

Sample Letter to Legislators: **Yield Before Right-Turn-On-Red**

Dear Representative (Senator) <last name>,

One of the few good things to come out of our past “energy crises” was the change in law allowing drivers to make a right turn at an intersection with a red light. This law saved time, saved fuel, made traffic flow more efficient, and made our local streets safer. It has prevented tens of thousands of rear-end collisions; you can’t hit someone who has already left the intersection, and isn’t there to run into.

As originally written and adopted around the country, the right-turn-on-red laws require a vehicle to come to a complete stop before executing the right turn. In reality, the driving public has interpreted this law to mean that pedestrians and crossing traffic always have the right-of-way, but if the intersection is clear, it is not necessary to come to a complete stop before turning right. Even police officers don’t come to a complete stop in this situation, if there is no need to do so.

Until now, the difference between how the law is written and how it is obeyed and enforced has not been a source of conflict. The law works very well: Out of roughly six million total vehicular accidents every year in the U.S., only about 2000 (or well under one tenth of one percent) are related to right-turns-on-red per federal accident data. However, with the advent of red-light ticket cameras, this difference between how the law is written, and how people actually comply with it, is being exploited by local municipalities and the for-profit ticket camera companies.

It has become well known that if traffic signals are properly installed, maintained, and operated, there are so few red-light violations that the expense of red-light ticket cameras isn’t justified. The new fall-back position to keep the ticket revenue rolling in is to target motorists who have not come to a complete stop while making a right-turn-on-red, or to cite them for not stopping in a particular spot that has no bearing on conducting a safe traffic maneuver.

This is not about safety, this is just another gimmick to use traffic enforcement to generate revenue.

The solution is simple and straight forward. Change the right-turn-on-red law to require that right-turning vehicles yield the right-of-way to other vehicles and pedestrians – exactly what they have been doing for 30 years. I’m asking that you introduce legislation that accomplishes this change in the law. The vast majority of motorists will come to appreciate your efforts on their behalf.

Sincerely,

<your name>

<your address>

Note: Here are some links that you can refer to in order to help customize this letter:

<http://thenewspaper.com/news/26/2693.asp>

<http://thenewspaper.com/news/31/3119.asp>