School in Colorado Springs. It was around 7am when a driver was sped through a school zone, ran a red light, veered into oncoming traffic, rolled over and crashed into a school bus carrying 16 kids. Thankfully, perhaps miraculously, the kids on the bus were not injured. It might be that this severely reckless driver would have not been deterred by a red light camera safety device. The people of Colorado Springs should be empowered to ask their government to seek one near the Remington Elementary School without an expensive, extended and probably unsuccessful referenda.

Red light camera safety devices save lives because calming traffic, lowering speed and deterring speeders reduce crashes and save lives. We know this from data from Colorado police departments:

- **Boulder**, 67.5% reduction in the number of collisions at eight photo-enforced intersections.
- **Greenwood Village**, 54% reduction in the number of collisions at the intersection of Belleview Avenue and Quebec Street.
- **Denver**, a 27% reduction in the number of collisions at four photo-enforced intersections. There was a 60% reduction in injury collisions, side impact collisions by 62% and total collisions by 38% at the intersection of Sixth Avenue and Lincoln Street.

- **Aurora**, a 26% reduction in the number of collisions at photo-enforced intersections in Aurora from 2010-2013.

The unpopularity of red light camera security devices is not unique to Colorado, and data demonstrates significant negative consequences when red light cameras get the red light.

- **Houston**, a 117% increase in collisions, from 4,100 to almost 9,000. There was a 30% increase in fatal crashes since safety cameras were turned off in 2010. One dangerous intersection saw crashes increase by 1,300%.
- **Albuquerque**, a 584% increase in speeding and red light running after five months.
- **Garfield Heights, Ohio**, a 214% increase in speeding after safety cameras were turned off.

According to an analysis based on a database created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the interventions of speed and red light cameras save 45 lives each year, reduce over 3,800 injuries and save more than \$173 million each year.

There is no question red light camera safety devices are unpopular. Citizens see the cameras as a revenue raiser for municipalities, but new legislation could earmark those funds for measures to make roads and highways safer as you suggested in your legislative message. There could be limits on fines and warnings for first time offenders. The cameras can be limited to school zones and other places where a large number of kids are on foot or bikes, and we would suggest areas where senior centers are located. Other curbs you cited also make sense: in roadway work zones; areas in which data shows a large number of traffic crashes; and areas with high volumes of traffic violations in which with residents or business owners request automated traffic enforcement. Our police are overextended and cannot do the job of enforcing speed laws alone.

When Colorado required parents to place their children in child restraint systems the state did not ask voters to decide whether the requirement could be put in place? Elected legislators rightly made that public safety decision, and many others.

Governor, thank you for your efforts to make Colorado kids safer. Please veto these bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Carr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Carr
President & CEO
Safe Kids Worldwide