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New Research Shows Strong Floridian Support For Red Light Camera Programs *STOP Red Light Running Coalition to continue push for legislative action in 2010*

Sarasota, FLA — Every year in the State of Florida thousands of lives are lost when drivers run red lights at high volume intersections. And although many cities and counties in Florida are leading the charge to deter red-light running and the accidents and fatalities it can cause, too many others refrain, uncertain as to public will. In an effort to generate additional legislative support for enactment of a uniform state law on intersection safety and red light cameras, the STOP Running Red Lights Coalition of Florida is sharing important research reflecting that Floridians indeed want these red light camera safety programs in place.

Executed by the well respected national firm, Public Opinion Strategies, the statistically relevant survey* shows:

- Over 65% believe red light cameras improve traffic safety;
- 72% support the use of these cameras in their community to detect red light runners; and,
- More than 60% of registered voters believe that the state should adopt a law that standardizes the use of red light cameras in Florida.

“Clearly, Floridians throughout the state recognize the importance of these red light camera programs,” said Melissa Wandall, President of the STOP Red Light Running Coalition of Florida. “I believe in my heart that most people realize that the lives they help save may be a loved one’s or even their own.”

Importantly, this support crosses regional boundaries throughout Florida with more than 70% in each region registering support for red light camera programs. The Orlando/Tampa region of Florida has the highest affirmative support at 74%.

“Further, these camera safety programs maintain that high degree of support across partisan, generational, and gender lines as well.” said Neil Newhouse, a founding partner of Public Opinion Strategies. “Even a very healthy majority - 60% - of those who have personally received red light and speeding tickets still support using the cameras.”

Florida law enforcement has been a long time advocate of red light programs as instrumental elements in state-wide transportation safety. Hillsborough County Sheriff David Gee has seen red light running become epidemic in Hillsborough County. In the last two years, more than 800 crashes and three

fatalities happened when someone didn't stop for a red light.

"I am a firm believer in intersection safety programs. Not only do the cameras reduce the number of traffic violations and incidents, but they also are able to monitor intersections and accident-prone areas 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Hillsborough County Sheriff David Gee. "This allows my deputies to deal with other crimes, which makes the entire community safer."

While many Florida cities have already adopted intersection safety programs, it's ultimately up to the State to ensure effectiveness through consistency in the programs. Melissa Wandall intends to see state wide legislation through to the end.

"I promised my husband the night of the crash that I would make a positive reason for what had just happened at our own intersection," said Wandall. "With love, authenticity and deep Grace, I will find a way to make the Mark Wandall Safety Act stand tall and save lives."

About the STOP Red Light Running Coalition of Florida

STOP Red Light Running of Florida is dedicated to reducing the incidence of red light running throughout Florida and the fatalities and injuries it causes. Additionally, STOP aims to better inform the public and their elected officials about the seriousness of this all-too-common danger, as well as the law enforcement practices and tools that can make our roadways safer. To learn more, log on at www.floridastopsonred.org.

The Mark Wandall Traffic Safety Act

The "Mark Wandall Traffic Safety Act" is established whereby the regulation and use of cameras for enforcing traffic control signal laws is expressly preempted to the state. The manner in which municipalities and counties may administer such a program is established and the amount of the fine to be imposed, \$150, is provided. Disposition of fines is provided as follows: three-fifths to be retained by the county or municipality enforcing the ordinance; one-fifth as provided by s. 318.21, F.S.; and one-fifth to be deposited in the Department of Health Administrative Trust Fund.

Public Opinion Strategies

Public Opinion Strategies is a national political and public affairs research firm. Founded in 1991, we have conducted more than four million interviews with voters and consumers in all fifty states and over two dozen foreign countries. Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, our nationwide presence is achieved through strategically sited offices in California, and Colorado, with ten Partners and two Vice Presidents leading research efforts.

***Source**

2010 Public Opinion Strategies report on Florida Red-light survey. Feb. 2010
www.floridastopsonred.org

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