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TEXAS LEGISLATURE APR 18

# 'Adios red light cameras!' Traffic camera ban passes first hurdle in Texas House



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AUSTIN — Red light cameras would be banned under a bill the House Transportation Committee passed Wednesday.

House Bill 1631 by Rep. Jonathan Stickland, R-Bedford, would prohibit cities from operating "a photographic traffic signal system" or issuing civil or criminal fines based on a "recorded image," and repeal state laws that allow for these systems. It would take effect Sept. 1.



## Texas Tracker: Your Guide to the State Legislature

Earlier this month, the bill was presumed to be on life support after Transportation Committee chairman Terry Canales said he did not intend to hold a vote on it. But Canales, D-Edinburg, said he changed his mind after Stickland told him he had the approval of a majority of committee's members.

Outlawing red-light cameras is popular with voters, who loathe the \$75 fines that turn up in the mail, and among lawmakers like Stickland, who say the cameras are unconstitutional. [The Texas Supreme Court is mulling this question right and could issue a ruling by June.](#)

[Will Texas ban red-light cameras? More than 100 lawmakers now say 'yes'](#)

Several other states have banned or restricted the use of red-light or speed-enforcement cameras, while some prohibit such enforcement measures on state highways but allow them on local roads. A handful of Texas cities, including [Arlington](#) and [Richardson](#), have quit using the devices, or, like DeSoto, decided against installing them.

But several others — including Dallas, Irving, Garland and Plano — say the cameras improve public safety.

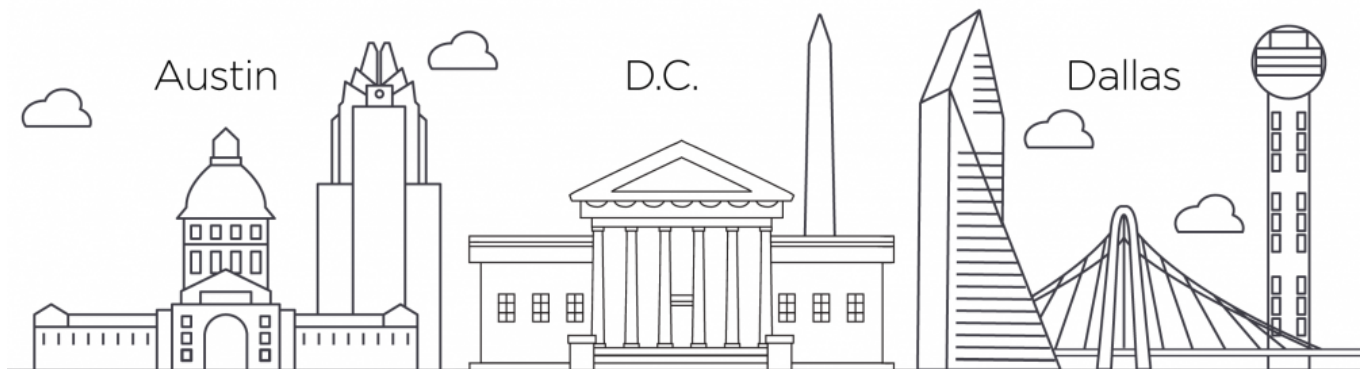
During his six years in the Texas House, Stickland has never seen a bill that he's championed as the primary author be debated on the House floor. A tea party Republican better known for killing bills he brands as "bad," Stickland expressed delight that the red-light camera ban might reach the floor.

"Adios red light cameras, your time is up! Onward to calendars!" he said in a text to *The Dallas Morning News*.

The red light camera ban's fate now sits with the House Committee on Calendars, which sets the agenda for floor debate. [The bill has the support of more than 100 of the House's 151 members](#), so if it reaches the floor, it will likely be approved. A similar bill in the Texas Senate has not yet received debate in committee.



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