



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 3438

Chief Sponsor: Rep. Gorsek

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**Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
Public Hearing May 14, 2013
3:00 p.m., Hearing Room B**

Good afternoon Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee. For the record, I'm Chris Gorsek, State Representative for House District 49, which includes the cities of Troutdale, Wood Village, Fairview and Gresham.

I'm glad to be here this afternoon to speak in support of House Bill 3438. Currently, only 10 cities in Oregon are allowed to operate photo radar and when in operation, each photo radar unit may only be used for 4 hours at a time and must have a uniformed officer with a marked police vehicle present. The current law, with these restrictions, does not allow us to adequately protect children who attend our schools.

House Bill 3438 would make several changes that would increase protection for children. First, it would expand local control and allow any city in Oregon to install photo radar in school zones if they choose to. Our cities should not be denied the ability to protect students from dangerous drivers.

Second, it would allow photo radar in school zones to be operated between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. only on days when school is in session. As anyone who has dropped off and picked up their children from school knows, there are two peak traffic times. Just before school begins and just after school ends. We shouldn't be limited to covering just one of those times as we are with the current four hour limit; we should be able to use these units to increase safety throughout the day.

Finally, it would eliminate the requirement that a police officer be present when photo radar is used in school zones. This would free officers in already understaffed departments for other, more pressing duties. However, a commissioned officer would still have to review the video before signing any potential citation.

If a vehicle is travelling at 20 mph and strikes a pedestrian, the odds of pedestrian death is 5%. If we raise the car's speed by just 10 mph, the odds of pedestrian death go up to between 37% and 45%. If we raise that speed to 40 mph, the odds of the pedestrian's death is between 83% and 85%. High speed traffic is a real threat to student safety.

In a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study in Portland, the mean and 85th percentile speeds were reduced by 5mph when cameras were present. In Montgomery County, Maryland the number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit by 10mph dropped 70% after installation of speed cameras in school zones.

It is an important to note that this is not a mandate; it simply allows cities in Oregon to install these devices if they wish. Also, it does not remove the discretion of police officers; they still review every potential incident before issuing any citations.

School zone speed enforcement cameras work and we should give all our cities the opportunity to make school zones safer for our children.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today.

