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February 25, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: House Bill No. H7748 AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE -- COURTS -- STATE AND MUNICIPAL COURT COMPACT (Authorizes the use of automated traffic violation monitoring systems for all traffic signal laws, including the "Don't Block the Box Statute" and allows for jurisdiction of the Don't Block the Box statute violations to be within a municipal court.)

Dear Chairman Craven:

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association (RIPCA) to voice our support for the House bill referenced above which authorizes the use of automated traffic violation monitoring systems for all traffic signal laws, including the "Don't Block the Box Statute" and allows for jurisdiction of the Don't Block the Box statute violations to be within a municipal court

Blocked intersections are a special problem for major cities. They create backups that can in turn block side street intersections and set off a gridlocking chain reaction throughout the network of streets.

Block the box laws are implemented to alleviate congestion at intersections by preventing vehicles from entering an intersection unless there is sufficient space on the other side for them to completely clear it. However, the effective enforcement on these laws has proven to be challenging without the presence of dedicated resources and manpower. Manual enforcement by law enforcement officers is often limited in scope and resources, leading to inconsistent enforcement and a lack of deterrence for violators.

The introduction of automatic traffic control systems, such as cameras and sensors, offers a promising solution to address these enforcement challenges. These systems can accurately detect vehicles that unlawfully enter intersections when traffic signals are red, enabling municipalities to efficiently enforce "block the box" laws without imposing an additional burden on law enforcement personnel. Moreover, the use of such technology can ensure consistent enforcement and adherence to traffic regulations, ultimately fostering safer and more orderly traffic flow in our cities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colonel Bradford E. Connor,
President, Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association
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