

Beyond Traffic Cameras

2011 0408

There has been a good deal of debate recently about the City of St. Petersburg plans to install traffic cameras. The opponents are screaming “Invasion of Privacy!” The City is trying to prevent accidents in the best, if inept, way they know how.

Opponents make some real valid points: That “Cameras ticket the car, not the driver” is probably the best. The expense is another valid criticism. Cries of “Big Brother” while scary, are ill placed because in public a photograph is perfectly legal. I don’t like the thought of being photographed wherever I walk, but the street is a public place. The City makes a good point in citing the safety of both other drivers and pedestrians.

But then the whole thing gets stupid. The City wants to stop T-bone crashes and the opponents state that cars braking for red lights will cause more rear end collisions.

Neither side is talking about the fact that it is selfish behaviour and bad driving that brings all this about. The opponents fail to mention that the rear end crashes are caused because drivers speed and follow too closely. The city fails to mention that T-bone crashes are caused by their inability to make people stop running red lights using the standard-issue patrol officer.

Here’s the real problem: People drive like idiots and the City can’t control it.

Let’s move beyond the issue on the surface and think like conservatives. We believe in the Rule of Law over the Rule of a Monarch. The law sets a speed limit. The law gives us guidance on how much room to leave between us and the car ahead. The law says stop for a yellow light unless it is impossible to do so. Do we drive that way? If we did, would the rear end collisions be an argument we might want to abandon? While many of us may not like the speed limits, as conservatives, we are bound to change the law, then our speed: Ignoring the law is the way of the Anarchist. Let’s face it. Principles are principles and we don’t get our moral code from Morrison’s Buffet.

My suggestion on the cameras? Take the money and hire more officers, but make the fine for running a red light about \$500.00. The incentive is there. But officers, unlike traffic cameras, are mobile and can set up on a new corner each day. You can even give the officer a camera if you want.

Thomas R. Cuba

© Thomas R. Cuba, 2011. All rights reserved.