



# Ohio Municipal League

*Our Cities and Villages ★ Bringing Ohio to Life*

December 11, 2006

The Honorable Bob Taft  
30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
77 S. High St.  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor Taft,

Senator Kevin Coughlin described it best when he said on the floor of the Ohio Senate that HB 56 was simply a bill that was not yet finished and should fail for that reason. Where else in Ohio law do we have such a logical inconsistency that places the burden of proof on local governments for a civil offense (red light camera citations) and then bars that local government from using the same technology to prove who the offender is? That is exactly what HB 56 says.

Where else in Ohio law do we have a provision that says to municipal law enforcement that they can protect children from being harmed or killed by speeding motorists within a few feet of their school, but we cannot try to protect them from those same motorists as those children walk three blocks to their homes or walk to the bus stop in the morning? That is exactly what HB 56 says.

HB 56 tries to render the use of red light cameras useless and the use of such cameras to enforce all other traffic safety regulations prohibited. If the provisions of HB 56 are allowed to become law, what other measures will be adopted by the General Assembly to tie the hands of municipal leaders and local law enforcement in our constant fight to increase public safety? While the state imposes a uniform traffic code to ensure safety and relies on our safety forces to enforce it, HB 56 attempts to choke off our ability to bring new and efficient resources to fight traffic hazards in the most troublesome spots in our communities.

Governor, you expressed your support for Home Rule with your veto of HB 347. We, of course, agreed with and appreciate that veto. However, that bill was about the on-going conversation in Ohio about where we should draw the line on firearm regulation. That conversation will continue.

HB 56 is not about potential threats to public safety. It is about the real threat posed by everyone who runs a red light in high traffic intersections, speeds in a school zone or

laughs at the speed limit in the neighborhoods in which our children play and live. The bill is also another attack on Home Rule. The state adopts what it considers proper safety standards, relies on the hundreds of millions of dollars our members spend on safety forces to ensure those standards are met by the motoring public, and then, through HB 56, attempts to protect those that break the law.

On red light camera use, we believe that HB 56 is so illogical as to be merely a masked effort to ban the use of such cameras. On its provisions related to speed and other traffic enforcement, it is simply an unconstitutional abridgement of Home Rule. On these latter matters, it is simply the state not proposing a system of regulation, but a ban meant to diminish the ability of municipalities to exert their constitutionally protected police powers.

We strongly and respectfully urge you to come down on the side of public safety and veto HB 56.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Cave  
Executive Director