



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0866-2023, **Version:** *

Res. No. 866

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the New York State Governor to sign, S.2447/A.5234, which would increase the penalties for purposefully obstructed license plates.

By Council Member Holden

Whereas, Under New York State (NYS) law, license plates must be kept clean and in a condition which is easily readable and must not be covered by glass or any plastic material, covered or coated with any artificial or synthetic materials or substances that obscure recorded or photographic images of such plate, or obstructed by any part of the vehicle; and

Whereas, The law also provides that those who sell or distribute materials or substances for the purpose of distorting a license plate when recorded or photographed may be subject to punishment; and

Whereas, NYS law allows for these violations to be punishable by a fine ranging from \$25 to \$300; and

Whereas, Although illegal, the prevalence of covered, defaced, or obstructed license plates is a persistent problem that allows those who are using such plates to evade speed, red-light, and bus-lane cameras, and tolls, ultimately making roads less safe; and

Whereas, According to data obtained by Streetsblog from the City Department of Transportation, the problem of cars evading speed, red-light, and bus-lane cameras with defaced or covered plates has gotten worse over recent years, with 4.66 percent of plates being unreadable in December of 2022 as compared to just 3.98 percent of plates in December 2021; and

Whereas, The data also shows that between January 2019 and December 2022, the City lost as much as \$38.7 million in unissued tickets due to unreadable license plates, which can result from cars having temporary plates, no plates, or plates that are defaced or covered; and

Whereas, With the rise in use of covered, defaced, or obstructed license plates in recent years, current penalties for such violations need to be increased in order to deter drivers from utilizing such plates; and

Whereas, To deter such use, NYS Senator Andrew Gounardes and NYS Assemblymember Michaele Solages introduced S.2447 and A.5234, respectively; and

Whereas, S.2447/A.5234 would increase the penalties for purposefully obstructed license plates and authorize a set of actions that law enforcement and the government can take, including confiscating coverings that obscure license plates, suspending a vehicle's registration, and/or temporarily blocking certain vehicle identification numbers from registration; and

Whereas, S.2447/A.5234 would discourage the use of purposefully obstructed license plates and allow for law enforcement and the government to properly enforce these violations, increasing safety on roads, and ensuring that tolls are paid by all those who use them; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the New York State Governor to sign, S.2447/A.5234, which would increase the penalties for purposefully obstructed license plates.

KK
LS #14887
12/14/23