



**TRANSPORTATION
ALTERNATIVES**



**Testimony of Transportation Alternatives
Before the New York State Assembly Ways and Means Committee and
Senate Finance Committee, February 6, 2024**

Good afternoon Chairs Krueger, Weinstein, Braunstein, Sepulveda, and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For 50 years, Transportation Alternatives has been a leader in the fight to make our streets safer and livable, and sustainable for all New Yorkers. Families for Safe Streets was founded in 2014 by the families of loved ones who were killed or injured in crashes in New York City and is now a growing national movement. Our mission is to confront the preventable epidemic of traffic violence by advocating for life-saving changes and providing support to those who have been impacted by crashes.

Sammy's Law

We are pleased that Governor Hochul has included Sammy's Law in her Executive budget proposal, and today, TA urges the state legislature to include Sammy's Law in both the Senate and Assembly budget bills. Traffic violence costs the New York State economy at least \$15 billion annually in combined costs from hospitalization, emergency response, legal expenses, lost wages, and lost economic activity and \$1.1 billion in hospitalization and emergency costs alone.

Sammy's Law (S2422, Hoylman-Sigal/A7266, Rosenthal) is named for the son of Families for Safe Streets' co-founder Amy Cohen, whose story was recently featured in [the NY Post](#), will give New York City the power to set speed limits in a way that is tailored to neighborhoods' actual safety needs. The bill gives NYC the power to lower speed limits below 25 mph on residential streets. Changes to a road's speed limit will go through normal City procedures. It also requires a robust public education campaign to inform residents of any speed limit changes before the bill goes into effect.

Last year, Sammy's Law received a message of home rule from the NYC Council, passed in the Senate, and was [supported by](#) Governor Hochul, Mayor Adams, and many New York City and State elected leaders.

Red Light Camera Reauthorization

New York City launched its red light camera program in 1994 and today, red light cameras are installed at 150 intersections. These cameras take images of vehicles that run through red lights and if the violation is deemed valid by the NYC Department of Transportation, the vehicle owner will receive a \$50 ticket.

The red light camera program is up for reauthorization at the end of 2024, and we urge the Senate and Assembly to include [S2812](#) (Gounardes) / [A5259](#) (Dinowitz) in the budget this year.

Red light cameras are incredibly popular in New York City. 85 percent of voters [support](#) the red light camera program. Additionally, the yellow light length in NYC is long enough that a driver has time to react, hit their brakes, and stop if going the speed limit or lower. Reauthorizing the program is a common sense measure to protect New Yorkers.

Despite the proven success of the program, Albany still requires that New York City's successful automated enforcement program remain a "demonstration," — requiring the City of New York to seek reauthorization every four years.

The all-time monthly high, in June 2021, showed 60,638 red lights run, or an average of 2,000 red lights run every day at only the 150 monitored locations. Extrapolated citywide, the problem is endemic: we call for the expansion of red light cameras to 10 percent of all intersections in the FY25 budget.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact elizabeth.adams@transalt.org.