

Submitter:

Stefani Davis

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Transportation

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4081

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 4081 (2026)

Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stefani Davis and I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to HB 4081, which expands the use of automated photo radar speed enforcement in highway work zones.

I am a paralegal with CLEAR Clinic, a nonprofit organization that helps underrepresented community members navigate court record relief and the long-term consequences of involvement with Oregon's legal system. Through this work, I regularly see how even minor traffic violations and court-imposed financial penalties can create serious and lasting barriers to housing, employment, and economic stability.

I want to begin by acknowledging an important point of agreement: highway worker safety is real and urgent. Work zone crashes result in serious injuries and fatalities every year, and Oregon has a responsibility to protect both workers and the traveling public.

However, I am concerned that this bill relies too heavily on automated enforcement mechanisms that raise significant equity, fiscal, and governance concerns.

Automated speed enforcement programs operate in practice as a regressive financial penalty. Traffic citations are flat fines, meaning the burden falls disproportionately on low-income and working class Oregonians. For many families, a single speeding ticket can lead to cascading consequences such as late fees, license suspension, increased insurance costs, and even job instability for those who must drive to work. In my work at CLEAR Clinic, I have seen how quickly court debt and minor violations can become life-altering obstacles. Public safety policy should not function as a poverty penalty.

This bill reduces requirements for visible enforcement, including the presence of marked vehicles and in-person officers. As a result, the program may be experienced by the public as invisible surveillance and automated punishment, rather than a transparent safety measure.

This risks eroding public trust and creating the perception of work zone enforcement as a revenue generating "speed trap" rather than a legitimate safety intervention.

The fiscal impacts of this proposal must also be substantial. Expanding the court system's traffic enforcement infrastructure for minor violations represents an inefficient use of judicial resources, particularly when Oregon has been moving away from fines and fees as a primary sanction and revenue source.

The alternative of removing the court from this process at all is a violation of the Due Process rights of Oregonians to contest incorrect tickets.

Most importantly, automated ticketing is not the most effective way to protect highway

workers. The strongest evidence supports engineering controls physical barriers, rerouting traffic, improved work zone design, and other infrastructure-based solutions as the most reliable means of preventing injury and death.

Safety should be funded through stable public investment, not through uncertain and potentially inequitable fine revenue.

In conclusion, for these reasons, I urge the Committee to reject HB 4081 or significantly amend it to prioritize proven engineering safety measures, clear equity safeguards, and transparent oversight.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your consideration of these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

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