

HOUSE No. 2971

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

David Biele

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act concerning photo enforcement of certain traffic violations.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>David Biele</i>	<i>4th Suffolk</i>
<i>Mayor Martin J. Walsh</i>	<i>1 City Hall Square Suite 500 Boston, MA 02201-2013 United States</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>
<i>Edward F. Copping</i>	<i>10th Suffolk</i>
<i>Tommy Vitolo</i>	<i>15th Norfolk</i>
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>
<i>Michelle L. Ciccolo</i>	<i>15th Middlesex</i>

HOUSE No. 2971

By Mr. Biele of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2971) of David Biele and others relative to photograph or video enforcement of certain traffic violations. Transportation.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act concerning photo enforcement of certain traffic violations.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 14 of Chapter 90 of the General Laws is hereby amended by
2 inserting after section 14B the following section:-

3

4 Section 14C. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following
5 meanings:

6

7 “Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System”, a device with one or more camera
8 sensors working in conjunction with:

9

10 (1) A red light signal to produce recorded images of a motor vehicle that enters an
11 intersection, which it is unable to proceed through without stopping, and thereby blocks vehicles
12 from travelling in a free direction in violation of section 9 of Chapter 89; and

13 (2) A school bus stop arm traffic control sign to produce recorded images of a motor
14 vehicle that fails to come to a complete stop when approaching a vehicle which displays a sign
15 bearing the words “SCHOOL BUS” in violation of section 14.

16

17 “Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System” shall be a system with 2 or more camera
18 sensors and computers that produce live digital and recorded video and 2 or more film or digital
19 photographic still images of each motor vehicle at the time it is used or operated.

20

21 “School Bus Stop Arm Traffic Control Sign”, a stop sign mounted on a mechanical arm
22 installed on a school bus which is deployed when a school bus is stopped to allow pupils to alight
23 from or board the same and notify motorists when they are required to stop and when they can
24 proceed.

25

26 (b) (1) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a city or town may
27 install and operate an Automated Traffic Law Enforcement Systems for the purposes of
28 enforcing violations against the registered owner of a motor vehicle whose vehicle commits a
29 violation pursuant to this section. Such systems shall be limited to monitor and detect violations

30 of a school bus stop arm traffic control sign pursuant to section 14, and violations of motorists
31 that block an intersection in violation of section 9 of chapter 89.

32

33 (2) The city or town shall install a sign notifying the public that an Automated Traffic
34 Law Enforcement System is in use at each location of such a system. Each school bus with a
35 stop arm traffic control signal shall have a sign notifying the public that a camera is in use on the
36 bus.

37

38 (3) The city or town shall make a public announcement and conduct a public awareness
39 campaign of the use of an Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System beginning at least 30
40 days before the system is in use. The public awareness campaign shall continue throughout the
41 period of time that the system is in use.

42

43 (4) For a period of at least 60 days after the implementation of an Automated Traffic Law
44 Enforcement System, a city or town may issue only warnings to owners of motor vehicles
45 operated in violation of this section and said city or town shall not collect fines for a violation of
46 this section.

47

48 (2) All systems installed for use under this section shall produce an evidence file that
49 includes a live digital video image viewable remotely, a recorded image of the license plate and
50 shall be able to record the date, time and location of the vehicle committing the violation.

51

52 (3) Recorded video images and still photographic images shall record the rear or front of
53 the motor vehicle, with at least 1 photographic image and 1 recorded video image clearly
54 recording the motor vehicle immediately before the violation and at least 1 photographic image
55 and 1 recorded video image recording the motor vehicle committing the violation. At least 1
56 photographic image and 1 recorded video image shall clearly identify the license plate of the
57 motor vehicle.

58

59 (4) To the extent practicable, a Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System shall use
60 necessary technologies to ensure that photographs or recorded video images produced by the
61 Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System shall not include a frontal view photograph or
62 video image that identifies the operator, the passengers, or the contents of the vehicle; provided,
63 however, no notice of liability issued under this section shall be dismissed solely because a
64 photograph or recorded video image allow for the identification of the operator, passengers, or
65 contents of a vehicle as long as a reasonable effort has been made to comply with this paragraph.

66

67

68 (5) A penalty imposed for a violation of this section shall not be considered a criminal
69 conviction and shall not be considered a surchargeable offense pursuant to section 113B of
70 chapter 175;

71 (6) The fines contained in this section shall be applied whether the violation is detected
72 through the use of a Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System or by a police officer on scene
73 who issues a written citation to the operator of the motor vehicle. Pursuant to the provisions of
74 section 2 of chapter 280, all fines imposed for a violation that is detected by a Automated Traffic
75 Law Enforcement System or by a police officer who cites the operator in hand shall be paid over
76 to the treasury of the city or town where the offense was committed.

77

78 (7) A city or town may enter into an agreement with a private vendor or manufacturer,
79 pursuant to the provisions of chapter 30B, to provide an Automated Traffic Law Enforcement
80 System and evidence file processing services, up to and including the installation, operation,
81 monitoring, evidence file preparation and maintenance of such systems. An agreement pursuant
82 to this section shall take effect upon its acceptance by a municipality or district; such acceptance
83 shall be in a municipality, by a vote of the legislative body, subject to the charge of the
84 municipality, or, in a district, by a vote of the district at a district meeting. Compensation paid to
85 the manufacturer or vendor of the Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System shall not be
86 based upon the revenue generated by the use of such systems. The compensation paid to the
87 manufacturer or vendor of the equipment shall be based upon the value of the equipment
88 installed and the recurring services provided in support of the Automated Traffic Law
89 Enforcement Systems including processing of evidence files, cost of the technology provided
90 and maintenance of such technology.

91

92 (8) A city or town shall provide reimbursement of expenses to the private vendor or
93 manufacturer for the installation, operation and maintenance of the Automated Traffic Law
94 Enforcement Systems in operation and acknowledged by an agreement between the private
95 vendor and the city or town. Unless modified by an agreement with a city or town,
96 reimbursement shall be made from ticket revenue proceeds incurred under this section only if
97 received as currently allocated under the laws of the Commonwealth for said citations so as to
98 eliminate any cost to the city or town for installation, operation and maintenance of the
99 Automated Traffic Law Enforcement Systems in its municipality. Such reimbursement shall be
100 made to the private vendor or manufacturer within 45 days following the submittal of request for
101 cost reimbursement.

102

103 (c) (1) An evidence file of the alleged violation shall be forwarded to the chief of police
104 of the municipality, or a designee of the chief, who is trained to observe and detect a violation of
105 this section. The officer shall issue a citation if satisfied that a violation was committed and the
106 vehicle committing such violation can be identified from its registration plate. A certificate, or a
107 facsimile thereof, sworn to or affirmed by a police officer or other law enforcement officer
108 authorized to issue motor vehicle citations, stating that based upon inspection of the evidence file
109 produced by a Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System, the vehicle was in violation of this
110 section, shall be prima facie evidence of the facts contained therein. A recorded video images or
111 still photographic images produced by a Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System
112 evidencing the violation shall be available for inspection in any proceeding to adjudicate the
113 liability for a violation pursuant to this section.

114

115 (2) In all proceedings of violations pursuant to this section, the registered owner of the
116 motor vehicle shall be primarily responsible, except as otherwise provided in this section. In the
117 event the registered owner of the vehicle operated in violation of this section was not the
118 operator of the vehicle at the time of the violation, the registered owner of the vehicle shall
119 assume liability for the violation by paying the fine or defend the violation pursuant to the
120 procedures established for violations pursuant to this section. A vehicle owned or leased to a
121 corporation that is identified by a Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System shall be primarily
122 responsible for a violation pursuant to this section even if a person who normally operates the
123 vehicle for the corporation denies operating the vehicle at the time of the violation; provided,
124 however, no entry shall be made on the person's driving record.

125

126 (3) A penalty imposed may, if so provided in writing, be increased by up to 33 1/3% if
127 the penalty remains unpaid in excess of 45 days after a citation has been issued consistent with
128 the procedures established in this section and there has been no request for a hearing under
129 paragraph (3) of subsection (d).

130

131 (d) (1) Upon the determination of a violation through the use of a Automated Traffic Law
132 Enforcement System, the chief of police of the city or town, or a designee of the chief, shall issue
133 to the registered owner of the vehicle a citation. The citation shall include, but not be limited to,
134 the following information: (i) the name and address of the the registered owner of the motor
135 vehicle; the registration number and state of issuance of the registration number of the vehicle

136 involved in the violation; the date, time and location of the violation; the specific violation
137 charged; the amount of the penalty for the violation; and the date by which the penalty shall be
138 paid; (ii) a copy of 2 or more still photographs or microphotographs showing the vehicle
139 committing the violation; (iii) a copy of the certificate or affidavit of the police officer under
140 paragraph (1) of subsection (c); (iv) a statement that recorded video images and photographic
141 images are evidence of a violation of section 14; (v) instructions for the return of the citation
142 notice including, but not limited to the following text:- “This notice and the required payment
143 may be returned in person, by mail, or by a duly authorized agent. A hearing to contest liability
144 may be obtained upon the written request of the registered owner. Failure to pay the penalty or to
145 contest liability within 30 days of issuance of this notice is an admission of liability and may
146 result in a default judgment being entered against the owner to whom the violation has been
147 issued and non-renewal or suspension of the license to drive and the certificate of registration of
148 the registered owner.”; (vii) a statement explaining the procedure to adjudicate the violation by
149 mail under paragraph (6); and (viii) a statement explaining the procedure for the violator to
150 access and view the digital video or other recorded images showing the vehicle in violation. The
151 citation shall require the registered owner to pay the fine amount issued pursuant to this section
152 or appear before the parking clerk not later than 30 days after the date the citation was mailed to
153 the registered owner. Citations shall be mailed by first class mail, postmarked no later than 14
154 days after the date of the alleged violation, inclusive of Sundays and legal holidays. The citation
155 shall be mailed to the address of the registered owner on record with the registry of motor
156 vehicles, or, in the case of a motor vehicle registered under the laws of another state or
157 jurisdiction, at the address of the registered owner on record with the official in the state or other
158 jurisdiction having charge of the registration of the vehicle. If the address is unavailable in the

159 case of a motor vehicle registered under the laws of another state or jurisdiction, the chief of
160 police, or a designee, shall mail the citation to the official in the state or other jurisdiction having
161 charge of the registration of the vehicle. The citation shall be considered sufficient notice, and a
162 certificate of the chief of police, or a designee, mailing the citation stating that it has been mailed
163 in accordance with this section shall be deemed prima facie evidence thereof and shall be
164 admissible in any judicial or administrative proceeding as to the facts contained therein.

165

166 The chief of police, or designee, shall retain and safely preserve a copy of the citation and
167 shall at a time no later than the beginning of the next business day after mailing to the registered
168 owner, deliver a copy of the citation to the parking clerk. The parking clerk shall maintain a
169 docket of all issued citations. The date of issuance shall be the date of mailing. The police
170 officer issuing the citation shall certify that the evidence obtained from the Automated Traffic
171 Law Enforcement System was sufficient to demonstrate a violation of this section. Such
172 certification shall be sufficient in all proceedings pursuant to this section to justify the entry of a
173 default judgment in all cases where the citation is not answered within the time period permitted
174 under this section.

175

176 (2) A person issued a citation may pay the fine by appearing before the parking clerk, or
177 his designee, and admit to the violation, either personally, through a duly authorized agent, or by
178 mailing to the parking clerk the fine. Payment of the penalty established shall operate as a final
179 disposition of the case.

180

181 (3) If the person requests a hearing to contest liability of the citation, the parking clerk
182 shall forthwith schedule the matter before a hearing officer. The hearing officer shall be the
183 parking clerk, or a designee, of the city or town in which the violation occurred. Written notice
184 of the date, time and place of the hearing shall be sent by first-class mail to the registered owner.
185 The hearing shall be informal, the rules of evidence shall not apply and the decision of the
186 hearing officer shall be final subject to judicial review as provided by section 14 of chapter 30A.
187 Within 21 days of the hearing, the hearing officer shall send by first class mail to the registered
188 owner the decision of the hearing officer, including the reasons for the outcome.

189

190 (4) A person issued a citation may, without waiving his right to a hearing before the
191 parking clerk or hearing officer, and also without waiving judicial review under section 14 of
192 chapter 30A, challenge the validity of the citation and receive a review and disposition of the
193 violation from the parking clerk or a hearing officer by mail. The registered owner may, upon
194 receipt of the citation, send a signed statement explaining his objections to the violation notice as
195 well as signed statements from witnesses, police officers, government officials and any other
196 relevant parties. Photographs, diagrams, maps and other documents may also be sent with the
197 statements. Any statements or materials sent to the parking clerk for review shall include the
198 name and address of the person as well as the citation number and the date of the violation. The
199 parking clerk or hearing officer shall, within 21 days of receipt of this material, review the
200 material and dismiss or uphold the violation and notify, by mail, the registered owner of the
201 disposition of the written review. If the outcome of the written review is adverse to the
202 registered owner, the parking clerk or hearing officer shall include the reasons for the outcome
203 on the notice. The review and disposition handled by mail shall be informal, the rules of

204 evidence shall not apply, and the decision of the parking clerk or hearing officer based upon the
205 written materials shall be final, unless the owner invokes the hearing provisions under this
206 section or judicial review under section 14 of chapter 30A.

207

208 (5) A person who violates this section by failing to stop for a school bus traffic control
209 arm signal shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$250; and for a second offense by a fine of
210 not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000; and for a third or subsequent offense by a fine of not
211 less than \$1,000 nor more than \$2,000. All other violations under this section shall be punished
212 by a fine of not less than \$150.

213

214 (6) If a person fails to pay the fine or fails to receive a favorable adjudication of the
215 hearing from a hearing officer and fails to pay the fine within 30 days of the date that the hearing
216 officer has mailed notice of the decision of the hearing officer, the parking clerk shall notify the
217 registrar of motor vehicles, who shall place the matter on record. Upon notification to the
218 registrar of 2 or more citations under this section from the parking clerk of the city or town, the
219 registrar shall not issue or renew or may suspend the license to operate a motor vehicle of the
220 registered owner or motor vehicle registration of the registered owner until after notification
221 from the parking clerk of each city or town, from whom the registrar received notification, that
222 all fines, taxes and penalties owed by the owner under this section have been disposed of in
223 accordance with law. Upon such notification to the registrar, an additional charge of \$20 payable
224 to the registrar but collected by the city or town, and an additional charge of \$20 payable to and
225 collected by the city or town, shall be assessed against the registered owner of the motor vehicle.

226 It shall be the duty of the parking clerk to notify the registrar forthwith that the case has been so
227 disposed; provided, however, certified receipt of full and final payment from the parking clerk of
228 the city or town issuing the violation shall also serve as legal notice to the registrar that the
229 violation has been disposed of in accordance with law. The certified receipt shall be printed in a
230 form approved by the registrar of motor vehicles.

231

232 (7) Upon the accumulation by a registered owner of 2 or more outstanding citations
233 under this section on account of violation of this section, the parking clerk of the city or town
234 may notify the chief of police or director of traffic and parking of the city or town that the
235 vehicle bearing the registration to which the notices have been issued shall be removed and
236 stored or otherwise immobilized by a mechanical device at the expense of the registered owner
237 of the vehicle until all fines, taxes and penalties owed by the owner either under this section, or
238 otherwise arising out of the parking or usage of the owner's motor vehicle, have been disposed
239 of in accordance with law. No vehicle shall be removed, stored, or otherwise immobilized unless
240 the registered owner of the motor vehicle shall have received 10 days prior notification by mail
241 that the motor vehicle may be removed, stored, or immobilized without further notification. It
242 shall be sufficient for the parking clerk to mail, postage prepaid, the notification to the last
243 known address of the registered owner. It shall be sufficient for the parking clerk, in the case of a
244 motor vehicle registered in another state or jurisdiction, to mail notification to the official in the
245 state or jurisdiction having charge of the registration of the motor vehicle.

246

247 (8) Except as expressly provided, all proceedings based on evidence produced by a
248 Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System shall follow the procedures of this section.
249 Notwithstanding the installation and use of an Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System, a
250 trained police officer, in whose presence a motorist commits a violation under any general or
251 special law, may issue a citation at the scene to the operator of such vehicle for such violation.
252 An owner of a vehicle shall not be liable for a citation as a result of an Automated Traffic Law
253 Enforcement System if the operator of the vehicle was cited directly by a police officer at the
254 scene of the violation

255

256 (9) An owner to whom a citation has been issued shall not be liable for a violation of this
257 section (a) if the violation was necessary to allow the passage of an emergency vehicle; (b) if the
258 violation was necessary in order to protect the property or person of another; (c) if the violation
259 was incurred while participating in a funeral procession; (d) if the violation was incurred during
260 a period of time in which the motor vehicle was reported to the police department of any state,
261 city or town as having been stolen and had not been recovered before the time the violation
262 occurred; (e) if the operator of the motor vehicle was convicted of the underlying violation under
263 a citation issued in accordance with section 2 of chapter 90C; (f) if the violation was necessary to
264 comply with an order of a law enforcement officer or a flagger directing traffic flow; or (g) if the
265 vehicle was subject to the exceptions granted to an authorized emergency vehicle under section
266 7B of chapter 89. An owner disputing a violation under this subsection shall, within 30 days of
267 issuance of the notice, provide the parking clerk with an affidavit signed under the pains and
268 penalties of perjury in a form approved by the parking clerk, as provided for in clause (vii) of
269 paragraph (1) of this subsection, stating the following: (1) the reason for disputing the violation;

270 (2) the full legal name and address of the registered owner of the motor vehicle; (3) the names
271 and addresses of all witnesses supporting the registered owner's defense and the specifics of their
272 knowledge; and (4) where applicable, the signed statements from witnesses. The affidavit shall
273 be filed with the request for a hearing.

274

275 (e)(1) Other than for purposes of enforcement of a violation of this section or for
276 purposes of a registered owner defending a violation of this section, recorded video images and
277 photographs taken or created under this section may only be obtained under an order by a court
278 of competent jurisdiction.

279

280 (2) All recorded video images and other photographic information obtained through the
281 use of Automated Traffic Law Enforcement Systems authorized in this section that do not
282 identify a violation shall be destroyed by a city, town, school department or vendor within 30
283 days of the date the image was recorded, unless otherwise ordered by a court of competent
284 jurisdiction. All photographic and other recorded information that identifies a violation shall be
285 destroyed within 1 year of final disposition of proceedings related to the enforcement or defense
286 of a violation, unless otherwise ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. All recorded video,
287 audio and other photographic information, however stored or retained, which is obtained through
288 a Automated Traffic Law Enforcement System are the property of the municipality under
289 agreement with a vendor and shall not be used by a vendor for any other purposes. Upon the
290 expiration of an agreement authorized under this section, all of such video, audio, and other

291 photographic information shall be delivered within 30 days to the particular municipality, unless
292 otherwise ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction.