

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



Testimony of Ryan Lynch Tri-State Transportation Campaign Hearing on Speed Camera Home Rule Message

My name is Ryan Lynch, and I am the associate director for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit policy watchdog in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Tri-State urges this body to issue a home rule message in support of speed cameras enforcement so that the New York State Legislature can pass a bill authorizing 69 cameras for Suffolk County; one of which will be placed in each of Suffolk County's school districts.

Suffolk County is home to some of the deadliest roads to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in the region. According to a Tri-State Transportation Campaign analysis of federal data, 122 pedestrians were killed along roads in Suffolk County from 2010-2012, with the Suffolk County portion of Jericho Turnpike seeing 16 pedestrian fatalities alone. According to Governor Cuomo's Traffic Safety Committee, 278 motorists and passengers, and 22 cyclists were killed during the same time period. 52,000 non-fatal injuries occurred as a result of almost 90,000 crashes from 2010-2012. The Suffolk County Police Department served as the lead investigating agency in over 80 percent of these crashes. Yet speeding tickets made up only 13 percent of all tickets issued over the three year period, a number that is shockingly low to anyone who has driven Suffolk County's roadways where drivers speed without consequence.

Suffolk County has taken significant steps to address these tragedies and combat reckless driving with better enforcement. In 2009, the New York State Legislature, at the County's request, authorized Red Light Cameras for 50 intersections in Suffolk County. In 2012, the County Legislature passed, and Suffolk County Executive Bellone signed, a Complete Streets law that upon implementation will redesign our roadways to calm traffic and provide safer infrastructure to those who walk, bike, take transit and drive on Suffolk County roadways. Unfortunately, motorists continue to drive recklessly and break the law.

More needs to be done immediately because speeding is illegal and it kills.

When a person is hit by a car traveling 40 mph, there is a 70% chance they'll be killed. When a person is hit by a car traveling 30 mph, there is an 80% chance that they'll live. If you are hit by a car going 20 mph, the speed limit in the school zones where speed cameras will be placed, your survival rate is 95 percent.

These traffic deaths are avoidable and it is crucial that Suffolk County have the necessary tools to address this challenge head on. Speed enforcement cameras are now in use in over 100 communities and in at least 14 states across the country. Research shows that speed enforcement cameras reduce

injuries and fatalities by 40-45 percent, and reduce speeding by 71 percent. Research has even suggested that the mere presence of speed cameras in a community, and coverage of them in the media, has a 'halo effect' on drivers, reducing speeds on roads with no cameras or signage by up to 16 percent.

Not only will speed cameras reduce injuries and fatalities by changing driver behavior but they will also:

- Boost effectiveness of Suffolk County Police Department and serve as a force multiplier;
- Reduce the burden on first responders, hospitals, and human service providers; and
- Save health care costs through a reduction in crashes.

Much has been made by opponents who say speed cameras do nothing but serve as revenue-generators. Yes, it's true, these cameras generate revenue. They generate revenue from people who break the law and willingly put other people's lives in danger. But cameras improve safety first and foremost, and the ultimate goal of speed cameras is, and always will be, zero speeding, leading to zero revenues and most importantly zero fatalities.