

Testimony of Senator David G. Argall (R-Schuylkill/Berks)
Senate Transportation Committee & House Transportation Committee
Joint Public Hearing: Enhancing the Safety of Highway Workers, Drivers and Pedestrians
July 14, 2015 | 9:30 a.m.
North Office Building, Hearing Room No. 1

Thank you Chairman Rafferty, Senator Wozniak and members of the committee. We appreciate your leadership to review work zone safety.

Senate Bill 840, which I have introduced with Senator Judith Schwank and eight other Senators, would set-up automated speed enforcement systems, or speed cameras, on Interstate highways in active work zones.

Over the last few months, several accidents have occurred in Pennsylvania's work zones. According to preliminary data from PennDOT, in 2014, 24 people died in work zone crashes, an increase of eight from 2013. The data also indicates 1,841 work zone area crashes in 2014.

In May, Holly Doppel of Berks County emailed Senator Schwank and me about strengthening safety in work zones. She referenced a fatal accident on May 2 near Bensalem on the Turnpike that claimed the life of a motorist and sent four construction workers to the hospital. Holly's youngest son was working with the crew that was involved in the accident, but left at 1 a.m. The accident occurred at 5:30 a.m.

She offered her support for our legislation which aims to protect workers, like her son, from any life-altering situations due to reckless driving and speeding. In her email, Holly stated, "The worker that was so badly injured had his life totally changed and well never really recover to the person he was before the accident."

These men and women dedicate their time and effort towards improving Pennsylvania's infrastructure each and every day so that motorists can arrive to and from their destinations safely and efficiently, and it is our responsibility to protect them.

Our legislation would establish a 5-year pilot program under the jurisdiction of PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, to place speed cameras on interstate highways in active work zones. The systems would only be active when the work zone is active.

Motorists would receive advance warning of the use of these systems, and failure to comply with the speed limit would result in a \$100 fine without any points on the driver's record. The revenue raised would be sent to the Motor License Fund to be used exclusively for work zone safety.

Other states have utilized similar programs and have found that they do, in fact, slow down traffic. Maryland realized an 85 percent reduction in the number of motorists speeding through work zones as a result of automated speed enforcement systems.

Our proposal has been met with bipartisan support, with the main goal in mind: saving lives.

I would like to thank Senators Teplitz, Wozniak, Fontana, Scavello, Costa, Yudichak, Blake and Leach for joining Senator Schwank and me as cosponsors of this important proposal.

Again, thank you for taking the time to learn more about our legislation.