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Speed Monitoring Systems – Agencies – Statements and Certificates of Violations

Each state is responsible for setting its own maximum speed limit laws. In 1901, Connecticut was the first state to pass a law regulating the speed of motor vehicles. In 1973, a national maximum speed limit of 55 mph was established using restrictions on federal funding for states. However, speed limits have increased since the relaxation of the law in 1987 to allow for speed limits of up to 65 mph on rural interstates and the repeal of the law in 1995.

Automated enforcement systems, also known as Photo radar or speed cameras, are devices used to enforce traffic laws while using fewer law enforcement personnel and resources. These tools allow state and local governments and law enforcement agencies to remotely capture images of drivers violating traffic laws and issue citations, often civil, to drivers.

The first speed cameras in the United States were installed in 1987 in the Peoria and Paradise Valley communities in Arizona. As of January 2022, 171 communities in 19 states and the District of Columbia use automated speed camera enforcement.

It is widely accepted that speed cameras are effective in saving lives. A 2016 [study](#) of speed cameras in Montgomery County, Maryland found that about 7 1/2 years after the program began the proportion of drivers traveling at least 10 mph over the speed limit had declined on streets with speed cameras. The cameras also reduced the likelihood of fatal or severe injury crashes by 19%. The study concluded the likelihood of a driver exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph on roads with cameras decreased by 62% compared to similar roads without cameras.

The bill I bring before you today does not expand the use of speed cameras which, for most of Maryland, is restricted to schools zone and highway work zones. Rather this bill simply seeks to redefine who is qualified to interpret the video and determine if a violation has occurred. Currently, in addition to being reviewed by the ASE system contractor, each citation is verified and approved by a police officer employed by the Maryland State Police or the Maryland Transportation Authority Police. The reviewing police officer signs a statement on the citation that indicates the vehicle was being operated in violation of the law based on inspection of the recorded images.

Nationally, we are seeing an increase in vacancies in law enforcement with an average of 93% of budgeted positions filled. With this staffing shortage, I see it as a poor use of scarce resources to have police officers verify what have already been determined to be speed violations by the contractor. Certainly, there should be a second pair of eyes reviewing the video of the alleged violation, but they should not have to belong to a police officer.

It ties up an officer's time that could be spent on other public safety matters. For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report.