

# Nevada Advisory Committee on Traffic Safety (NVACTS) 2023 Legislative/Policy Recommendations: Road Safety Cameras

## Nevada Law:

NRS 484A.600 Use by governmental entity or agent of photographic, video or digital equipment to gather evidence for issuance of traffic citation. A governmental entity and any agent thereof shall not use photographic, video or digital equipment for gathering evidence to be used for the issuance of a traffic citation for a violation of [chapters 484A to 484E](#), inclusive, of NRS unless the equipment is held in the hand or installed temporarily or permanently within a vehicle or facility of a law enforcement agency.

## Link to Legislative History: 1999 Nevada State Legislature, Senate Bill 381:

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/LegHistory/LHs/1999/SB381,1999.pdf>

## Background:

Road safety cameras are primarily used in two ways: to reduce speeding, or to reduce instances of red light or stop signal running.

In 2017 the National Transportation Safety Board issued a Speed Safety Study Report that identified Nevada as one of 15 states that limits use of safety cameras and made the following recommendation: *Finally, the NTSB recommends that the 15 states with ASE restrictions amend current laws to remove operational and location restrictions on the use of ASE, except where such restrictions are necessary to align with best practices.*

In 2020 the National Transportation Safety Board issued an Accident Report regarding a vehicle collision with student pedestrians crossing to board a school bus that made the following recommendation to Nevada: *Enact legislation to permit stop arm cameras on school buses to capture images and allow citations to be issued for illegal school bus passings based on the camera-obtained information.*

In 2019 the Department of Public Safety/Office of Traffic Safety sponsored SB43 at the request of Governor Sandoval's office to permit local government jurisdictions to determine use of safety cameras (automated traffic enforcement). The bill, SB43, was heard not passed out of committee. This was the most recent of legislative attempts to modify NRS 484A.600.

Speed related crashes comprise 1/3 of Nevada fatal crashes; intersection crash data was not pulled for this report but can be evaluated.

Per [NRS 484B.353](#) it is illegal to proceed past a school bus displaying flashing red signals, however, the only means by which a motorist is cited for an infraction require a law enforcement officer to observe the violation or for a school bus driver to observe the license plate of the vehicle and prepare a report of violation. If a report of violation is filed, a notice is mailed to the vehicle owner notifying them they are receiving a warning. According to the Nevada Department of Education an average of 1,770 passing violations occur each school year.

**Data for crashes and citations in School zones is as follows:**

Nevada	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Statewide Crashes in Active School Zone	153	152	170	92	133
Total Statewide Citations in Active School Zone	7137	6201	8059	3282	6965

**Research & Data:**

The benefits of safety cameras in reducing serious and fatal crashes are well studied and well documented.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – “The best-controlled studies suggest injury crash reductions are likely to be in the range of 20 to 25 percent at conspicuous, fixed camera sites.”

<https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/calculator/factsheet/speed.html>

Insurance Institute for Highway Safety – “In 2019, a total of 9,478 deaths, or 26 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities, occurred in speed-related crashes. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that the economic cost of speed-related crashes is about \$52 billion each year.”

<https://www.iihs.org/topics/speed>

National Conference of State Legislatures – “Red-light and speed cameras allow local law enforcement agencies to enforce these traffic laws remotely. [Nearly 350 U.S. communities](#) use red-light cameras and more than 150 communities use [cameras to enforce speed laws](#). State laws regarding automated enforcement generally establish guidelines for municipal governments. Some state laws limit the use of the cameras to certain cities, streets or specific areas, such as school or work zones, while other state laws allow their use statewide.”

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/enforcing-traffic-laws-with-red-light-and-speed-cameras.aspx>

**National trends:**

Per the National Conference of State Legislatures, at least 33 states and the District of Columbia have laws addressing a variety of issues related to automated enforcement, including to authorize or prohibit it. [State laws](#) generally establish guidelines for municipalities, such as limiting the use of cameras to certain cities or authorizing their use statewide.

Cameras are used in [highway work zones](#) in Illinois, Maryland, Oregon and Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania enacted legislation in 2018 that established a five-year pilot program for automated speed enforcement cameras in highway work zones, which began in March 2020. Drivers going 11 mph or more over the posted speed limit in work zones when highway workers are present will be given a warning after their first offense, fined \$75 after their second offense and \$150 after their third offense.

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/states-increase-use-of-traffic-cameras-to-counter-surge-in-unsafe-driving-magazine2021.aspx>

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/enforcing-traffic-laws-with-red-light-and-speed-cameras.aspx>

### **Special Uses: School Zones and Work Zones**

A growing number of states are allowing cameras to be placed on the outside of a school bus to record illegal passing. At least 24 states have school bus stop-arm camera laws.

Delaware and Michigan became the latest states to allow stop-arm cameras in 2020 and 2021 respectively. In 2019, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia authorized localities or school districts to use school bus stop-arm cameras. Pennsylvania did so in 2018, and in the 2017 legislative session, Arkansas and Utah passed legislation to allow school bus stop-arm cameras. In 2016, Alabama enacted a law allowing for exterior school bus cameras, expanding a program initially created in 2015 in Mobile County. In the 2014 legislative session, South Carolina and Wyoming enacted such laws. In the 2011 and 2012 legislative sessions, Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Rhode Island, Virginia and Washington enacted such measures.

### **School Bus Safety Laws:**

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/school-bus-safety.aspx>

### **Comprehensive State List of Automated Enforcement Laws:**

<https://www.iihs.org/topics/red-light-running/automated-enforcement-laws>

The newly passed 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) is signaling support for safety cameras by making the following changes:

- Allows states to use federal 402 grant funds to support automated safety cameras in school or work zones, subject to USDOT guidelines
- Directs USDOT to study illegal school bus passing, related state laws, effectiveness of various technologies to enhance school bus safety, and how drivers are trained on passing school buses.

### **Safety Camera Pros:**

Proven safety benefits, ability to provide additional data, remove law enforcement officer and eliminate concerns of disparate treatment, increase law enforcement agency's abilities to redirect crash and traffic enforcement efforts, safety camera system costs are typically self-sustaining when implemented properly, local government autonomy, widespread perception that recording cameras currently exist.

### **Safety Camera Cons:**

Public perception, concerns of possible unconstitutionality, potential system start-up costs, government use of funds.

### **Options:**

- Change existing statute to allow autonomy for local jurisdictions to determine use of safety cameras
- Authorize certain locations where safety cameras can be used, i.e. School Zones, Work Zones
- Do nothing

**Resources & Reference:**

2017 NTSB Speed Safety Study: <https://www.nts.gov/safety/safety-studies/documents/ss1701.pdf>

2020 NTSB School Bus Passing Study: <https://www.in.gov/doi/files/ntsb-full-final-report-rochester-fatalities-2018-april-2020.pdf>

2019 Nevada Legislature Senate Bill 43:  
<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/Bill/5962/Text>