

Good evening members of the Committee. My name is Nick Palmer, and I'm a resident and property owner here in Bristol.

I'm speaking tonight against the red light camera ordinance under review. I know tonight's discussion is scoped to red light cameras specifically, so I want to focus on something I haven't heard discussed much: who this ordinance actually costs, and how.

Referencing the city's own materials, every violation carries a \$50 fine for a first offense, \$75 for later ones, plus a state-regulated \$15 fee that goes directly to the vendor running the cameras. That means the company installing this system gets paid per ticket. The more violations, the more revenue, for both the vendor and the city. It's worth asking directly: who reviewed the yellow light timing at these intersections, and was that review done independently of the vendor that profits from every red light violation recorded? When a program's revenue model, its timing decisions, and its messaging are all touched by the same profit motive, this Committee owes the public a real answer on how that conflict is managed.

I'd also ask this Committee to think about who actually pays these fines. A flat \$50 or \$75 fine is not the same expense for every household. For someone on a fixed income, or working an hourly job, or living on SSI, that's a substantial hit to groceries, a utility bill, or a car payment. A flat fine isn't neutral. It's regressive by design, and it falls hardest on the residents who can least absorb it.

And it doesn't stop at the fine itself. Unpaid tickets turn into late fees. Late fees turn into collections. In many towns with these programs, unresolved fines can lead to license or registration holds. For someone already living paycheck to paycheck, one missed payment can spiral into a debt that's genuinely difficult to climb out of. This is a well-documented pattern, and I'd ask this Committee to be proactive and build in real protections, before adopting this ordinance, not after the first wave of complaints.

Last, I'd ask this Committee to clarify a due process question directly: does this ordinance issue the fine to the vehicle's registered owner, or to whoever was actually driving? If it's the registered owner by default, then someone who lent their car to a family member, a co-worker, or a teenager is on the hook for a violation they didn't commit, unless they can prove otherwise. I'd like to know what that appeals process actually looks like, and how much burden it places on an innocent owner to clear their own name.

I'm not asking you to pretend traffic safety isn't a real concern. I'm asking this Committee to take the financial and due-process side as seriously as the safety pitch. The way this program is structured, it functions less like a safety measure and more like a private revenue system with the City of Bristol's name on it.

My honest position is that this Committee should reject the red light camera ordinance and discontinue the program altogether. The financial incentives built into this model, and the burden it places on residents who can least afford it, aren't problems that get fixed with better language... they're inherent to a for-profit, automated ticketing system. If this Committee isn't prepared to do that tonight, then at minimum I'd ask you to send this ordinance back with real answers on vendor incentive structures, a fine schedule that doesn't fall disproportionately on low-income residents, and a clear, low-burden process for an innocent registered owner to contest a ticket.

Thank you for your time.

Ordinance 9/1/26

Good morning. Councilman Dickau.

I am writing in support of cameras at selected intersections around Bristol. Some drivers are showing little regard for traffic signals. Cell phones and internet connections have taken much of our privacy away. Public safety far outweighs any additional loss of privacy.

Hal Kilby
651 Lake Ave.
Bristol

Mark, for the record, Patti and I are strongly behind red light cameras especially in high traffic and accident areas of Bristol. We travel a lot around Bristol and are amazed by the disregard of red lights just about everywhere in Bristol. High traffic areas, low traffic areas, it doesn't matter. It really is a serious problem. Will red light cameras solve everything, no, but they will certainly help and send a strong message that Bristol has had enough of speeding through red lights. I hope the city is successful in this venture.

Bob and Patti Kalat
34 Hollev Rd

Dear Councilman Dickau and Councilman Seymour:

I am a resident and property owner in District 3, writing ahead of Tuesday's Ordinance Committee meeting regarding the review of the Red Light Camera ordinance.

I plan to speak during public participation if my schedule allows, but I want to ensure my district representatives hear my perspective directly. I oppose both the red light camera ordinance and the city's continued use of automated license plate readers (ALPRs), regardless of the vendor. My concern is not with a specific implementation, but with the broader precedent of normalizing constant automated tracking of residents and visitors, especially given current concerns regarding data use, sharing, and retention.

Additionally, Governor Lamont has asked municipalities statewide to pause new camera and ALPR installations pending POST Council guidance, and the Newtown Police Department has already paused its program in response. I believe Bristol should take this guidance seriously before expanding further.

~~I recognize that you must weigh public safety considerations, and I do not take that responsibility lightly. However, I want to emphasize that this is not a fringe concern within our district, and many residents share this view.~~

~~I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further, and I will make every effort to attend Tuesday's meeting.~~

~~To be upfront about where I stand: my actual position is that the city should discontinue the red light camera program altogether. Beyond the civil liberties concerns, I have real questions about the program's financial structure: the vendor is paid per ticket issued, the fines are flat rather than income-adjusted, and unpaid tickets can spiral into late fees and collections for residents who can least absorb them. If the Committee isn't prepared to reject the ordinance outright, I'll request meaningful safeguards as a fallback, but that's not my actual ask.~~

~~Thank you for your time and for your representation of District 3.~~

Sincerely,

Nick Palmer
69 Cronin Street
(860) 207-4226

Good morning Councilman Dickau:

After speaking with the Police Chief last year about them, I believe there is a need for them. Unfortunately I cannot attend tonight's meeting at which time I would support the program but I do have a question (about the draft) that I hope you'll help me with:

1. Sec. 14-81 Penalty for Violations - Throughout this section it refers to notifying the OWNER and citing the OWNER. But hasn't the process always been when a police officer cites a person for motor vehicle violations, it is the OPERATOR, not the OWNER, who is cited?? Although I believe the OWNER is ultimately responsible for his/her motor vehicle, how does citing the OWNER, rather than the OPERATOR, help get to the root of the violation, assess responsibility to the correct person, and ultimately reduce occasions and improve safety?

Respectfully,

Terrie Pitti

65 Paimorr Place