

For May 21, 2013 Release

Flawed Surveys Distort Public Opinion on Red-Light Cameras

Waunakee, WI – May 21, 2013: Plagued by scandal¹, gross mismanagement², and financial setbacks³, purveyors of red-light camera systems and their supporters continue to misrepresent public opinion on automated traffic ticketing schemes.

That's the conclusion of the [National Motorists Association](#) after reviewing the latest red-light camera public polling results released by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). [The April 2013 poll](#), which surveyed 800 Washington, D.C., residents, claimed that the overwhelming majority favored red-light cameras.

"We question the results of this poll since only 38 percent of the respondents were regular drivers," said NMA President Gary Biller. "The majority of D.C. residents drive on a regular basis so targeting non-drivers skews the results. The IIHS used a similar polling tactic in Houston where it contracted a phone survey of about 300 city residents and proclaimed 57 percent supported red-light cameras. This was only a handful of months after 53 percent of 335,000 Houston voters cast their ballots to eliminate the ticket cameras."

The ballot box is a more accurate measure of how the public views red-light cameras according to Biller. "Voters in 30 cities across the country have used ballot measures to pass judgment on ticket cameras," he said. "[The cameras failed in 27 of those contests](#). That's a 90 percent rejection rate. Don't be fooled. When citizens express their wishes directly, they overwhelmingly tell their public officials 'we don't want ticket cameras in our community.'"

John Bowman, communications director for the NMA, pointed out, "People are smart; they know ticket cameras are about money, not safety." He noted recent [revelations that officials in Florida had intentionally shortened yellow-light times](#) to greatly increase ticket revenue at camera-equipped intersections. "This degrades highway safety, unfairly targets responsible drivers and represents a violation of the public trust."

The National Motorists Association encourages citizen groups to push for ticket-camera ballot measures as the most effective way to give the public a voice in this critical policy issue.

Sources:

¹ Redflex Traffic Systems, one of the two largest U.S. red-light camera operators, acknowledged a [\\$2 million bribery scheme](#) related to its longtime contract with the City of Chicago. The company, which terminated several top executives in the wake of the scandal, warned that there are "potential issues" with their business involving two other U.S. cities. A federal criminal investigation is ongoing.

² City of Chicago Inspector General Joseph Ferguson blasted the lack of control over the city's red-light camera program that generated \$72 million in ticket revenue in 2012. The [IG's audit](#) found that CDOT (Chicago Department of Transportation) could not substantiate camera locations for safety purposes, and that there was a "lack of basic record keeping and an alarming lack of analysis for an ongoing program that costs tens of millions of dollars a year and generates tens of millions more in revenue." Symptomatic of the lack of fiscal control was the discovery that Chicago is paying \$13,800 in annual maintenance for cameras bought at \$24,500 each. The Chicago program has 384 red-light cameras in operation.

³ The loss of the Chicago contract will [cost Redflex](#) \$17 million a year and is causing a restructuring of U.S. operations that will cost 65 employees their jobs. American Traffic Solutions, the other major camera vendor in the United States, lost major contracts when the cities of Houston and Los Angeles shut down their red-light camera programs and recently [set up a \\$4.2 million fund to pay plaintiffs](#) in a New Jersey class action suit centered around the issue of short yellow lights.

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About the National Motorists Association:

Founded in 1982, the National Motorists Association is a North American grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to the protection of motorists' rights and freedoms. The NMA was instrumental in repealing the 55 mph National Maximum Speed Limit. Since then, the organization has fought for reasonable speed limits, an end to speed traps, fairer traffic courts and against using traffic tickets to generate revenue.

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