

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### For More Information, Contact:

Lisa Gardiner (916) 651-4011 [lisa.gardiner@sen.ca.gov](mailto:lisa.gardiner@sen.ca.gov)

Phil Yost (650) 688-6834 [phil.yost@sen.ca.gov](mailto:phil.yost@sen.ca.gov)

## LEGISLATURE PASSES SIMITIAN BILL TO CURB RED-LIGHT CAMERA ABUSES

**SACRAMENTO** – A bill to protect the rights of drivers by regulating red-light cameras passed today in the State Senate and is now headed to the Governor for approval. The vote was 34-0.

Senate Bill 1303, by State Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), would establish statewide standards for the installation and operation of traffic enforcement cameras, and make it easier to challenge unjustified tickets.

“I think we can keep folks safe and still give the driving public a fair shake,” said Simitian. “This bill is designed to establish some ground rules around the use of red-light cameras, and make sure that drivers’ rights are protected. We want to be sure that if drivers get a ticket that they shouldn’t have, they have a way to contest the ticket that’s relatively quick and convenient.”

The cameras have been a subject of debate in cities around the state, as drivers have questioned their accuracy.

“I don’t oppose red-light cameras per se,” said Simitian. “But I believe that traffic tickets should only be issued to improve public safety, not to raise revenue. By making some of these key changes, I believe we can help restore public confidence in the purpose and fairness of red-light cameras.”

Senate Bill 1303 protects drivers’ rights by:

- Requiring that camera locations be chosen solely on safety considerations;
- Specifically prohibiting the use of red-light cameras to raise revenue;
- Requiring cities and counties to follow state standards in the placement and operation of cameras;
- Requiring adequate signs to notify drivers when red-light cameras are in use;
- Prohibiting so called “snitch tickets” (i.e., an innocent ticket recipient may not be required to identify another driver in order to clear an inaccurate ticket); and
- Making it easier for a wrongfully ticketed driver to get a ticket cleared.

In addition, SB 1303 clarifies recent confusion as the result of conflicting court cases by specifying that evidence from red-light cameras is not hearsay, and can be used as evidence in court.

This legislation is a reintroduction of Senate Bill 29 by Simitian, which passed out of the Senate on a 38-0 vote in 2011 but was vetoed by Governor Jerry Brown. In his veto message, Brown indicated that he felt local elected officials should oversee the use of red-light cameras. Simitian said he hopes that amendments taken this year will win a signature from the Governor.

The idea for the bill originated in Simitian’s annual “There Oughta Be a Law” contest. San Jose resident Vera Gil suggested the legislation after receiving multiple tickets from red-light cameras for a car in Southern California that she does not own and never has driven.

Based on the difficulty she experienced challenging the tickets, Gil proposed a law requiring improved policies and procedures for red-light camera citations.

“Discussion of legislation over the past couple of years confirmed my initial suspicion that Ms. Gil’s experience was just the tip of the iceberg,” said Simitian.

The Governor has until September 30 to act on the measure.

For more about SB 1303, visit <http://www.senatorsimitian.com/legislation>

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