



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

September 14, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 645 (Friedman): Speed Safety System Pilot Program —Request to Sign Into Law

Dear Governor Newsom:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, an alliance of consumer, safety, law enforcement, medical and public health groups, and insurance companies and agents working to advance laws proven to prevent crashes, deaths and injuries on our roads and contain related costs, urges you to sign into law Assembly Bill (AB) 645. This bill would authorize six cities to establish a pilot program for automated enforcement (AE), a proven and lifesaving technology, to deter speeding, a leading killer on California roadways.

In 2021, 4,285 people were killed in traffic crashes in the state, a 27 percent increase since 2015.ⁱ Urban drivers face even greater risk as 70 percent of California's traffic fatalities are in urban areas compared to 60 percent nationally.ⁱⁱ California urgently needs to employ proven, yet underused, traffic safety solutions to curb these preventable deaths.

Adherence to speed limits saves lives and prevents injuries. Unfortunately, in 2021 35 percent of motor vehicle deaths in California involved speeding, exceeding the national average of 28 percent.ⁱⁱⁱ Crash tests show that speed upticks of even five to ten miles-per-hour (mph) greatly increases the risk of injury or death.^{iv}

AE deters speeding and its impact. Speed cameras have been shown to produce a 19 percent reduction in crashes leading to serious injury or death.^v Law enforcement are effective at curbing speeding but cannot be omnipresent. AE augments traditional police enforcement of speed limits without requiring a traffic stop.

AB 645 is narrowly tailored to create a pilot program with a sunset date, limits participation, and is subject to stipulations and city approval. AB 645 will save lives and is backed by wide and bipartisan support, having passed the Senate in a 29-6 vote and the Assembly 58-7. It also has nearly 100 letters of support including from the cities covered by AB 645, namely San Francisco, Glendale, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Jose.

We urge you to sign into law AB 645 to curb speeding, and save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce associated crash costs.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

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- i State Highway Safety Report (2021) – California, available at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/reporting/state/safety.cfm?state=California>
 - ii Fatality Facts 2021 State by state, available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/fatality-statistics/detail/state-by-state>
 - iii NHTSA State Traffic Safety Information for California, accessible at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>
 - iv Impact of Speeds on Drivers and Vehicles – Results from Crash Tests, AAA Foundation for Safety, Humanetics, and IIHS, Jan. 2021, available at <https://www.iihs.org/api/datastore/document/bibliography/2218>
 - v Effects of Automated Speed Enforcement in Montgomery County Maryland on Vehicle Speeds, Public Opinion and Crashes, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, August; available at <https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2097>