



NMA Foundation

402 W. 2nd St., Waunakee, WI 53597

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The NMA Foundation is a non-profit group dedicated to finding innovative ways to improve and protect the interests of North American motorists.

Driving Freedom

NMA Foundation



If your NMA membership expiration date is on (or before) 05/01/07, this is your last issue of

Driving Freedoms

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**Driving
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Editorial Staff

- Managing Editor** Aaron Quinn
- Staff Writer**.....John Holevoet
- Staff Writer**.....James J. Baxter
- Staff Writer**.....Robert Talley

Cover
"Lane Courtesy Month"



There "Oughta" Be A Law

by James J. Baxter, President, NMA

Every time some catastrophe or calamity makes it to the front page of the newspapers or CNN, the first response is a call for new laws to prevent the recurrence of a similar event. The fact that nine other existing laws were violated in the process leading up to the catastrophic event is usually ignored. Of course, the same exact event may have occurred numerous times in the past, but it never involved a starlet, sports hero, or prominent political figure. Add in that famous person and the thirst for legislative action is virtually unquenchable!

Another variation on this theme is the call for a new law to deal with a novel crime that is already against the law. For example, stealing gasoline is theft and theft is a well-covered crime in all 50 states. Still, many states have felt compelled to pass separate laws that deal specifically with stealing gasoline. It just seems like the thing to do when gasoline becomes significantly more expensive at the pump.

Then there are the pre-emptive laws, laws that make benign and harmless acts into crimes because such acts might lead to committing a real crime. Carrying a loaded firearm, or a half-empty wine bottle, in a vehicle, are crimes created by pre-emptive laws? Speed limits can fall into this category as well. Simply driving down the road at a speed higher than an arbitrarily posted limit is not tantamount to harming anyone.

Finally, there are the "piling on" laws. Again, looking at traffic laws, there are straight forward fines for speeding, disobeying traffic signals,

drunk driving, failing to signal, not having insurance, making U-turns, and a myriad of other violations. The piling on feature comes from the desire to generate more revenue and circumvent legal and constitutional limitations on how much money can be generated and where it can be sent. Typical examples are increased fines for subsequent violations; surcharges to subsidize government agencies, for example the courts; and assessments for agencies and private organizations, like victim funds or medical institutions.

The latest wrinkle on this theme is the establishment of laws where motorists are assessed additional annual surcharges, by the state, based on the points they have accumulated on their driver records. If motorists don't pay the surcharges, their licenses are suspended. Michigan, New Jersey, and New York are three states that are running this latest surcharge scam. Others are waiting in the wings.

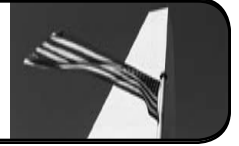
We've come a long way since the Ten Commandments. I'm sure we have enough laws and regulations to go to the moon and back, several times. Average citizens would find a large portion of this body of law confusing, vague, contradictory, and probably a waste of paper and ink. It's only when they get tangled in its web that they experience its complexity up close and personal.

I don't have any realistic suggestions for simplifying or reducing this mountain of law and regulation. However, perhaps when the hue and cry goes out "there 'oughta' be a law," we should say "maybe not." ■



NMA Washington Report

by Robert Talley, NMA Lobbyist



At the highest levels of both Congress and the White House, a strong desire to lower the US's dependence on foreign oil is driving a push to increase fuel economy standards for the automobile manufacturers. The Administration has proposed an annual four percent efficiency increase for manufacturers while Congressional proposals have been significantly more aggressive.

At the same time this is happening, the Supreme Court recently determined that the EPA has the authority to regulate Carbon Dioxide under the Clean Air Act. This is significant because the way the Clean Air Act works is to delegate federal authority to states—meaning that states like California and New York may now be able to regulate CO₂ emissions.

The next step will be for these states to set an emission standard for CO₂ for all vehicles sold in their state. Many states are considering

dramatically raising the emissions standard and thus changing the types of vehicles available to consumers.

Congress is also looking into increasing the federal Renewable Fuels Standard in response to both a concern about global oil markets and to concerns about the link between fossil fuel use and global warming. Increased renewable fuels mandates will likely increase the price of fuel in the US while at the same time proving to be a major boon for a select few manufacturers and for the farmers that grow corn.

Combine more fuel-efficient vehicles and increased reliance on fuels that are not subject to the highway tax and another nasty surprise emerges—you get a shortfall in funding for the Federal Transportation Trust Fund. In fact, the trust fund is anticipated to be in a deficit of \$21 billion in two years—largely due to these factors.

States are now actively looking

to find alternative ways to raise funds to pay for highway construction. Some are simple—increasing the state tax rate. Others become more worrisome—Oregon has a test program in place that has installed GPS systems in vehicles and charges them for each mile driven. The federal government is evaluating a tax system using radio frequency identification systems that track vehicles for the purposes of revenue collection. States are even turning to Wall Street to get help through toll roads and HOT lanes. In the most egregious examples, some cities are literally selling bridges to private investors who then place a toll on the road—think of it, you paid to build the bridge through taxes and now you have to pay to use it!

These policies combined from the federal, state and local level, will increase the cost of driving and impact your freedom to choose what kind of vehicle you drive. ■

Minnesota Court Rejects Ticket Cameras

In a unanimous ruling, the Minnesota Supreme Court agreed with lower courts that the use of ticket cameras in Minneapolis was illegal. The city ordinance fined the owner of a car that was photographed violating a red light. This conflicts with a state law that clearly puts liability for traffic offenses on the driver.

The city first began issuing camera tickets in July 2005. A lawsuit challenging the ordinance was initiated less than a month later. In March 2006, a District Court ruling turned off the de-

vices. The city appealed that decision to the Supreme Court.

Howard Bass, the attorney that challenged the cameras, said that the court's ruling sent "two very clear messages. First, under current state law, cameras cannot be used to enforce traffic laws; and second, cities cannot enforce traffic laws in ways that violate due process."

A class-action lawsuit against the city is also pending in federal court. The plaintiffs in that case are seeking refunds for all 26,000 people who were

ticketed by the illegal cameras. It was on hold pending the outcome of the Supreme Court case and is expected to move forward now.

Following the city's defeat, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak is pressing forward with plans to legalize the use of cameras. So far, the city's position is fairing as poorly in the legislature as it did in the courts. A city-supported bill died in committee because of concerns that it would irreparably harm due-process rights. ■

A Mixed Blessing

by John Holevoet

Idaho currently has a split speed limit on its interstate highways, cars are allowed to go 75 mph, but heavy trucks are supposed go no faster than 65 mph. Senator Tim Corder wanted to change that. Corder correctly notes the split speed limits create dangerous speed differentials that actually cause accidents.

This sounds like something that the NMA would support. Unfortunately, Corder's "solution" was to establish a new 70-mph speed limit for all vehicles.

Corder owns a trucking company and this is his second attempt to have a uniform speed limit for all vehicles. Last year, he tried to raise the speed limit for trucks to 75 mph. That effort failed because "people weren't comfortable with trucks going that fast," he explained.

This year he attempted a compromise. However, the members of the Senate Transportation Committee were not convinced, and they voted down the bill.

They didn't believe that drivers' behavior would actually change just because of the speed limit changes. Instead, they felt drivers would continue to travel at the speeds they were used to, which would negate any positive impact the law might have on interstate traffic flow.

It's back to the drawing board for Corder. We'll have to wait a year to see if he makes a third attempt to end Idaho's split speed limit. ■

Kentucky Goes To 70!

The speed limit on most rural interstates and parkways in Kentucky will soon increase to 70 mph. Governor Ernie Fletcher signed a new law changing the speed limit in late March. However, the higher speed limits won't kick in until engineering studies are completed to determine which stretches of highway will have to remain at 65 mph.

"In every instance, all due attention will be given to highway safety," Fletcher said in a statement issued after he signed the bill. "Data from other states and the conditions for implementation in this legislation give me confidence that 70 mph will not mean a loss of highway safety," he continued.

The speed limit bill passed the

Senate 34 to 2 and the House by a vote of 69 to 27. The measure faced little opposition. Even the spokesman for the Kentucky State Police said that the agency was not opposed to raising the speed limit.

State Senator Brett Guthrie, chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee and a major proponent of the new speed limit, said he travels Interstate 65 frequently and believes that Kentucky is out of touch with other states along the road.

"You can drive from the shores of Lake Michigan to the shores of Alabama, and the only place you have to slow down is in Kentucky," he said. Senator Guthrie and others will soon be able to legally make that trip at 70 mph the entire way. ■

Utah Speed Limit Increase Derailed

It wasn't long ago that Texas became the first state to post an 80-mph speed limit, and some Utah legislators were hoping that their state would join the club. State Senator Scott Jenkins introduced a bill that would have raised the limit on Utah's interstates by 5 mph to 80 mph in rural areas and 70 mph in urban areas.

"We're trying to improve the traffic flow here. You can debate whether it's going to do it or not, but that's what this is about," said Jenkins. He was also quick to point out that the limit increase was not designed to be automatic; the DOT would have to do a study prior to raising the limit on a particular stretch of road.

Jenkins' colleagues in the Senate were supportive and the proposed speed limit increase passed by almost

a three-to-one margin. However, the bill was gutted in the House.

The final version, which was signed into law by the governor, did keep a requirement that any state highway speed limit below the current 65 or 75 mph statutory limit must be justified by a MUTCD-compliant engineering study.

Any mention of a higher speed limit was removed and new anti-motorist measures were added.

For example, motorists in the left lane must maintain at least two seconds space between you and the car ahead of you at all times. If the gap is longer than two seconds, you are classified as impeding traffic. If the gap is less than two seconds, you are classified as following too close. This new law is just one more excuse to write tickets. ■

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Succeeding with Repeat DUI Offenders

The majority of accidents caused by drunk drivers involve very high blood alcohol levels and repeat offenders usually cause the most severe accidents. This type of accident is the darling of sensational media outlets. They love to spark moral outrage with lines like, "This was Johnson's fifth DUI conviction. He was driving without a license and his BAC was nearly three times the legal limit."

Even though repeat offenders with high levels of alcohol in their systems pose the greatest risk, many of the resources employed by the government to deal with the drunk driving problem are directed at catching first-time offenders that are barely above the legal limit and are probably not significantly impaired.

Meanwhile, the high-risk drivers, most of whom have a problem with alcohol, are not adequately treated. They may have their licenses pulled, but this usually has little impact on

their decision to drive, either sober or drunk. Fortunately, not everyone is pleased with the status quo.

A South Dakota pilot program is successfully treating repeat offenders with chronic alcoholism. Instead of trying to prevent them from driving, it tries to prevent them from drinking. Offenders enrolled in the 24/7 Sobriety Program must appear twice daily for alcohol testing. If they don't show up for a test or don't pass they are immediately arrested.

The two-year-old program grew out of the frustration officials felt over the ineffectiveness of suspending or revoking offenders' licenses. Attorney General Larry Long believes the real solution for chronic drunken drivers is to get them sober and keep them that way, which is this program's goal. "If they quit drinking, I don't care if they drive," Long says.

Offenders are normally enrolled in the program for four months and

the alcohol tests are augmented by alcoholism treatment. The results of this combined approach have been impressive. Over 1,000 serious repeat offenders have been enrolled in the program in 14 of South Dakota's 66 counties. The participants have passed more than 99 percent of the 166,000 daily breath tests.

The success of the program has pleased participants too. Lacey Graff, a 24-year-old secretary from Sioux Falls, has been in the program since last August. She readily admits being annoyed with the multiple exams at first, but she now credits them with turning her life around. After failing two breath tests and having to spend the night in jail, she got sober for the first time in over two years.

Under a new South Dakota law, the successful pilot program will become permanent this year. It will also be expanded throughout the entire state. ■

Georgia's Proposed Money Grab

If Governor Sonny Perdue gets his way, Georgia will join a growing list of states that charge ticket surcharges. This is an effort to keep punishing motorists who get tickets by coming back to them for more money on top of the regular fine. Preliminary estimates show that Georgia could rake in as much as \$30 million from this proposed law in the first year alone.

Working with one of his floor leaders in the state senate, Purdue had a bill introduced to create the new fine structure. According to legislation, driving over 85 mph or more anywhere in Georgia and 75 mph or more on a two-lane road will

be classified as a "super speeding" offense. An additional fine of \$200 will be added to any such ticket.

The legislation would also assess fines based on the number of points a driver has on his or her license: \$100 fine at 7-9 points, \$125 fine at 10-12 points, and \$200 fine at 13-14 points. (Georgians' licenses are suspended at 15 points.) Those that do have their licenses suspended or revoked will also be hit with extra charges to have them reinstated. Depending on the reason for suspension or revocation, the extra charge ranges from \$100 to \$300 dollars.

Purdue claims the bill will help

reduce traumatic automobile accidents and provide additional funds for trauma care. The second claim is true since most of the surcharge money will go into a pool dedicated to funding trauma centers, but the first claim has no basis in fact. Very few accidents are strictly caused by speed, so fleecing someone with tickets for a few hundred dollars worth of extra fees won't have any impact on road safety, let alone the number of traumatic accidents.

"There is a clear link between the people who cause deadly accidents on our roadways and the rising strain on our hospitals'

(Continued on Page 7)

Coming To A Federal Highway Near You?

by John Holevoet, Director of Development



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is urging transportation officials in Connecticut to install equipment for a congestion pricing system. These specialized tolls are designed to charge motorists varying rates based on the level of congestion the road experiences. The idea is to charge drivers more to travel at peak hours and thereby reduce traffic during rush hour.

Patrick DeCorla-Souza, the manager of FHWA's congestion pricing initiative, sang the praises of this type of tolling at a recent meeting of Connecticut's South Western Regional Planning Agency. He pointed out that other cities worldwide are using the method to fund transportation costs.

While congestion pricing is being used in some cities, the picture is not as rosy as DeCorla-Souza made it seem. Cities using this system typically do not see a noticeable decline in congestion. As anyone who has sat in rush hour traffic can attest, it's not generally associated with recreational fun. We sit in traffic to get to places we need to go, like our jobs. Congestion pricing would not get us off the roads, but it would make our commutes more expensive.

Examining the traffic patterns of cities using congestion pricing illustrates that those most likely to be kept off the road are those making discretionary trips. This group

represents a relatively small part of the total traffic volume. Furthermore, discouraging them from traveling hurts the economies of the cities involved. Fewer discretionary trips result in less discretionary spending at shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues.

Automated tolling technology, such as EZ-Pass, makes tolling more palatable. In fact, that is what the feds are counting on to get people to swallow this idea. People will be able just to drive without thinking about how much it is costing them. This undermines the whole purpose of congestion pricing, which is meant to deter people from driving at certain times because of the cost.

Congestion pricing schemes are used in a couple of counties in Southern California. On Interstate 15 in San Diego, the car pool lane has been converted to a toll lane. The congestion in that lane is monitored every six minutes, and the fare often is raised throughout the day. The idea that someone driving to his or her destination who is not even aware of how much the toll is at a given moment will stop driving because the toll just went up a nickel is ridiculous.

The only concrete result of congestion pricing is more money for the state. The Connecticut DOT is seeking federal money to study the impact congestion pricing would have, particularly on local traffic and mass transit ridership. DeCorla-Souza cautioned that money would be easier to get to install a congestion pricing system than to study its effects, which is a telling sign of how strongly FHWA is pushing the concept. ■

Money Grab

(Continued from page 6)

emergency services," Governor Perdue maintains. However, he didn't offer any evidence of the so-called "clear link," nor did he provide anything that demonstrates that driving 85 mph necessarily makes you more likely to cause an accident, especially on suburban Atlanta expressways where such speeds are not uncommon.

The Georgia Senate passed the surcharge measure, SB 125, by a 48-2 vote without any debate. The legislative session in Georgia has already ended, but the bill will still be alive when the House reconvenes next year for the second half of its two-year term. With this in mind, it's not too late to contact your state representative or the governor to let them know what you think of this proposal. ■



New NMA Website Coming Soon

We've been hard at work recently redesigning our main site, www.motorists.org.

In addition to a more modern look, the website will have improved navigation, more up-to-date news, and the ability to search all of our information with one click. The new site will launch sometime in May 2007. ■

June Is Lane Courtesy Month

With summer just around the corner and visions of vacations dominating Americans' thoughts, our highways will experience a dramatic increase in traffic. To enhance the travel experience for motorists, we have designated June as Lane Courtesy Month.

Lane courtesy, also called Lane Discipline, is the simple act of moving to the right to allow faster traffic to

pass. Lane Courtesy has a powerful influence on highway safety, traffic flow, and congestion. Arguably, its effect is more important than speed limits, traffic enforcement, or any other attempt to control driver behavior.

Ask almost any motorist what most raises their ire when using major highways and the answer will be "failure of slower traffic to keep right

or yield to the right when faster traffic approaches."

The lane courtesy ethic must be reinvigorated, promoted, and recognized for the contribution it can make toward safer, faster and more enjoyable travel. We hope that declaring June as "Lane Courtesy Month" will reawaken interest in this incredibly important and positive traffic safety concept. ■

Four Key Benefits of Lane Courtesy



Less Congestion

Yielding to faster traffic reduces road congestion. When traffic is flowing smoothly, highway capacity can be utilized to its fullest extent. An additional benefit of lane courtesy is reduced air pollution.



Decreased Road Rage

Ask almost any motorist what irritates them the most and the majority will answer, "left lane hogs." The courteous act of moving to the right can eliminate driver stress and conflict.



Better Gas Mileage

Lane courtesy promotes the smooth flow of traffic and helps drivers maintain an even pace. Vehicles use the most gas when accelerating. Less braking followed by acceleration will improve fuel economy.



Fewer Accidents

By not obstructing other drivers, traffic is able to flow more smoothly. When traffic flows smoothly, there is less tailgating, less weaving in-and-out of traffic, and therefore fewer accidents.

Help Promote Lane Courtesy



Help promote Lane Courtesy by attaching our bright red and black Lane Courtesy bumper stickers to your vehicle. At \$1 per sticker, this is an easy, inexpensive way to promote our efforts!

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Take Action!

Lane courtesy is one of the most important issues that motorists deal with. You can help improve lane courtesy across the country by employing the strategies below:

Lead by example.

Practice lane courtesy whenever you drive. Improved lane courtesy starts with you.

Distribute lane courtesy information to friends, family, and co-workers.

Word of mouth is one of the most powerful ways to get the lane courtesy message out to the public.

Contact your state legislators and urge them to support stronger lane courtesy laws.

Thoughtful letters, emails, and phone calls can have a large impact on what bills your legislators support. Do your part locally by making contact with your legislators.

Write to the commander of your state police or highway patrol.

Lane courtesy enforcement is seriously lacking, explain to him or her why enforcing this law is so important.

Donate to the NMA Foundation's efforts to promote lane courtesy.

All contributions to the foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Write a "letter to the editor" to your local newspaper.

The whole point of Lane Courtesy Month is to raise public awareness about this issue, and your letter will help. We've included a sample letter to the editor on this page that you can use or you can write your own. ■

Sample Letter To The Editor

Driving on the highway has become a pain. Drivers don't yield the left lane to faster moving traffic, people tailgate, and the highways are congested. I think it is time we got back to using Lane Courtesy on the roadways.

Lane Courtesy isn't a radical idea and it's easily implemented. Drivers should keep the left lane clear for faster moving traffic. After you pass a slower moving vehicle, move back into the right lane. This way there's less tailgating, less congestion, and a more consistent traffic flow. It's safer because you don't have to continually speed up and slow down, which also helps to conserve gas.

I realize that a lot of drivers claim the left-hand lane as their own because they're going the speed limit, but they're just adding to the frustration on our roads by blocking the flow of traffic. They are creating the potential of an accident by being an obstacle on the road. Many accidents and frustration can be alleviated if more drivers would simply follow lane courtesy.

The National Motorists Association Foundation even made this June "Lane Courtesy Month" and have more information about this issue on their web site, www.lanecourtesy.org. Take a few minutes to check it out. It's a good way to learn more about how lane courtesy can benefit us all. ■

If At First You Don't Succeed...

Florida State Senator Mike Bennett has renewed his efforts to pass meaningful lane courtesy legislation. This is the fourth year in a row his bill has been introduced. It died twice in committee and was vetoed by former Governor Jeb Bush in 2005. Bennett is optimistic that newly elected Governor Charlie Crist will sign the measure into law.

The bill, S536, is intended to combat aggressive driving on the state's multilane highways by reducing the number of drivers that hog the far left-hand lane. It would give law enforcement more authority to ticket drivers who block traffic, even if they are driving the speed limit.

Under the proposed legislation, the failure of slower traffic to keep right would be included as one of the offenses that make

up "aggressive careless driving." The bill also changes, from two to three, the number of driving offenses that must be committed at one time to constitute "aggressive careless driving."

Violators would face a \$100 fine. Repeat offenders would face as much as a \$500 fine and a mandatory court appearance. Drivers would also receive points for each offense committed.

The bill has already passed out of committee and will hopefully be brought up for a floor vote soon. Its many supporters in the Senate know the measure would make the roads safer by reducing dangerous situations in which frustrated motorists stuck behind slower-moving vehicles try to pass on the right. They just need to convince enough other legislators of the bill's importance. ■

Washington, D.C.'s Camera Mess

Affiliated Computer Services (ACS), a Texas-based camera manufacturer, has come under fire for allegedly failing to maintain ticket cameras in Washington, D.C.

A report by rival ticket camera firm, American Traffic Solutions (ATS), found that 27 of the 50 red-light cameras were inoperable or defective, two of the ten stationary radar units hadn't been inspected, and flash bulbs were not replaced, rendering the cameras ineffective at night and during bad weather.

Most of the sites had been out of service for more than a month, with some of the cameras being inoperable for six months or longer.

ACS also had a contract with the city to maintain its parking meters and they were found in similar state of disrepair.

A further investigation of the situation by the *Washington Examiner* revealed that ACS had previously contributed thousands of dollars to political campaigns and travel by Washington D.C. leaders while the company was attempting to negotiate a new deal with the city.

ACS donated \$8,500 to six council members' campaign committees, including the current mayor and council chairman. In addition, Donella Brockington, a vice-president at ACS, contributed \$3,000 as an individual to eight separate campaign committees.

Despite these well-documented problems, ACS was awarded a three-year contract worth \$1.5 million in January to oversee both red-light and speed cameras in Montgomery County, Maryland. ■

One Million Drivers!

There are over 6,000 speed cameras in use in Britain and while they haven't increased safety, they have apparently increased speeding citations.

More than a million drivers in Britain are about to be banned from the roads because they are one point away from losing their licenses.

According to research by Direct Line, a British car insurance company, rising convictions could affect the livelihood of 14 percent of drivers: they will lose their jobs if their driving licenses is revoked.

Speed cameras are rare in the U.S. right now, but if they continue to gain support, this could be a chilling preview of things to come. ■

Look Out For Yellow Trucks



The Kansas Highway Patrol has begun spying on motorists from privately owned big rig trucks. As part of a new, federally funded effort, a state trooper sits in the passenger seat of each truck and operates a set of five video cameras and a radar gun to identify motorists to ticket. The trooper will then contact a patrol car hidden nearby to issue the citation.

The program is expected to generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in ticket revenue over a six-

week period.

"I want to thank industry and governmental partners that have agreed to work with the Patrol on this important program," Kansas Highway Patrol Superintendent William R. Seck said in a statement.

Yellow Transportation, a Wichita company, provided trucks for the most recent operation at no cost to the state. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which is funding the Kansas ticketing program, this month rewarded the cooperative company with its "highest safety rating"—a valuable endorsement of Yellow's practices.

In 2005, the federal agency similarly spent \$600,000 in federal gas tax money to fund a ticketing program in Washington state. ■

Keep in Touch with the NMA

Want to know about key motorist legislation in your state as it comes up?

Without your email address, we're unable to get this kind of information out to you.



To get the full benefit of your membership, send your name and current email address to nma@motorists.org.

Note: We do not sell or rent our mailing list to anyone.



News From Around The Country

Arizona

Arizona is planning to expand its automated enforcement program in the first program of its kind in the country. The two-phase program would start with cameras in construction zones and at traffic signals on some highways. Cameras would then be placed at selected locations on Phoenix-area freeways.

American Traffic Solutions, a photo enforcement company, is quietly trying to gather legislative support for a dramatic overhaul of the citation process. Under ATS' proposal, photographs would only be taken of the license plate and then the registered owner would be sent a citation. Currently, a photograph is taken of the driver and the license plate, which must be matched to issue a citation.

Georgia

House Bill 77, which was initially crafted to do away with red light cameras altogether, was altered to send 75 percent of the fine money generated by the cameras to a state trauma care fund. The adapted bill was then shelved by a Senate committee, virtually dooming its chances to get through the General Assembly before the end of the 2007 session.

Hawaii

The Hawaii state legislature turned aside an attempt to re-authorize the use of red light cameras. There were multiple bills (SB1191, HB352, SB830) that would have allowed ticket cameras to return to the state but they did not pass through the requisite committees in time for a floor vote this session.

Iowa

Senator Pat Ward (R-West Des Moines) introduced a ban on red-light cameras in the form of a freestanding amendment to a transportation bill that had previously passed the state House. The Iowa Senate voted 28-22 to ban ticket cameras but the Iowa House later removed the amendment.

Another court in Iowa has struck down red light camera tickets as illegal. A Dallas County Magistrate ruled that the city of Clive's photo tickets violated state laws requiring a valid citation to include the defendant's address as well as the time and place of a court appearance.

Minnesota

With seven members voting against it and six for it, the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee blocked a measure that allow Minneapolis and other cities to use ticket cameras.

Missouri

Shawn Brown, the former mayor of St. Peters, Missouri, has checked in to the Federal Prison Camp in Duluth, Minnesota to serve an eighteen-month sentence for soliciting a bribe from Australian red light camera vendor Redflex.

The Judiciary Committee approved a measure introduced by Representative Bob Nance (R-Excelsior Springs) to forbid cities and towns from making more than 35 percent of total revenue from traffic tickets. Current law caps the amount of traffic ticket revenue at 45 percent.

Montana

Montana recently defied the U.S. government, enacting the first state laws to reject the 2005 federal Real ID Act and ratcheting up pressure on Congress to amend or repeal national standards for driver's licenses. Governor Brian Schweitzer (D) signed legislation that bans the state's Motor Vehicle Division from enforcing the national rules, which set uniform security features for driver's licenses and require states to verify the identity of all driver license applicants.

New Jersey

The cumbersome, treadmill-like dynamometer associated with New Jersey's auto inspection program will no longer be used. The devices, which cost \$70 million dollars to purchase, were used for the past seven years to measure emissions. They were plagued with problems from the very start: they didn't work when it was cold or raining; they damaged some cars; and they actually caught very few emissions violators.

New Mexico

Governor Bill Richardson (D) informed the legislature that he vetoed legislation that would have cut the maximum fines for ticket cameras on the condition that the mayor of Albuquerque would consider lowering his city's fines. Under the proposed law, the total amount of any speed camera or red light camera ticket issued within the state would have been capped at \$100. ■

As of this printing, this information is current. For more information on this and other motorist news, visit www.motorists.org



Members Write

When I started reading the article by John Holevoet about ethanol in the March/April *Driving Freedoms*, I first questioned what the article had to do with driving freedoms. When I finished reading I felt the article was a little out of place and quite a bit off base.

To suggest that we stop producing domestic ethanol and buy foreign ethanol is totally opposite to a major reason to develop any alternative fuel, which is to reduce our dependence on imported energy.

Ethanol cannot and will not be the answer to alternative energy, but until other technologies develop it will help. If a side benefit is the price of corn rising to a profitable level for the American farmers, I'm all for it.

I'm convinced that the additional cost we will pay to produce domestic forms of energy will be far less than the cost of our involvement in the Middle East and around the world to protect our sources of foreign oil.

*James W. Koktavy
Rush City, MN*

This refers to a statement Rob Talley made in the recent Washington Report (March/April 2007).

He wrote, "in Sacramento, CA the only way to contest a red-light-camera ticket is to plead guilty first."

Perhaps he will explain how he arrived at the above. Why? Because his assertion is wrong.

In a page sent to alleged red light violators by the California CHP it says the following:

If you contest the violation: (court trial) Send a certified or registered letter postmarked not later than five days prior to the appearance date,

or come to the court by appearance date to request a COURT TRIAL on a future date when an officer and witnesses will be present.

You will be required to submit the bail amount. You will be given a date for your TRIAL.

For further information contact the Superior Court of California, (916) 875-7800.

*G. Golt
Fair Oaks, CA*

I just want to send my thanks to you for giving me the courage to contest the tickets I received in Bedford Texas this past January. I was cited for 47 in a 30, failing to signal lane change, and no seat belt. The day was January 30th and I guess that the officer was a little behind with his quota.

By reading the information I ordered from your site, it gave me the confidence to fight. After appearing before the judge and pleading not guilty, I went before the city prosecutors to plead my case. The first thing I did was to get a 3a certified copy of my clean driving record. I first asked to have all citations dismissed because of my past driving record. When she asked why, I told her because I did not deserve these citations. She said, lets talk.

The failure to signal lane change was dismissed immediately because I knew that I had a light out and was using hand signals that the officer did

not see. I then told her that I did not believe that I was going anywhere near the speed that the officer had accused me of driving, and I truly believe I was not going 47 in a 30. She then told me that she would dismiss another of the tickets and do differed adjudication on the other. My original goal was to get the turn signal and the seat belt dismissed and plead differed adjudication to the speeding. She then surprised me and said she would dismiss the speeding and defer the seatbelt. All in all I feel that I came out a winner.

I now am very confident that if I receive another ticket, I am well prepared to fight it and win. Thanks again for giving me the courage to fight and the knowledge to win!

*Mike Wywias
Bedford, Texas*

The information I found in the *Legal Defense Kit* was immensely helpful and I would like to thank you for providing this service.

I went to court very well prepared with discovery, eight pages of cross-examination questions, pictures and photocopies of the ticket, the officer's training record and lots of data that would indicate that the officer could not have definitely pinpointed my vehicle as the one that caused his radar to register a speed in excess of the limit. However, I will never know if my data, preparation and argument would have succeeded in convincing the judge I was innocent. The officer never showed up! I was in court for all of three minutes! I can only think that I scared them off! Thanks again!

*Doug McElhaney
Northampton, MA*

Your letters are welcomed and should not exceed 300 words. They may be edited for length or clarity. Full-length articles will also be considered for publication and should not exceed 600 words. Submissions may be emailed to nma@motorists.org or mailed to us.

Motorist Marketplace

NMA Foundation Legal Defense Kit

Represent yourself in traffic court and win! In addition to covering court procedures and strategy, this ten-pound kit includes technical information on speed enforcement devices. It also contains state-specific information on Discovery and Public Records Laws (this is how you get information from the police on your case!). Remember, this resource is being constantly updated and improved.

Call 800-882-2785 to order the Kit and tailor it specifically to your ticket!

\$155 Refundable Security Deposit \$10 S&H Rental Fee: \$30/month



NMA Patch

The patches are three inches in diameter. They have a white background, a color NMA Logo, and the NMA web site is embroidered on the patch in black lettering. They can be easily sewn to just about anything. Hats, jackets, or shirts are just a few of the options.

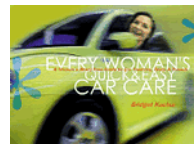
Non-Member Price: N/A **Member Price: \$2.50**



Guerrilla Ticket Fighter

Now, while you're driving, you can learn how to fight traffic tickets and win. **Guerrilla Ticket Fighter** will tell you how to defend yourself against traffic tickets using strategies that have proven successful for other motorists, just like you. Available on CD or audiocassette.

Non-Member Price: \$19.95 **Member Price: \$15.00**



Every Woman's Car Care

Many motorists don't have useful knowledge about the vehicles they drive. This book can help. While it was written by and for women, this book is an asset for anyone. Its 262 pages cover everything from how to read gauges to "jump starting" and trouble shooting.

Non-Member Price: \$19.95 **Member Price: \$14.95**



Beat Your Ticket

State and local governments are increasingly relying on traffic ticket revenue for daily operations. This book gives responsible motorists the means to protect their rights by addressing many types of tickets: speeding, reckless driving, defective equipment, and more.

Non-Member Price: \$29.95 **Member Price: \$21.95**



Legal Research

Many laws and statutes that you need to prepare your case are state specific, which means that you will have to do the research. This book gives you the basic understanding of how to conduct legal research. The book explains everything in easy-to-understand terms.

Non-Member Price: \$44.95 **Member Price: \$34.95**

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\$50.01 to \$75.00	\$8.00
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Over \$100	\$10.00

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Electronics Engineer and
Co-Inventor of the original
Escort® detector.



**“Live with the *Arrows*,
you’ll wonder how you ever
managed without them.”**

— Car and Driver

**Drivers
like you do
their own tests**

*It’s easy. Order both V1 and Passport.
Compare them on the road. Return the
loser within 30 days for a full refund.*

Yes, I bit on their price

Marc Palmer bought a Passport 8500 and handed down his 1998 V1 to his wife, who was following him on I-40. “I look in my mirror and she had dropped way back,” he said. Then his Passport 8500 went off. Too late!

As he was being written up, his wife phoned to say V1 had been warning for seven or eight seconds. “I’d say close to a quarter mile.”

“I’m looking forward to my new V1,” says Mr. Palmer, after returning his Passport.

Dumped his Passport... for \$50

James Wegielewski was driving in a pack with friends on I-78 when his V1 warned of K band. “I radioed the other cars,” he said. An M3 ahead, relying on Passport, radioed back he “didn’t have anything,” and pressed on.

“Right at the top of the hill I saw a frantic dive for the slow lane, with heavy braking” by the M3. Luckily for him, a car ahead got nailed.

“His exact words were, ‘I saw the light rack not even a second after my detector went off. I can’t believe how early you got a warning.’”

The Passport was sold for \$50 that very day, and replaced by a V1.

His Passport is going on eBay®

Justin Kreimer, with both a V1 and a Passport 8500 in his windshield, was south-bound on I-85, heading uphill. “The V1 chirps a light warning on Ka band; says ‘ahead,’” he remembers, “8500 says nothing. I think for a second about *radartest.com*’s test. I decide not to trust it.”

“As I get closer to the top, 8500 finally starts to chirp...and there’s an enforcer’s Camaro hiding in the bushes. V1 warned me a full 3-4 seconds before 8500.”

“V1 is becoming a permanent fixture in my vehicle.”

Radar Locator

Tracks one or more radars at the same time; points to each.



When Valentine One® finds radar or laser, a red arrow points toward the source. Ahead? Behind? Off to the side? V1 tells you instantly. Other detectors? They all go “beep” and leave you guessing, just like in the Seventies.



“We’ve said this before and it’s still true: Once you live with the arrows, you’ll wonder how you ever managed without them,” said Car and Driver.

Car and Driver — Overall Ratings	
Total Score for Test Year 2002	
Valentine One	97
Escort Passport® 8500	73
BEL® 980	61
Cobra™ XR-1950	43
Whistler™ 1780	35
Uniden LRD 987	34



Arrows and the Bogey Counter

V1’s advanced computer analysis tracks each signal separately. And the arrows point toward each one. A digital display called the Bogey Counter tells “how many.” V1 won’t let you get blind sided.

Example: you see one radar, but there’s another ahead. V1 tells you exactly that. The beepers just go “beep.”

“The Valentine’s patented radar-direction arrows and bogey counter made it easy to decide which warnings to worry about,” said Car and Driver.

Which is Best?

“The Passport offers less range than the Valentine and, like all the non-Valentine units, lacks the useful directional arrows,”

Car and Driver went on to say. Final ranking: 97 points for V1, 73 for second-place Passport 8500.

See V1’s patented Radar Locator in action: www.v1pop.com

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