



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 664

Resolution calling upon the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York to conduct oversight hearings to examine the consequences of aggressive motorcycling on City streets and to explore ways to make the streets safer for both drivers and pedestrians.

By Council Members Gerson, DeBlasio, the Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum), Avella, Felder, Gennaro, Koppell, Nelson, Quinn, Sears and Jackson

Whereas, On any given day, numerous motorcycles pass through New York City, many of which are driven aggressively and dangerously down pedestrian-crowded thoroughfares; and

Whereas, At various times of the day and night, many City residents are disturbed by the sound of motorcyclists revving their engines in a loud and disruptive manner, producing deafening noise levels and setting off numerous car alarms as they speed through the streets; aside from the obvious nuisance such irresponsible and aggressive motorcycling produces, this type of show-off driving that many motorcyclists engage in creates hazardous and dangerous conditions along our public thoroughfares; and

Whereas, Often motorcyclists careen through the streets in an intimidating and frightening manner, possessing little regard for fellow drivers or pedestrians, or for the rules of the road; further, because of the danger to the public inherent in pursuing motorcyclists who commit moving violations, the police refrain from attempting to pursue violators and consequently, aggressive motorcyclists frequently get away with dangerous driving without ever being held accountable for their actions; and

Whereas, Since the risks associated with police pursuit of motorcycle violators make enforcement of motorcyclist violations extremely difficult, the City must examine alternative means to effectively enforce the rules of the road; and

Whereas, New York City was faced with a similar predicament in the 1980's when a shortage of police manpower to enforce intersection violations resulted in motorists routinely running red lights throughout the city with impunity; and

Whereas, To compensate for the lack of manpower, the City implemented a ground-breaking technological solution: in December 1993, in response to the rash of red light violators, New York City became the first community in the United States to have a full-time red light photographic enforcement program, featuring cameras located at select intersections which photograph license plates of vehicles, including motorcycles, that run red lights; and

Whereas, Since the cameras are only activated when the light is red, they only monitor red light violations, not aggressive driving generally; following an infraction, summonses are issued and mailed to the owner of the vehicle accompanied by the incriminating photographic evidence; and

Whereas, As in the current situation involving dangerous motorcyclists, the arguments offered in favor of the Red Light Camera Program centered on the ineffectiveness of traditional law enforcement methods; as with red light runners, minimal monitoring and enforcement has led to motorcycle offenders having little fear of being apprehended or prosecuted, resulting in motorcyclists who continue to endanger the lives of themselves and others; and

Whereas, By exploring the use of similar camera technology to apprehend dangerous and aggressive motorcyclists, the City would help reduce reckless behavior and crashes, improve the safety of our City's roadways and enhance our overall quality of life; and

Whereas, Since the Red Light Camera Program was implemented in 1993, studies have shown a 40 percent decrease in the total number of incidents of motorists going through red lights at intersection locations where cameras have been installed; with fewer people running red lights, New York City has seen fewer accidents on its streets, making the City a safer place for pedestrians and drivers alike; and

Whereas, In 1995, the Department of Transportation's Red Light Camera Program received the Innovations in American Government Award from Harvard University's Ford Foundation; as the success of the Red Light Camera initiative has proven, technology can successfully be used to counter the ineffectiveness and shortcomings of traditional law enforcement methods; and

Whereas, Like aggressive automobile drivers, aggressive motorcyclists create hostile and perilous conditions that can lead to tragic consequences; as traffic volume increases on City streets, it becomes imperative that we continually address matters of public safety by examining new and innovative ways to optimize the safety of our City and its roadways; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate committee of the Council of the City of New York conduct oversight hearings to examine the consequences of aggressive motorcycling on City streets and to explore ways to make the streets safer for both drivers and pedestrians.
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