



NMA Advocacy Guidebook

For all NMA members who want to proactively impact motorists' rights.

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The Advocacy Guidebook was written expressly by the NMA National Staff for members to use at their discretion. The book and the three accompanying NMA Tool Kits (Citizen Lobbying, Local Organizing and Media) have been written and distributed by Shelia Dunn with assistance from Gary Biller, Kelly Endres, and Thomas Miller with additional proofreading assistance by NMA Member Josh McKay. This book and every revision has been copyrighted © by the National Motorists Association.

INTRODUCTION

THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION

The National Motorists Association (NMA) is a grassroots alliance of motorists joining together to protect our rights in the courts, on the streets, and in our vehicles. NMA members number in the thousands and are active in all 50 states as well as in several provinces of Canada.

The NMA has empowered drivers since 1982. We fight for the driving freedoms of motorists. We lobby for traffic regulations and enforcement actions that are based on safety considerations, rather than based on a line item on the income side of a city, county, or state budget. Among the principles we advocate:

Traffic safety through sound engineering and real driver training

Lives are saved on the highway through proven engineering solutions such as setting speed limits at their safest levels, i.e., slightly above the natural prevailing speed of free-flowing traffic, and through driver education programs that emphasize early advanced driving-skill development both on-road and in controlled learning environments.

Traffic laws fairly written and reasonably enforced

Traffic laws and penalties should be based on sensible standards that differentiate between responsible behaviors and demonstrated unsafe actions. If a driver is acting in a reasonable and prudent manner, not putting anyone else's safety or property at risk, then no penalty should apply. Command-and-control tactics like [speed traps](#) and [red-light cameras](#) do not constitute reasonable enforcement. They do not increase the safety of the roads and are corrupted by revenue motives, a problem exacerbated by the hiring of private, for-profit contractors as proxies for local law enforcement.

Freedom from arbitrary traffic stops and unwarranted searches/seizures

[Roadblocks](#) are used to cast a wide net, targeting hundreds of thousands of innocent motorists to catch relatively few offenders. Probable cause has become so loosely defined that it is subject to the whims of roadside "justice." [No motorist's property should be taken without a finding of guilt in a fair criminal trial.](#)

Freedom from invasive surveillance

Myriad surveillance schemes – including tracking motorists and vehicles with GPS, [indiscriminate license plate data collection and retention](#), and the use of the driver's license as a national ID card – do irreparable harm to the privacy rights of motorists.

Full due process for motorists

A fair trial is a fundamental constitutional right that has been increasingly stripped away from motorists. Our system of justice is based on the principle that people are considered innocent until proven guilty, but drivers – and vehicle owners in cases involving automated enforcement – are frequently presumed to be at fault and then subjected to administrative hearings that rubber-stamp guilty verdicts. This process denies them basic rights such as discovery, trial by jury, and often the ability to question their accuser.

Reasonable highway user fees for maintaining and improving highways, not for financing non-highway projects

Having road users pay for upkeep and expansion of roads and bridges is fair. Charging them twice – as both taxpayers and as drivers through the use of tolls and various fees – is not, particularly when the highway infrastructure continues to crumble and funds purposed for road improvements are funneled to unrelated projects.

Motorists' rights keep pace with technological advances

Autonomous vehicles and interconnected cars are examples of rapidly evolving technologies that promise improved safety and comfort on the road, but will also spawn new challenges to the rights of drivers.

THE NMA MOTORIST BILL OF RIGHTS

1) *The right to traffic regulations based on sound engineering principles and public consensus.*

Traffic safety begins with traffic engineers who have the training and expertise to survey traffic and can correctly set speed limits at the 85th percentile. The 85th percentile is the speed at which 85% of the drivers are traveling at or below on the surveyed road. Traffic engineers are also instrumental in making sure that yellow lights at intersections are correctly timed based on normal vehicle approach. Traffic moving freely promotes safety for all users of the road.

2) *Clear guarantees that revenue collected from highway users for highway purposes be used for such purposes, and that all streets, roads, and highways be properly maintained, signed and regulated in a manner that expedites travel.*

Any tax money or fees (in whatever form) collected for the purpose of building and maintaining roads should be used only for road infrastructure instead of siphoned off by elected officials for other programs.

3) *Freedom from unreasonable search and seizure and the guarantee that all traffic stops will be based on probable cause.*

The 4th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures. Motorists are particularly vulnerable during traffic stops. With your help we can reform unreasonable searches and seizures during traffic stops, ask for civil asset forfeiture reform and advocate against the unconstitutional practices of warrantless blood draws at DUI/DUID traffic stops and checkpoints.

4) *The right to choose the type of vehicle and related equipment that best meets an individual's needs and preferences.*

Motorists should be allowed to make choices with regards to safety features and connectivity in any vehicle they purchase. Mandating restrictions on car ownership and driving our own vehicle should also be limited.

5) *Protection from discourteous and reckless drivers including those who deliberately impede traffic, who threaten other motorists with their actions, and those who are impaired or incompetent.*

Distracted driving, impaired driving and road rage have become endemic in our society. Each motorist needs to understand his or her own tendencies towards distracted driving, impairment and driving frustration trigger points that can lead to road rage. With freedom of mobility comes personal responsibility, or otherwise we will soon have fewer options to choose from due to increased government safety laws and mandates.

6) *Freedom from unreasonable surcharges, fees, taxes, and fines.*

Fighting every traffic ticket you receive is important because many times traffic laws are unfair and the punishment does not fit the crime. When faced with increased insurance rates, exorbitant cash fines/court fees and possible jail time or community service, fighting your ticket becomes even more important for your personal liberty and your bank account. Taxation by citation must stop.

7) *Complete access to all public streets, roads, and highways, free of arbitrary restrictions, exorbitant fees, or governmental attempts to dictate personal travel choices.*

Did you know that 88% of American adults drive? When motorists are limited in their freedom to be mobile, it hurts not only them with the loss of time and money, but also the main street businesses who rely on traffic. Unsustainable financially and a prime example of social engineering, programs like Vision Zero artificially impose personal travel choices whether local citizens want them or not.

8) *Freedom from driver license suspensions or revocations for non-driving violations or matters of personal conduct.*

A driver's license is one of the most important personal documents a person can hold. Without one, jobs are difficult to find or keep, and travel obviously becomes more difficult. With suspended driver's licenses, motorists could find themselves spiraling into a black hole that may take years to overcome. Suspending a

driver's license should be a punishment of last resort and should never be automatic for non-driving violations or matters of personal conduct.

9) Protection from arbitrary and exploitative insurance industry practices.

The auto insurance industry is not your friend. Making money for stakeholders--not insuring your safety--is their primary objective. Traffic ticket points, black boxes and auto tracking devices are all ways that insurance companies can raise your rates. At the urging of "safety groups" financed by the insurance lobby, local governments are encouraged to artificially and arbitrarily lower speed limits on roads and utilize automatic camera enforcement.

10) The right to a fair and impartial trial for traffic offenses, including a trial by jury if requested by the defendant.

The 5th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives Americans the right to due process. Motorists have every right to contest a traffic ticket. Judges, prosecutors and law enforcement however typically want to discourage you from contesting your ticket because it is indeed a hassle and more expensive for local governments. Going to trial defeats the purpose of taxation by citation. Therefore the NMA urges motorists to fight each and every ticket they receive!

NMA CODE OF PROFESSIONALISM

The National Motorists Association is a grassroots organization consisting of thousands of members from every walk of life and political persuasion. We are partisan only when it comes to the issues that affect the rights of motorists.

Recognized representatives of the NMA are encouraged to use their own experiences when communicating on behalf of the organization, but must understand that in doing so they are representing not only the NMA but also the entire membership. As such there are some important guidelines to follow:

- Be consistent with the NMA positions on the issues as documented on the Motorists.org website and other communications such as the weekly NMA e-newsletter.
- When in doubt about any of those positions, ask for clarification from the NMA or refer the inquiry back to the National Office nma@motorists.org.
- Remain non-partisan with regard to political opinions (which includes candidate endorsements) or ideologies.
- Stick to the facts of the issue and avoid being baited by opposition rhetoric; and
- Express yourself in a civil, professional manner while dressing appropriately for the occasion.

By following these standards, NMA staff members, activists, and volunteers will further the organization's mission to defend motorists' rights by communicating clearly and effectively.

WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A MOTORISTS' RIGHTS ADVOCATE

Dictionary Definition of Advocacy: Act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.

Many motorists' rights advocates begin their journey by first simply answering a call from an NMA Alert to write their elected official about a pending vote on a bill or ordinance. This is the most basic level of advocacy work. The act of supporting the cause though can be much more fulfilling than writing just one letter.

Here are some questions you should ask and answer for yourself:

- What kind of advocate do I want to be?
- How can I use my talents, experience and time to push for motorists' rights on a local, state and/or national level?
- How can I best gain credibility and trust so that elected and non-elected officials will listen to what I have to say?
- How could I influence my family and friends to help me in my advocacy efforts?

After you answer these questions for yourself, think about the following concepts to become an effective advocate:

Know and Understand the Facts

To gain and maintain credibility, you must have all the facts on both sides of any issue. Knowing the facts or having the information easily accessible will help you in communications with officials, the media, other advocates and the motoring public.

Learn and Use NMA Website Information

Learn and understand all the [NMA positions](#) our association advocates for on a local, state and national level. Feel welcome to use the information that the NMA provides on the [NMA website](#), [daily blog posts](#), [weekly e-newsletter](#) and [Driving Freedoms Magazine](#).

Create a Clear and Concise Message

Use facts and make your points quickly and concisely. Speak or write without using jargon or unexplained acronyms so that the person you are talking to understands the issue and your point of view.

Engage

Write letters, emails, and social media posts to elected and non-elected officials and the media.

Make your Voice Heard

Don't be shy! Make phone calls and/or meet with your elected and non-elected officials. Stand up and speak at public meetings. Don't be afraid to contact the media—the media loves a good story!

Say Thank You

Everyone is busy and time is valuable. A thank you for effort and even more so for support is always appreciated!

KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS

Besides our members, the NMA's most valuable asset is its website at www.motorists.org. We encourage you to bookmark the site and visit often. The NMA also supports two sister sites: www.speedtrap.org and www.roadblock.org that are also valuable assets to members and the motoring public.

The cornerstone to becoming an effective motorists' rights advocate is to learn the issues and understand the current zeitgeist of what regular motorists like yourself are facing each day. Here are five communication streams that the national staff presents for members to read and use in advocacy efforts.

- Visit [DRIVING NEWS](#) which is a curated feed of news from around the country.
- Visit your [State Page](#) to find out specific news, current traffic laws, state's speed traps and roadblocks, and to access a portal to state specific discussions in the NMA Forum.
- Visit and subscribe to the [NMA Blog](#), which features regular NMA blog contributors and two weekly roundups.
- Read and subscribe to the weekly [NMA E-Newsletter](#), which is emailed to your inbox every Sunday and features an issue perspective piece plus links to recent activity on our blogs and social media. Feel free to comment on any newsletter by emailing us at nma@motorists.org.
- Every quarter, the national NMA staff prepares and mails to each member's home the Driving Freedoms magazine, which includes a more extensive look at NMA issues, related developments in the news, and additional information exclusively for NMA members.

If you find articles that you think might contribute to the national or state news feeds, please feel free to send the URL link to the national office nma@motorists.org.

Also, the National Motorists Association is active on the following Social Media streams:

Social Media	User Name	URL	Other Information
Facebook	National Motorists Association	https://www.facebook.com/motorists/	Follow Us on Facebook!
Flipboard	National Motorists Association	https://flipboard.com/@motorists	11 curated magazines
LinkedIn	National Motorists Association	https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-motorists-association?trk=nav_account_sub_nav_company_admin	Follow Us on LinkedIn!
Pinterest	Driving Freedoms	https://www.pinterest.com/drivingfreedoms/	30 boards with over 15K pins
Twitter	@motorists	https://twitter.com/motorists	Follow Us!

HOW TO BECOME AN NMA STATE ACTIVIST

Becoming an NMA state activist takes volunteer advocacy work to the next level. Activists are trained to assist members with traffic fighting questions and generally do the heavy lifting in their cities and states with regards to tracking bills and ordinances, writing NMA alerts, and helping direct lobbying efforts of elected and non-elected officials. Here are the general responsibilities of an NMA activist.

- Maintain a working knowledge of NMA activities, policies, and organizational philosophy.
- Respond to calls and letters from NMA members in a timely and courteous manner.
- Collect and forward relevant information to the National Motorists Association National Office.
- Establish and maintain contact with local and/or state elected and non-elected officials.
- Respond to requests for interviews on NMA issues (This is encouraged but not everyone is comfortable and/or trained to do this)

NMA state activists are recruited and trained by the national staff. If you have interest in serving as an NMA local or state activist, please contact the national office by email nma@motorists.org or by phone 608/849-6000.

POLITICAL PROCESS

BE AN INFORMED VOTER AND VOTE!

Voting is one of the most basic ways one can advocate. Inform yourself on your rights and understand how those who are running for elected office vote on issues important to you as a motorist. Understand ballot issues that tackle NMA issues such as transportation spending, road user fees, and traffic regulations. Take a stand on issues with your friends and family. Learn more about candidates and voting records of incumbents. Voting for and helping candidates who support motorists' rights get elected is one important and sometimes overlooked factor for ongoing advocacy efforts.

Here are some national websites that can assist you on learning more about candidates and voting:

- Ballotpedia.org—an online encyclopedia of American politics and elections.
- Vote Smart.org—a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that collects and distributes information on candidates for public office.
- RocktheVote.org—encourages young people to vote and participate in the process.
- FactCheck.org—nonpartisan, nonprofit “consumer advocate” for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in American politics.
- Politifact.com—a fact-checking website that rates the accuracy of claims by elected officials and others.
- OpenSecrets.org—provides information on which companies and lobbyist groups contribute to which candidates.

To keep up-to-date with future elections, here is a list of voting websites per state.

Alabama: http://alabamavotes.gov	Montana: http://sos.mt.gov/elections
Alaska: http://elections.alaska.gov	Nebraska: www.sos.ne.gov
Arizona: http://azsos.gov/elections	Nevada: http://nvsos.gov/elections/
Arkansas: http://sos.arkansas.gov/elections	New Hampshire: http://sos.nh.gov
California: http://sos.ca.gov/elections	New Jersey: http://njelections.org
Colorado: http://sos.state.co.us	New Mexico: http://sos.state.nm.us
Connecticut: http://ct.gov/sots	New York: www.elections.ny.gov
Delaware: http://elections.delaware.gov	North Carolina: http://ncsbe.gov
Florida: http://election.dos.state.fl.us	North Dakota: http://sos.nd.gov
Georgia: http://sos.ga.gov/elections	Ohio: http://sos.state.oh.us
Hawaii: http://hawaii.gov/elections	Oklahoma: http://ok.gov/elections
Idaho: http://idahovotes.gov	Oregon: http://oregonvotes.org
Illinois: http://elections.il.gov	Pennsylvania: www.votespa.com
Indiana: http://indianavoters.in.gov	Rhode Island: http://sos.ri.gov/elections
Iowa: http://sos.iowa.gov/elections	South Carolina: http://scvotes.org
Kansas: www.voteks.org	South Dakota: http://sdsos.gov/elections-voting
Kentucky: http://elect.ky.gov	Tennessee: http://sos.tn.gov/elections
Louisiana: http://sos.la.gov/electionsandvoting	Texas: www.votetexas.org
Maine: http://maine.gov/sos	Utah: http://elections.utah.gov
Maryland: http://elections.state.md.us	Vermont: http://vermont-elections.org
Massachusetts: www.sec.state.ma.us	Virginia: http://sbe.virginia.gov
Michigan: http://michigan.gov/vote	Washington: http://sos.wa.gov/elections
Minnesota: http://sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting	West Virginia: http://sos.wv.gov/elections
Mississippi: http://sos.ms.gov/elections-voting	Wisconsin: www.myvote.wi.gov
Missouri: http://sos.mo.gov/elections	Wyoming: http://soswy.state.wy.us/elections

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW (U.S. CONGRESS AND STATE LEGISLATURES)

The state legislatures and the U.S. Congress pass laws in generally the same way.

Some state legislatures, however, are a bit different in name and how they handle turning bills into laws. In 30 states, the legislature is called the “Legislature” or “State Legislature” and in 16 states the name is “General Assembly”. In Massachusetts and New Hampshire the legislature is called the “General Court” while North Dakota and Oregon call their legislature “Legislative Assembly”.

Every state except Nebraska consists of two separate legislative chambers or houses. The smaller chamber (usually the state senate) is called the “upper house”. In 41 states, the larger chamber is called the “House of Representatives” (same as the federal). Five states designate the larger chamber as the “Assembly” and three states call it the “House of Delegates”. The larger chamber customarily has the exclusive power to initiate taxing legislation. Nebraska has a unicameral (one-chamber) instead of a bicameral (two-chamber) legislature. Members of the Nebraska Legislature are called senators.

In states and the U.S. Congress, a law always begins as an idea. Ideas can come from elected officials and regular citizens like you. If a motorists’ rights advocate wants to create a new law or help change an existing law, he or she has the right to make a case with the appropriate elected representative. If the elected representative agrees, the representative will then work on the idea and write a bill.

After a bill has been written, the sponsoring representative will then look for co-sponsors. Once a bill has enough support from other legislators, the bill moves forward through a formal reading-in process in which the bill receives an official designation and is sent to one or more committees for review and possible hearings.

Most of the work in state legislatures and in Congress is done in committees. In the assigned committee (sometimes a specialized sub-committee), the bill is reviewed, researched and revised before members vote the bill out of committee to send back to the full legislative body for a vote. If a bill does not make it out of committee, the original sponsor will then either let the bill die or rewrite the bill for another try at a later time.

Once voted out of committee, the bill is then debated on the legislative floor. Elected representatives discuss the bill and may ask for changes at this stage. After all the changes have been recorded, the bill is now ready for a vote. There are three ways that the U.S. House of Representatives can vote:

- A roll call or voice vote;
- A stand up and be counted vote; or
- An electronic vote

The U.S. Senate votes with a Yea or Nay voice vote. State legislatures may have their own traditions of voting that is unique to that state.

If passed, the bill is then certified and referred to the other legislative body. The bill may pass exactly as written in the other chamber. The other chamber could however alter the bill with amendments attached which members of the original chamber of origin may refuse to accept. In that case, a conference committee may be convened to reach an agreement between the two chambers so that each can pass an identical bill. Bills will sometimes become stuck in conference committees and never make it back out to either floor again that legislative session.

If the bill passes both legislative bodies, it is then sent on to the President or Governor for signature. The President or Governor generally has three choices:

- To sign and pass the bill which now becomes a law.
- Veto the bill and send it back to the first legislative body with reasons for the veto.
- Do nothing which is called a pocket veto. (*In the U.S. Congress, if the President does not sign a bill nor veto it, the bill will automatically become a law after 10 days. If the U.S. Congress is not in session though, the bill will not become a law.*)

If the president or governor vetoed the bill, but the elected representatives still believe the bill should become a law, the elected representatives can then hold another vote on the bill. For the U.S. Congress, two-thirds of both House and Senate members have to vote for a bill to override the president's veto and turn it into law.

After the bill becomes a law, government bureaucrats then figure out how to apply the law in the already existing governmental structure which includes the budgetary process.

HOW A VILLAGE, TOWN, CITY, COUNTY OR PARISH PASSES AN ORDINANCE

The process that a city, county, village or town goes through to pass an ordinance is quite similar to how the state legislatures and the U.S. Congress works.

The idea for the ordinance may originate from a locally elected or non-elected official in response to state or federal initiatives or to private citizen concerns.

The initial idea now called the proposed ordinance is drafted into a proposal. The proposal is then introduced by the main elected body or committee and will move perhaps between the main elected body and various boards, commissions and committees multiple times.

The specialized committees do the heavy lifting by researching the proposal and then reporting their findings and making recommendations back to the main elected body.

A proposed ordinance is read usually each time it goes before the elected main body. Local governments may also be bound to hold at least one public hearing to give the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed ordinance.

The locally elected city, village, town council or county/parish board of supervisors then discuss publicly the merits of the proposed ordinance taking into consideration the committee's findings/recommendations and/or public comments.

After public hearings and final discussions, the elected body then votes on the proposed ordinance. In some cities after the vote occurs and the ordinance has been passed, the mayor will also have to approve the ordinance.

After final approval, the ordinance is officially adopted. Local bureaucrats will then need to figure out how to apply the law in the already existing structure which includes the budgetary process.

NMA ADVOCACY TOOL KIT (FOR ALL MEMBERS)

WRITING EMAILS AND LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Most local and state elected representatives lack the time, money, staff and technical expertise to find out information on topics that are important to many constituents but not necessarily to them. That is why politicians are motivated by grassroots advocacy and special interest groups. They can bring value in the form of ideas, information and political strength.

One of the biggest special interest groups in the U.S. is motorists. Over 80 percent of American adults drive. Of course, not every driver is a member of the National Motorists Association. That is why your voice is important and writing a letter or email to your elected representative(s) is the base of all advocacy efforts for motorists' rights.

At the heart of effective grassroots advocacy is the distinctive voice that can be heard above the din, whether that is an individual voice or the chorus of many. To be truly heard a lasting impression must be made. Chain emails and form letters are not effective and degrade the issue under discussion. Writing your own letter or email is not always easy but once you do a few, you will become a pro.

Of course, writing and sending a letter will have a more overall impact because taking pen to paper takes much more effort than firing off an email. Both methods though have merit and you should use whichever technique you are most comfortable with at the time.

WHO SHOULD I WRITE TO AND WHY?

Your elected representative (city council member, county commissioner, state house or assembly representative, state senator, governor, U.S. House of Representative and U.S. Senator) wants to hear from you—his or her constituent. Many politicians only want to hear from their constituents and no one else (which is why it is important to always identify yourself and provide, if not a full contact address, at least your city of residence and zip code). This is important to remember before you write your letter or email. You may also write to other elected officials such as your town's mayor, an important committee chair, legislative leadership, the governor or the president to let him or her know where you stand on an issue and why. Writing to a government administrator also may be helpful since he or she is frequently involved in implementing and budgeting for new laws and ordinances.

WHEN SHOULD I WRITE THE LETTER OR EMAIL?

The timing of the letter or email is everything. Sending an issues letter too soon will be forgotten but sending the letter after the vote is too late. If you don't have that much time before an all-important vote, an email can be just as effective as a letter because it is important to be heard and counted. Determine if email contact with the officeholder is required via a portal on his or her website. If so, check for guidelines because some email forms have restrictions such as word count and use of links.

Also, writing an official to introduce the NMA and motorists' rights in general is always appropriate. Building a friendly relationship before a vote on an important bill or ordinance will help our cause in the long run. Write a letter or email when you want to:

- Explain how a particular issue affects you or your group.
- Express support or opposition for an upcoming vote on a proposed law or ordinance.

- Encourage an official to consider a certain action or policy that impacts motorists.
- Immediately respond (positively or negatively) to a vote or change in policy. This includes a thank you for his or her support if appropriate.
- Introduce the organization that you support with regards to motorists' rights—the National Motorists Association.
- Send background information on an issue or situation he or she might not have known otherwise. Sometimes, local and state officials have small staffs and rely on constituents to help them understand the issues.
- Ask for information on what happened to a bill or ordinance when introduced in the past.
- Send your ideas for funding priorities involved in the budget process or law/ordinance implementation. Many issues are determined not by laws but by the amount of money allotted for the program in the annual budget.

HOW TO USE AN NMA ALERT AND OTHER NMA WEBSITE MATERIALS

As necessary, the NMA national staff sends out an email alert to members either on a national, state or local basis. Generally, an alert is sent out for two reasons:

- A vote is eminent on an important piece of legislation
- A local, state or national department of transportation or other transportation organization requests comments or feedback on a transportation plan or an issue.

The NMA Alert will contain a link to the information that you need to write an informed email or letter and generally includes talking points or an associated link for you to use.

NMA Alerts is an important advocacy resource for you to use and one of the most basic ways to participate in motorists' rights advocacy. We encourage you however to not always wait for an NMA Alerts prompt; if time is of the essence, contact the official at the first opportunity.

In order to help letter writing, the NMA website has a wealth of information on all of the major issues. Please use the information freely and often. [Find the NMA Issues Pages Here!](#)

WRITING AN EMAIL OR LETTER TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

- Write an actionable letter and do not ask the official to do more than the scope of his or her job description.
- Write about one issue, one bill/ordinance at a time. Mixing issues becomes too confusing for the intended reader. Be specific and clear about your stance on the issue and if applicable, what could be changed to garner your support. If you are in opposition, offer an alternative.
- Brevity is key. Keep your letter to one page and your email to no more than three paragraphs. Elected officials and/or their staff will more likely read an entire email or letter that is well-constructed, brief and informative.
- Write from your own viewpoint. Do not use someone else's letter. For your letter to have punch, the letter needs to be insightful, well-written, readable, relevant and easy-to-understand. Elected officials have no time for subtext.

- Make sure your letter is necessary and not just venting. To build credibility, write in a polite, businesslike tone. No swearing. No Insults. Respect begets respect.
- Open the letter in an official manner and address your letter properly. Pay close attention to correct titles and spelling of the person's name. If in doubt look up the information on the appropriate website or call to find out the proper title, spelling of the name and correct address. You will need the correct mailing address for both a letter and email.

Title	Address	Salutation
President of the United States	The Honorable (Full Name) President 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington, D.C. 20500	Dear Mr. or Madam President
Vice President of the United States	The Honorable (Full Name) Vice President Washington, D.C. 20025	Dear Mr. or Madam Vice President
U.S. Cabinet Secretary	The Honorable (Full Name) Secretary of _____ Address	Dear Mr. or Madam Secretary
U.S. Senator	The Honorable (Full Name) United States Senate (Room Number and Office Building) Washington, D.C. 20510	Dear Sen. (Last Name)
U.S. House of Representatives	The Honorable (Full Name) U.S. House of Representatives (Room Number and Office Building) Washington, D.C. 20515	Dear Rep. (Last Name)
Governor	The Honorable (Full Name) Governor, State of _____ (find rest of mailing address on state website)	Dear Gov. (Last Name)
State Senator	The Honorable (Full Name) (find rest of mailing address on state website)	Dear State Sen. (Last Name)
State Representative or Assemblyman	The Honorable (Full Name) (find rest of mailing address on state website)	Dear State Rep. or Assemblyman/woman (Last Name)
County Commission or County Board of Supervisors or Parish Commission	Mr., Mrs. or Ms. (Full Name) (find rest of mailing address on city and/or county/parish website)	Dear Commissioner or Supervisor (Last Name)
Mayor	The Honorable (Full Name) (find rest of mailing address on city and/or county/parish website)	Dear Mayor (Last Name)
City or Town Council	Mr., Mrs. or Ms. (Full Name) (find rest of mailing address on city and/or county/parish website)	Dear Mr., Mrs. or Ms. (Last Name)
Non-Elected Official	Mr., Mrs. or Ms. (Full Name) Title City, County, State or Federal Department (Find rest of mailing address on the appropriate website or call)	Dear Mr., Mrs. or Ms. (Last Name)

- Explain the purpose for your letter or email in the first sentence. (Email subject line can briefly echo the first sentence.) Let your recipient know immediately what your letter is about and whether you are for or against the law or ordinance currently under consideration (if appropriate). Otherwise focus on the issue.
- Request specific action. This allows you to tell your representative exactly what you want and allows you to hold him or her accountable.
- Ask for an answer, your legislator’s stance, and request support.
- Make sure your mailing address, email address and phone number are included with the email or letter. You want your elected official to contact you.
- Thank the official for his or her time.
- When finished, read the letter out loud to yourself to see if it makes sense. Use grammar and spell check on your computer. If you need additional input before sending the email or letter, ask a trusted family member or friend to proof.
- Send the letter or email or fax.
 - *Regular Mail*--Address an envelope with both the official’s name and address as well as your own. Fold the letter neatly and place inside the envelope. Put a stamp on the envelope and place in a mailbox for delivery.
 - *Sending an email*--Check the recipient’s guidelines first. Many nationally elected officials use online email portals that may have a restriction on the number of words. Otherwise, find the correct email address on the official’s webpage to send your correspondence.
 - *Sending a fax*--Faxing might also be an effective way to send correspondence, especially if the vote for a bill or ordinance is imminent. Find the fax number on the elected official’s website and don’t forget to write a cover page.

WRITING A LETTER OR EMAIL TO A NON-ELECTED OFFICIAL

Writing letters or emails to a non-elected official might be also an effective way to push motorists’ rights. Government agencies promulgate ninety percent of the laws and agency officials can be extremely influential when it comes to creating budgets for programs. The same steps above apply when writing to a non-elected official.

ADVOCACY RESOURCES

FOR CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Most cities have a website available with the city council members’ names and contact information. Same for the county or parish board of supervisors. Check out their website and follow how the elected official would like to be contacted. For elected local officials, always best to address him or her formally with either Mr. or Ms. or City Council Member (then full name) or County Commissioner (then full name).

If you want to address your local/state department of transportation (DOT) or department of motor vehicles (DMV), find out who you can address the letter to either by calling or checking on the appropriate department website. Make sure you gather all the relevant information when there and especially the correct title and spelling to whom you would like to address your letter.

FOR STATE LEGISLATURES

The NMA webpage www.motorists.org/chapters has a link to www.OpenStates.org per state that will allow you to easily contact your house/assembly and state senate elected representatives and leadership. When you click www.motorists.org/chapters, click your state and choose the link for your state legislature and bill tracking on the right side of the page.

If you prefer instead to find your own state's legislative page, use the Appendix 1 in the back of this guidebook or google <state name> + legislature. Most have a fairly straightforward interface and you should easily find contact information as well as current bill information.

For a handy list of each state's governor, makeup of the senate and house/assembly by party and projected legislative session dates, go to www.multistate.us and under the Resources tab, click on "(Current Year) Governors and Legislators." Also, in the Resources menu is "State Government Websites" which provides a list of hyperlinks for the legislature and government websites of each state.

If you are writing to non-elected official, check your state's governmental website for correct contact information. If you can't find the information on the state site or aren't sure to whom to address your correspondence, call the state office for clarification.

State legislative members, should be addressed as State Representative (the full name), State Assembly Member (the full name) or State Senator (the full name). Non-elected officials are generally addressed as Mr. or Ms. or Dr. with full name.

FOR CONGRESS

www.openstates.org is again a great resource to find contact information for your elected national representatives and to track bills.

www.govtrack.us is also a great resource to find information on your elected officials and tracking bills that are important to you.

WRITING AND POSTING ONLINE COMMENTS

Currently, there are three ways to engage in online comments:

- Writing and posting comments to an online article or blog post.
- Writing and posting a question, an answer or comments to an online forum.
- Writing comments on a government survey asking for your views on a topic.

Writing and posting comments to an online article or blog post can be an effective way to advocate for motorists' rights as long as you do it in a professional manner. ([See the NMA Code of Professionalism](#)). We ask that if you say that you are an NMA member as part of your bio, please make sure that you are writing what the NMA actually stands for and write any comments in a civil tone.

When you read an article or a blog post, by all means post a comment that is:

- From your viewpoint
- Fact based
- And pertinent to the topic of the article or blog post

Besides expressing your viewpoint, your other goal should be to give information to others who know nothing about motorists' rights and the National Motorists Association. The NMA is only as strong as its membership and posting online is one great way to introduce the NMA to interested motorists.

Did you know that the NMA has its very own forum for members and the general public? We would like to encourage you to post comments, questions and answers on both the national and state page forums. Posting on the NMA forum is also a great way to advocate and help out other motorists by answering questions from your own experience. [Check out the NMA Forum here.](#)

The State and National Departments of Transportation (DOT) frequently ask for online feedback on various programs, projects and plans. Federal government agencies are frequently required to post proposed rules for public comments on the www.regulations.gov site prior to moving forward with those rules.

As with the DOT surveys, the NMA national staff will send out alerts to members with instructions on how to access the specific surveys and proposed rule dockets. If you find one related to motorist issues that the NMA has not yet sent out an alert, please notify us at nma@motorists.org. Whenever you are asked to take one of these online surveys, please take the time to carefully read the information before participating.

MAKING ADVOCACY PHONE CALLS

Calling an elected official might be easier for you than writing a letter--especially if the vote for an important piece of legislation is imminent. With a little planning, a phone call can be an effective form of advocacy.

CALLING CONGRESS

Dial 202/224-3121 for the Capitol switchboard. The switchboard can direct you to both senators and your district representative. Once a switchboard operator answers, ask to be connected to whomever you are trying to reach. You may also use the [House phone list](#) or the [Senate phone list](#) to find a direct line.

Once connected, a legislative assistant will likely answer the phone. Let the assistant know why you are calling and what issue you are calling about. Most often you will speak to a staff person who keeps track of how many people call and their positions on the various issues. Your call counts even if you do not speak directly to your senator or representative.

It is always best to call your own senator and representative, because they do want to hear from you—someone who lives in their district.

The same rule applies when contacting your state senator or state representative or city council members.

For contact information of your state elected representatives, check out the [OpenStates Portal here](#). For city council or county board representatives, look online for the local government website to find contact information.

HOW TO HAVE A PRODUCTIVE PHONE CALL WITH AN ELECTED OFFICIAL OR STAFFER

Always let whomever you talk to know that you are a constituent. Be sure to give them your full name, city and state.

Be prepared. Write down what you want to say beforehand so that you don't forget anything.

Make sure you have the correct bill number and name of the bill or ordinance and state that information in your introduction.

Be sure to keep your call to one topic so that it is very clear where you stand on each issue.

State briefly why you support or oppose the bill or ordinance. Know your facts. Describe the issue that concerns you and state your opinion. Be brief. Keep your call short.

Also, don't miss the opportunity to make an important point when on the phone: share a personal experience about how the topic (bill/issue) at hand will affect your life (good or bad)—this often creates one of the most powerful calls an elected official or staff member will receive. Personal stories are what he or she will remember. Stay on point and focused when telling a story—rambling can turn a positive call into a negative one very quickly—but the “how this bill would affect my family and I or my business because...” perspective can be quite indelible.

Encourage the elected official to take action by supporting or opposing the bill or the ordinance at the upcoming vote.

Be timely. If the vote is imminent, only call the Washington office or if it is a state representative, the legislative office of the elected official.

If you are calling about an issue affecting your district or community but there is no vote imminent, call the local office of the elected representative. This is a great way for him or her to become aware of an issue.

Don't forget to thank the lawmaker/staffer for taking your call.

If you are calling about an issue that is currently not up for a vote, follow the same criteria as above, and in addition, ask if you can email or mail background information about the issue.

After sending, handle follow-up emails, letters and calls with the elected official as needed.

WRITING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND TWEETS

If you want to use social media to promote driver's issues, feel free to follow and like the NMA's various social media streams. We encourage you to retweet and repost our information and certainly add some of your own. If you would like to follow and like us on our NMA social media outlets, please find the links in the Keeping UP with [Motorists' Rights News](#) on page 7.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Be Genuine—be yourself

Let your personality show and try not to simply broadcast but speak as an individual to an individual. This approach helps you build credibility as a trusted source.

Stay Focused

Keep your message and the way you engage with followers consistent. You do not want to lose followers' trust and attention.

Be Reliable with your Tweets, Posts and Pins

Share quality content from trusted sources and avoid content from unreliable sources. Reliability means posting to your social media services regularly. Be reliable and consistent with meaningful content to help you establish credibility as an important source of information and ideas for your followers.

Build the conversation—Get Social

Share and comment on other people's or organizations' posts to start new conversations. The more you engage, the more your followers will understand your priorities are their priorities too.

USING TWITTER TO BUILD THE CONVERSATION WITH ELECTED AND NON-ELECTED OFFICIALS

Nearly every national politician and governor is on twitter, and many state and local elected officials are as well. Twitter is one of the best platforms to engage elected and non-elected officials. A recent study by the National Journal found that many members of Congress were likely to do their own posts on weekends even if they have a paid staffer who handles their social media the rest of the time. Here are the NMA's recommendations in using Twitter specifically for your own personal advocacy efforts:

- Follow the NMA @motorists so that you can retweet our information as much as you want.
- Follow your own elected representatives on a local, state and national level. Retweet their stuff and engage with them on NMA issues.
- If you really want to build influence, follow their chief of staff, their PAC, their advisors, their biggest fans and their biggest enemies. The most important thing with Twitter is to start the conversation.
- Don't forget to engage with Federal and state agencies and sub-agencies plus local non-elected officials. Many of these departments and leaders are active on Twitter because it's a channel to monitor public opinion on regulatory policy.
- Be consistent and build your credibility with an elected official and their influencers.
- Monitor local opposition groups (such as Streetsblog.org-local chapter) by using Twitter lists which can be found on your twitter dashboard. Click your Icon in the top right hand corner and find lists. Pretty explanatory after that.
- Monitor local reporters who report regularly on transportation topics by following them on Twitter.

Anti-car trolls though do like to bait motorist advocates into participating in social media slug fests. Twitter, especially, is notorious for these types of trolls and even if you respond by taking the high road, they will still come at you with a troll-like vengeance. Beware and don't take the bait. No one has to answer these trolls and the best thing you can do is mute them, report them and/or block them.

WRITING OPINION PIECES FOR THE MEDIA

Basically, there are two ways to write opinion pieces:

- A letter to the editor (could appear in print or online)
- An Op-ed or Opinion Piece (could appear in print, online or as part of community broadcast)

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR—MAKE IT COUNT!

Writing a great letter to the editor of your local or regional daily or weekly newspaper or online news source or to the news editor or station manager of your local television or radio station can make all the difference in the world. Motorist advocates will generally need to learn and not be afraid of writing two types of letters: one in support of an article or editorial or report and one in opposition. When writing a letter to the editor, news director, or station manager, here are some pointers to keep in mind:

- Be timely. Respond to something the magazine, newspaper, TV or radio station has published or presented quite recently.

- Follow the directions on how to submit a letter. Magazines and newspapers generally have this information either online or on their editorial page. TV and radio stations probably indicate a way to contact them on their website. If not give them a call.
- Keep your letter-to-the-editor short and sweet. Keep the letter to one main paragraph with 1 to 2 points in the first two sentences. The letter should be no more than 150 to 200 words. Write the letter in your own voice and with a one sentence call to action at the end.
- Share who you are and your expertise. Remember elected officials generally read the letters to the editors and watch or listen to the local news so make this count.
- If the letter is published or presented on air, it is important to then send the clipping or URL link to your elected officials and to the NMA at nma@motorists.org.
- Always make sure your contact information is included with your letter. Name, address, daytime phone number and email address would be all that is needed.

WRITING OPINION OR EDITORIAL (OP-ED) PIECES FOR A NEWSPAPER OR ONLINE MEDIA

What if you would like to write an op-ed piece instead of a letter to the editor? There are generally three reasons why someone would want to write an op-ed or opinion piece:

- Perhaps there is something that has been bothering you and you want to let everyone else know about it by stating the problem and presenting some solutions.
- You are writing to respond in support or in opposition to another article, editorial or report that was previously published or presented.
- You submitted a letter-to-the-editor and the editor wants you to rewrite your letter into an opinion piece.

The difference between a letter-to-the-editor and an op-ed/opinion piece is the op-ed piece is longer and more essay-like. Here are some guidelines for writing op-ed and opinion pieces.

- Check guidelines for submission. Each publication is different and if you follow the guidelines closely, an advocate will have a much better chance of getting a piece printed.
- Timely and not too long. An op-ed or opinion piece should generally be between 500 and 800 words. To be sure, check the guidelines on the outlet's website.
- Make your op-ed or opinion piece about one key point only.
- In the first sentence, tell the reader why he or she should care, then explain the problem followed by solutions. If you are referencing another article or report that had previously been published or presented, use the URL link so that the reader can access the source.
- Write from your own perspective. Use your own voice.

WRITING OPINION PIECES FOR BROADCAST

Sometimes, a broadcast outlet asks for comments from the general public. If you are so compelled, volunteer an opinion. Writing for broadcast is quite a bit different than writing for printed or online content. For one thing, you have to voice the opinion piece on camera with a mic as in local television or behind a mic on the radio. This means that the piece needs to sound conversational and be easily read by you. Still think of the piece as

an essay with the opening statement, one to three supporting reasons, and a summation with at least one concrete and actionable solution.

Also, keep in mind that there will be a strict time limit. In order to adhere to that time limit, you need to write, time yourself while you read it (generally a bit slower than you normally talk), rewrite, and time it again until you are within the time parameters.

On the day of recording, remember to wear something you feel comfortable in and look your professional best. For TV, they might put some powder on your face so your skin does not shine—let them. Probably best to memorize your piece since you have most likely never used a teleprompter. If you forget something, briefly look down at your text. Generally, the station personnel will videotape you before broadcast so you have the opportunity for more than one take.

If you don't memorize your piece, bring your final copy double spaced so that you can read it easily in front of the microphone. If you are nervous, practice your radio commentary by recording yourself.

Writing a broadcast opinion piece might be a great way to advocate in your community and gives you more credibility as a local motorists' rights media spokesperson.

Please don't forget to send the URL link of the piece to the National Motorists Association at nma@motorists.org.

WRITING AND PRODUCING A RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

If you have a sympathetic radio station, another avenue to advocate for motorists' rights would be to write a radio PSA for motorists' rights in general and encourage listeners to join the National Motorists Association. Not every radio station will do this but some might and this could be another effective way to advocate for motorists' rights.

After gaining acceptance from your local radio station, again following the strict time guidelines, write and rewrite the PSA, timing yourself by reading the copy, and revising as necessary. Make sure your copy is double spaced and easy for you to read in front of the microphone.

Please send your PSA copy to the NMA at nma@motorists.org.

ATTENDING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING AND PREPARING COMMENTS

Preparing to speak up at a public open meeting is another great way to advocate for motorists' rights. Local councils, boards and committees must balance all views, interests, and proposals as they determine the best course for serving the public. Generally, there are two opportunities to speak before a local city or town council, board or transportation commission, or committee:

- A vote to consider turning a proposal into an ordinance, rule or law.
- A public forum that outlines a plan or proposal under consideration.

Standing up to comment before a town council or a public forum might be a bit intimidating, but if you are prepared, your nervousness will be less. Here are some things to consider:

- If you hear that a certain proposal of interest might be voted on soon either by the city council, a county board of supervisors, or a local transportation committee, check out the website and locate the upcoming meeting agenda. Public comments will probably not be permitted on issues that are not on that particular meeting's agenda, unless the Chair announces that comments will be taken for other items. Meeting agendas can generally be found on the website or posted at city hall.

- If you find an announcement for a public forum, find out information about the public forum and research to find and read the actual plan that they will propose before the forum so that it will be easier for you to prepare your comments.
- Research your topic, distill what you want to say and practice in front of a mirror if you need help with your nerves. Practicing allows you to become more confident and comfortable. Speaking into a recording device to accurately time your comments plus listen for ease of flow and content is also another way to help you prepare for the public meeting.
- If you want to make comments on an agenda item, you will generally need to arrive early to sign up to speak. This could be as simple as a sign-up sheet on a clipboard or a separate public comment sign-up sheet that needs to be fully completed and handed in to a certain place. Only people who sign up will be allowed to speak, and signing up to speak must be done before the meeting begins.
- Generally, you will be allowed two minutes to speak. At the end of the two minutes (or whatever time allowed), your microphone may be turned off so be prepared to speak less than more. The microphone might also be turned off if the speaker uses personal attacks or makes comments unrelated to what the speaker signed-up to speak about before the group.
- When your name is called by the chair, come to the podium, adjust your mic for your height, take a deep breath, and give your name and town (or neighborhood if a local meeting) that you live in for the record. Briefly thank the council or commission and then dive right into your point-of-view. Use your own experience as a touchstone and state one to three facts about your point(s). End strong and thank the council or commission again when finished. Two minutes will go by fast so don't waste a second.
- Remember the [NMA Code of Professionalism](#) when you speak before an elected council, board or committee. This might be the only time you can make an impression and as a motorists' rights advocate you want to be seen as someone who has credibility and can be counted on to be professional.
- Keep your comments to the issue that is before the council or committee. Remember your objective is to persuade the members of the council, board or committee to vote or decide in favor of your side of the issue. Due to time limitations, state the most important information first. Organize your comments so they're easily understood and close by stating your recommendations.
- If the council, board or commissions will allow comments on non-agenda items and you have something you would like to say, be prepared with comments and especially a handout for the members (don't forget to put your name and area of town that you live in at the top of the handout). If the group will not allow spoken comments, prepare your handout anyway and submit as indicated. You also might consider emailing the group with your information and handout as well.

If you are not sure how to prepare your written comments, please find the section in the Lobbying Tool Kit called [Preparing a One-Page Brief for Policymakers](#).

WRITING AND GIVING PRESENTATIONS TO CIVIC GROUPS

Much has been written elsewhere about the logistics and preparation of presenting to groups. The NMA encourages advocates to speak either informally or formally before civic groups that you belong to or that ask you to speak.

Informal remarks requires no actual graphical presentation but perhaps just a nod to a local issue, motorists' rights and the National Motorists Association. Most motorists are not even aware of the idea of motorists' rights and the NMA. Informal remarks will take less planning and allow you to pave the way for perhaps a more formal presentation in the future.

Formal presentations should involve graphical elements. Utilizing computer software to create slides to be used during your presentation would be important and if your meeting space does not have the capacity to show computer slides, think about going old school and utilize a paper flip chart with your graphical information.

When giving an informal or formal presentation, remember to bring it back to issues that affect the audience directly so that they understand the connections.

The NMA has made several public presentations on various issue in the past and if you would like some suggestions/tips for your presentation, please contact the national office at www.motorists.org or 608/849-6000.

APPENDIX 1: STATE AND NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION

STATE LEGISLATURE URL WEBSITE ADDRESSES

www.openstates.org is a great resource to find contact information on your elected state representatives and to track bills. If you would rather look up your state's legislature website, click below.

Alabama: www.legislature.state.al.us	Montana: www.leg.mt.gov
Alaska: www.legis.state.ak.us	Nebraska: www.nebraskalegislature.gov
Arizona: www.azleg.gov	Nevada: www.leg.state.nv.us
Arkansas: www.arkleg.state.ar.us	New Hampshire: www.gencourt.state.nh.us
California: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/	New Jersey: www.njleg.state.nj.us
Colorado: http://leg.colorado.gov/	New Mexico: www.nmlegis.gov
Connecticut: www.cga.ct.gov	New York: www.nysenate.gov www.assembly.state.ny.us
Delaware: www.legis.delaware.gov	North Carolina: www.ncleg.net
Florida: www.leg.state.fl.us	North Dakota: www.legis.nd.gov
Georgia: www.legis.ga.gov	Ohio: www.legislature.state.oh.us
Hawaii: www.capitol.hawaii.gov	Oklahoma: www.oklegislature.gov
Idaho: www.legislature.idaho.gov	Oregon: www.oregonlegislature.gov/
Illinois: www.ilga.gov	Pennsylvania: www.legis.state.pa.us
Indiana: https://iga.in.gov/	Rhode Island: www.rilin.state.ri.us
Iowa: www.legis.iowa.gov	South Carolina: www.scstatehouse.gov
Kansas: kslegislature.org/li/	South Dakota: www.legis.sd.gov
Kentucky: www.lrc.ky.gov	Tennessee: www.capitol.tn.gov
Louisiana: www.legis.la.gov/legis/home.aspx	Texas: www.capitol.state.tx.us/
Maine: www.legislature.maine.gov	Utah: www.le.utah.gov
Maryland: www.mgaleg.maryland.gov	Vermont: http://legislature.vermont.gov/
Massachusetts: www.malegislature.gov	Virginia: http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/
Michigan: www.legislature.mi.gov	Washington: www.leg.wa.gov
Minnesota: www.leg.state.mn.us	West Virginia: www.legis.state.wv.us
Mississippi: http://www.legislature.ms.gov/Pages/default.aspx	Wisconsin: www.legis.wisconsin.gov
Missouri: www.moga.mo.gov	Wyoming: http://legisweb.state.wy.us/LSOWEB/Default.aspx

NATIONAL CONTACTS

To reach by phone a member of the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate, call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202/224-3121. You may also use the [House phone list](#) or the [Senate phone list](#) to find a direct line.

Check out these two resources for additional contact information and bill tracking.

www.openstates.org

www.govtrack.us

APPENDIX 2: WRITING SAMPLES OF EMAILS, LETTERS, AND COMMENTS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA

This email to the Selma, AI city council was written by James C. Walker, NMA Foundation Board Member and Executive Director of the NMA Foundation in response to a newspaper article in September 2017.

To the Honorable Selma Officials

I added the comment below to this article.

<http://www.selmatimesjournal.com/2017/09/11/city-considers-speeding-cameras-to-slow-lead-footed-drivers-down/>

Selma should NOT go with Redflex, or any ticket cameras.

- 1) There are now five guilty pleas or verdicts in federal Redflex-related cases for fraud, bribery or extortion. I believe no one should do business with a company with that felonious history.
- 2) If cameras are used, under no circumstances can the payment to the company be based on a percentage or per-ticket basis because that virtually guarantees the company will use every means possible to unfairly maximize ticket numbers. Many places make such payments illegal and require fixed per-month lease payments that do not depend in any way on ticket numbers.
- 3) Officials should know the cameras are expensive at \$3,000 to \$5,000 per month per camera when leased. This means they can produce profits above their own high costs ONLY when used in places that the traffic safety engineering parameters like under-posted speed limits and too-short yellow light intervals are set less-safely to produce more tickets and more revenue that comes mostly from safe drivers who endangered no one.

In short, ticket cameras are money grab rackets that should be illegal in every state, as they are in some already. Residents need to pack EVERY public meeting to politely but clearly say NO to ticket cameras in Selma. You will be robbed by them.

James C. Walker, National Motorists Association

Here is another sample of a letter written to Solana Beach, CA city council members about the city's their red-light camera program.

To the Honorable Solana Beach Officials,

I believe you should terminate the Redflex Photo Light Enforcement Program and remove the cameras for several reasons.

- 1) The program does serious economic damage to the businesses in Solana Beach, their existing and potential employees, and ultimately to your tax base. Per the Federal Reserve, money circulates about six times a year. About \$350 per ticket goes to Arizona, Australia and Sacramento to produce about $6 \times \$350 = \$2,100$ of total sales of goods and services (turnover) in a year. Almost none of that turnover can occur in the Solana Beach economic area because most of that money is gone forever. If about 3,000 citations are paid in a year, this means about $3,000 \times \$2,100 = \$6,300,000$ of sales of goods and services will occur in Arizona, Australia, and wherever Sacramento spends their portion of each ticket's revenue.

Obviously, not all of that turnover would occur in the Solana Beach area, but some significant portion would—and the program prevents that turnover from having a chance to happen in your economic community because the money is gone.

2) These 79 California cities were reported to have dropped red light cameras, or prohibited them before any were installed. Anaheim, Baldwin Park, Bell Gardens, Belmont, Berkeley, Burlingame, Cerritos, City of Orange, Compton, Corona, Costa Mesa, Cupertino, Davis, El Cajon, El Monte, Emeryville, Escondido, Fairfield, Fresno, Fullerton, Gardena, Glendale, Grand Terrace, Hayward, Highland, Indian Wells, Inglewood, Irvine, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Lancaster, Loma Linda, Long Beach, City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, Lynwood, Manteca, Marysville, Maywood, Modesto, Montclair, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Napa, Newport Beach, Oakland, Oceanside, Orange County, Paramount, Pasadena, Poway, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, Redwood City, Riverside, Rocklin, Roseville, San Bernardino, San Carlos, San Diego, San Juan Capistrano, San Rafael, Santa Ana, Santa Clarita, Santa Fe Springs, Santa Maria, Santa Rosa, South Gate, South San Francisco, Stockton, Union City, Upland, Victorville, Vista, Walnut, Westminster, Whittier, Yuba City, Yucaipa.

Only 31 California communities are continuing red light camera programs, in a state that once had over 100 programs.

I believe that Solana Beach would be wise to become #80 in the list of California communities that ended or banned red light camera programs.

I urge the city to end the Redflex red light camera program.

Respectfully submitted,

James C. Walker
Life Member, National Motorists Association
Board Member and Executive Director, National Motorists Association Foundation

Arkansas Member Tom Beckett wrote this Letter to the Editor which appeared in the Arkansas Democrat and Gazette in July 2017.

Dear Editor,

It is unfortunate that Jeff Sessions is directing law enforcement to increase civil forfeiture (Article, page 4A, July 18). I believe for Sessions, who is sworn to uphold the Constitution, to advocate a practice that is directly in violation of the taking clause of the Fifth Amendment, is a travesty, and an insult to the American people.

Almost 90% of the people whose assets are taken are never charged with a crime, let alone convicted, yet their property is taken from them without any hearing. It's reported the Feds take more property than is lost in all burglaries in the United States, thus are bigger thieves than the actual thieves.

This is not about drug enforcement, it's about raising revenue, most often on the backs of innocent people who cannot afford to lose their assets, and cannot afford to mount a challenge to get their property returned, since the legal costs of doing so in many cases exceed the value of the property confiscated.

No one wants to see criminals profit from their ill-gotten gains. But if assets are to be taken, it needs to be only after a criminal conviction, where due process has taken place. Otherwise, this already unconstitutional practice should be banned outright.

Tom Beckett
Siloam Springs Ark.

A letter to the editor that appeared in several Pennsylvania newspapers written by member James Sikorski.

The [recent story by Rick Lee](#) did not tell the full story about speed cameras. Hold onto your wallets!

Magically, speed cameras came up when it is time to do the state budget. The state may authorize speed cameras in order to fund police and grants. So this always was only about the money! These bills are SB 172 and HB 1748, while a Philadelphia-limited bill is HB 1187. There is the need to set up the engineering and enforcement so that safe drivers violate the rules and get tickets. Notice how these devices do not stop violations. Some studies show camera areas have more crashes.

More: [Speeders beware: More radar enforcement may be on the way](#)

Simply setting 85th percentile speed limits, doing night work, posting the zipper-merge technique, keeping two lanes open, removing conflicting signs, and not putting stop signs on acceleration ramps would alleviate many problems.

A Minnesota study showed no benefit to speed cameras in work zones, while a UK study showed deaths increasing. The Maryland Drivers Alliance has an entire section on speed camera errors. An Ohio judge even called the cameras three-card monte.

You will lose if you appeal a camera ticket, and you have no rights.

The state has a pattern here of pursuing red-light cameras, speed cameras, stop-arm cameras, municipal radar, etc.

In general, maximum safety on roads occurs when we have speed limits posted to the 85th percentile, longer yellow traffic lights, and stop signs only where needed.

Please contact your state representative, state senator and the governor to oppose the above in Pennsylvania, and demand best-practice engineering. Tickets should only be issued by real police and be just points, no fines or surcharges.

James Sikorski Jr.
Pa. advocate
National Motorists Association

Comments written for a Pennsylvania DOT Annual Survey in 2016 by member Tom McCarey.

Every speed limit in Pennsylvania is posted between 8 and 16 miles too slow, per FHWA study, making it easy to set up speed traps, all for revenue not for safety. PennDOT repeats the anti-safety propaganda handed out by NHTSA and promotes automated for-profit traffic enforcement that makes the highways more dangerous in order to benefit the special interests who profit from same and for the irresponsible and unending government wasting/spending by the Legislature and PennDOT. The Transportation Committees in the House and Senate are ignorant of the most basic highway safety/engineering principles, and continue to feed their campaign-contributing benefactors in the automated enforcement industry by introducing anti-safety legislation like SB 840 et al.

Do us a favor and promote real highway safety, for a change.

Sincerely,

Tom McCarey/Member-National Motorists Association

Member Stephen Donaldson left online comments for an article on red-light cameras in his state of Florida.
<https://www.news4jax.com/news/house-could-speed-toward-red-light-camera-repeal>

Ban the Cams!

Red-light cameras (RLCs) are NOT a "safety" device.

They do not stop dangerous drivers, only mail bills weeks later.

So Drunks, and other dangerous drivers can continue on and hurt others.

ONLY PULLING OVER SOMEONE IS SAFETY!

It is dishonest to call RLCs "safety" devices no matter how much cities and vendors claim.

Red-light crashes by nature are typically 5 seconds into red. And have themes like DUI, car theft, and distracted driving. These will NOT be "stopped" by a RLC.

Most Red-light violations (and this TV station can ask the cities on that, if the cities will even comply with the FOIA) are:

1. Right turn on reds.
2. Split second after light turned red.

Red-light cameras NEED to be banned.

Or at least let the voters have a say (something the vendors don't want usually).

www.motorists.org

Ban the Cams on Facebook

Camerafraud on Facebook

APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

Act	Legislation that have been passed, signed by the President or Governor and have become laws.
Amendment	A change in a bill or ordinance that adds, subtracts or omits portions of it.
Appropriations Bill	Legislation that provides funds for authorized programs.
Authorization Bill	Legislation that establishes a program and sets funding limits.
Bill	Legislation that is introduced by an elected legislative official.
By Request:	Phrase used when a member introduces a bill at the request of an executive agency or private organization but does not necessarily.
Calendar	List and schedule of bills to be considered by a committee.
Caucus	Meeting of members of a political party to determine policy and choose leaders.
Chamber	The U.S. Congress and all states except for Nebraska has two different legislative bodies. The smaller is called the Senate and the larger body is called the House, Assembly or Court. Also, is the place where the legislative body conducts business.
Clean Bill	A bill which has been revised in mark-up. Amendments are assembled with unchanged language and the bill is referred to the floor with a new bill number.
Closed Hearings	Also called Executive Hearings. Only members, staff and witnesses testifying may attend.
Co-Sponsor	Member who signs on to sponsor legislation but is not the principal sponsor nor the one who introduced the legislation.
Committee	A group of members assigned to give special consideration of certain bills. There are standing committees, joint committees and special committees.
Companion Bills	Identical bills introduced separately in both chambers.
Concurrent Resolution	Legislative action used to express the position of either chamber. Does not have force of law.
Conference Committee	Meeting between the two chambers to resolve differences when two versions of a similar bill have been passed by both chambers.
Final Passage	Adoption of a bill after all amendments have been voted on.
Fiscal Year	Accounting year. For the Federal Government, the fiscal year (FY) is October 1-September 30. For state governments, all state except for four go from July 1 – June 30. Alabama and Michigan's FY go from October 1 – September 30. New York goes from April 1-March 31 and Texas goes from September 1-August 31.
General Consent	A unanimous silent vote. If no objection, the issue or bill is resolved without a formal vote.
Hearing	Committee sessions for hearing witnesses.
Joint Committee	Committee composed of members from both chambers.

Joint Resolution	Used for special circumstances, legislation that has the force of law if passed by both chambers and signed by the President or Governor.
Logrolling	Process where members help each other get particular legislation passed. One member helps another and vice versa to pass particular bills.
Marking up a Bill	Usually in committees, a process of analyzing a piece of legislation section by section and making changes.
Motion	Proposal presented to a legislative body for consideration.
Omnibus Bill	A single subject bill that combines many different aspects of that subject.
Pairing	System where two members jointly agree not to vote on a particular matter.
Petition	Written plea by an individual or organization for a chamber to consider particular legislation.
Quorum	The number of legislators who must be present before a legislative body can conduct official business.
Resolution	A measure passed only in one chamber to express the sentiment of that chamber. A simple resolution does not have the force of law.
Rider	A measure added to another, often unrelated bill, with the purpose of passing based on the strength of the bill.
Sine Die	Final adjournment of the session. Bills under consideration but not passed must be reintroduced in the next session.
Sponsor	The member who introduces the measure.