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Letter of Concern: SF 2026 Speed Cameras

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee,

Speed cameras and red light cameras have become a growing trend across the country to improve traffic safety. These cameras detect someone in a car running a red light or going over the speed limit and take a picture of their license plate to issue a ticket to the driver of the vehicle. In other states, these cameras have become contentious, creating data privacy and surveillance issues, criminalizing poverty, and imposing onerous fines and fees.

The ACLU of Minnesota believes implementation of these cameras should be delayed until stronger measures have been put in place to protect Minnesotan's civil liberties.

While we recognize that good efforts have been made to improve the bill, we want to highlight some concerns:

- **Data usage/retention:**
 - Do police officers and law enforcement agencies have access to the traffic safety camera database? We would propose the author add language that prohibits police departments from accessing databases.
 - We would also suggest reducing the data retention period (the length of time photos are held in the system before being erased).
 - Further clarification is needed on how databases will be linked and used – who has authority over implementation?
 - Clarification is needed on when/how cameras will be turned on and off and the policy that dictates decisions.
- **Criminal investigations:**
 - Narrow criminal investigations using data from cameras to only speeding/red light traffic offenses. Prosecutors and other government officials should not be allowed to use data from cameras for anything other than speeding/red light traffic offenses.
- **Fines and Fees – towing, impounding, collection, and income tax:**
 - While ticket amounts are low, clarification is needed on downstream effects. Can those who don't pay tickets have cars towed and impounded? If so, this would

add to issues around criminalizing poverty, leading low income or housing insecure Minnesotans into more precarious situations.

- We suggest adding language that states fines or convictions do not allow for towing, impounding, booting or immobilizing vehicles. Also fines cannot be sent to collections and/or stripped from Minnesota income tax refunds.
- **Location of Cameras:**
 - Uniform placement of these cameras would be ideal. We have concerns of them being concentrated in low income and primarily Black and Brown neighborhoods.

We also caution members on seeing this as a silver bullet in terms of public safety. While less interactions with police are improvements when it comes to traffic enforcement, structural inequities must be tackled head-on. More cameras will not address the underlying issues of poor city planning or political and economic disparities between neighborhoods and could lead to instances of over-policing

The ACLU of Minnesota shares these concerns in good faith and is more than willing to work with Senator Mohamed and other Senate members on this bill.

Thank you,

Munira Mohamed
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ACLU of MN