

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
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HOUSE BILL 145  
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/16/11

Short Title: Phoebe's Law.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 21, 2011

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY BY  
AUTHORIZING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC SPEED-MEASURING SYSTEMS BY  
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO DETECT SPEED LIMIT  
VIOLATIONS IN HIGHWAY WORK AND SCHOOL ZONES, TO ESTABLISH  
STANDARDS FOR THE APPROVAL, USE, AND CALIBRATION OF ELECTRONIC  
SPEED-MEASURING SYSTEMS, TO ESTABLISH A CIVIL PENALTY FOR SPEED  
VIOLATIONS IN WORK AND SCHOOL ZONES THAT ARE DETECTED BY THOSE  
SYSTEMS, TO CREATE A NEW SPECIAL FUND WITHIN THE STATE CIVIL  
PENALTY AND FORFEITURE FUND, TO PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE  
PENALTIES INTO THE DESIGNATED SPECIAL FUND, AND TO DECREASE THE  
AMOUNT OF HIGHWAY FUNDS TRANSFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION FOR DRIVERS EDUCATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 20 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 20-141.7. Use of electronic speed-measuring systems to detect speed limit violations in work and school zones.**

(a) Authorization. – Electronic speed-measuring systems may be used to detect violations of the speed limit set by G.S. 20-141(j2) for highway work zones and violations of the speed limit set by G.S. 20-141.1 for State-maintained highways in school zones.

(b) Definition. – As used in this section, an electronic speed-measuring system is a mobile or fixed device (i) consisting of an automated traffic camera and sensor and (ii) capable of measuring the speed and producing one or more digital photographs of a motor vehicle violating a speed limit set by G.S. 20-141(j2) or G.S. 20-141.1.

(c) Minimum Standards. – An electronic speed-measuring system authorized for use by this section shall produce at least one photograph that clearly shows a recorded image of the vehicle speeding; the vehicle registration number and state of issuance; the date, time, and location of the violation; and the recorded speed.

(d) Signage. – The Department of Transportation shall provide notice of the presence of an electronic speed-measuring system by posting a conspicuous warning sign not more than 1,000 feet from the location of the system. All warning signs shall be consistent with a statewide standard adopted by the Department of Transportation.

(e) Use. – An electronic speed-measuring system authorized for use by this section shall be approved by the Secretary of Transportation. No local government may operate an electronic speed-measuring system.



1       (f) Penalty. – Except as provided by subsection (i) of this section, a violation of a speed  
2 limit in a highway work zone established pursuant to G.S. 20-141(j2) or a speed limit on a  
3 State-maintained highway within a school zone established pursuant to G.S. 20-141.1 that is  
4 detected by an electronic speed-measuring system is a noncriminal violation for which a civil  
5 penalty shall be assessed and for which no points authorized by G.S. 20-16(c) shall be assigned  
6 to the owner or driver of the vehicle nor insurance points as authorized by G.S. 58-36-65. The  
7 civil penalties are as follows:

8           (1) For a violation of a speed limit in a highway work zone established pursuant  
9 to G.S. 20-141(j2), two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00).

10          (2) For a violation of a speed limit on a State-maintained highway within a  
11 school zone established pursuant to G.S. 20-141.1, two hundred fifty dollars  
12 (\$250.00).

13       (g) Notification of Violation. – The Department of Transportation shall issue to the  
14 registered owner of a motor vehicle cited for a speeding violation detected by an electronic  
15 speed-measuring system a notice of the violation containing all of the information listed in this  
16 subsection. The notice shall be delivered by first-class United States mail at the address on the  
17 current registration of the vehicle's owner and is deemed served on the registered owner five  
18 days after the mailing. The notice of the violation shall contain all of the following:

19           (1) The recorded image of the vehicle speeding.

20           (2) The vehicle registration number and state of issuance.

21           (3) The date, time, and location of the violation.

22           (4) The recorded speed.

23           (5) The process for paying the civil penalty or contesting the owner's  
24 responsibility for the violation.

25       (h) Liability. – The registered owner of a vehicle cited for a speeding violation detected  
26 by an electronic speed-measuring system shall be responsible for any penalty imposed under  
27 this section unless, within 30 days of service of the notification of violation, the owner provides  
28 to the Division of Motor Vehicles a sworn affidavit containing the information listed in one of  
29 the subdivisions of this subsection. If the registered owner fails to pay the civil penalty or fails  
30 to respond to the notice within 30 days of service of the notification of violation, the owner  
31 waives the right to contest responsibility for the violation and is subject to an additional penalty  
32 of one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125.00).

33       The sworn affidavit shall contain one of the following:

34           (1) The name and address of the person or persons who had or may have had  
35 actual physical control of the vehicle at the time of the violation.

36           (2) A statement that at the time of the violation the vehicle was under the control  
37 of a person unknown to the owner, without the owner's permission. A  
38 statement provided under this subdivision shall be accompanied by  
39 documentation verifying that the owner reported to appropriate law  
40 enforcement officials the theft or other loss of the vehicle not later than 48  
41 hours after the time of the violation.

42       (i) Notification of Criminal Charges. – If a law enforcement officer cites, pursuant to  
43 G.S. 15A-302, or arrests, pursuant to G.S. 15A-401, an owner of a vehicle in an area where an  
44 electronic speed-measuring system is in use for detecting violations of a speed limit set  
45 pursuant to G.S. 20-141(j2) or G.S. 20-141.1, then the officer shall notify the Department of  
46 Transportation within 48 hours of the citation or arrest. Upon notification, the Department shall  
47 not issue a notice of violation pursuant to subsection (g) of this section. If it is determined that a  
48 notice of violation was issued in error after proper notification, no penalty may be imposed  
49 under this section and any penalty already paid pursuant to the notice of violation shall be  
50 refunded.

1       (j) Administrative Hearings. – The Division of Motor Vehicles shall establish an  
2 administrative nonjudicial hearing process to review challenges to penalties assessed pursuant  
3 to this section.

4       (k) Appeal. – A person dissatisfied with the decision of the Division may appeal the  
5 decision to the district court of Wake County, or the county in which the violation occurred, by  
6 filing a notice of the appeal with the Clerk of Superior Court in Wake County or the county  
7 where the violation occurred within 30 days of notification of a final decision by the Division.  
8 An appeal under this section is for a trial de novo before the district court."

9       **SECTION 2.** Chapter 8 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
10 section to read:

11 **"§ 8-54.1. Results of electronic speed-measuring systems; admissibility.**

12       (a) Admissibility. – The results of the use of an electronic speed-measuring system  
13 satisfying the requirements of subsection (b) of this section and authorized by G.S. 20-141.7  
14 shall be admissible as prima facie evidence for the purpose of establishing the speed of the  
15 vehicle detected.

16       (b) Calibration and Testing. – All electronic speed-measuring systems shall be  
17 calibrated and tested at regular intervals pursuant to standards established by the Department of  
18 Transportation. A written certificate by a certified technician meeting the standards established  
19 by the Department of Transportation showing that a test was made within the required testing  
20 period and that the system was accurate shall be competent and prima facie evidence of those  
21 facts.

22       (c) Judicial Notice. – In every proceeding in which the results of an electronic  
23 speed-measuring system are sought to be admitted for the purpose of enforcement of  
24 G.S. 20-141.7, notice shall be taken of the rules approving the electronic speed-measuring  
25 system and the procedures for calibration or testing for accuracy of the system."

26       **SECTION 3.** Chapter 115 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
27 section to read:

28 **"§ 115C-457.4. Civil Penalty Litigation Fund.**

29       There is established within the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund a special fund entitled the  
30 Civil Penalties Litigation Fund to be administered by the Office of State Budget and  
31 Management. The Civil Penalties Litigation Fund shall include seventy-five percent (75%) of  
32 civil penalties paid pursuant to G.S. 20-141.7 and any other moneys appropriated or otherwise  
33 directed by the General Assembly. Moneys paid into the Civil Penalties Litigation Fund shall  
34 be allocated to local school administrative units on a per pupil basis, based on the student  
35 population for the current school year. The moneys in this fund shall be expended in  
36 accordance with the provisions of the State School Technology Fund pursuant to  
37 G.S. 115C-102.6D."

38       **SECTION 4.** Of the total amount collected in fines and penalties pursuant to this  
39 act, seventy-five percent (75%) shall be paid into the Civil Penalties Litigation Fund and  
40 twenty-five percent (25%) shall be paid into the State Public School Fund. The payments to  
41 the Civil Penalties Litigation Fund are intended to satisfy the judgment entered on August 8,  
42 2008, in North Carolina School Boards Association, et al. v. Moore, et al., Wake County  
43 Superior Court, No. 98-CVS-14158. The provisions of G.S. 115C-457.2 concerning an  
44 agency's retention of the actual costs of collection of penalties and fines shall not be applicable  
45 to penalties collected pursuant to this act.

46       **SECTION 5.** The funds transferred to the State Public School Fund under this act  
47 shall be used exclusively for the Drivers Education Program. The Department of Public  
48 Instruction shall report monthly to the Department of Transportation the amount allocated  
49 under this section for the Drivers Education Program, and the Department of Transportation  
50 may reduce the transfer of funds it otherwise would make to the Department of Public  
51 Instruction for the Drivers Education Program pursuant to G.S. 20-88.1(c) by an equivalent

1 amount. The Department of Transportation shall use the Drivers Education Program funds that  
2 otherwise would have been transferred to the Department of Public Instruction exclusively for  
3 the implementation and administration of the electronic speed-measuring systems authorized  
4 under this act. After consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental  
5 Operations, such funds may be used to establish positions for the administration of the  
6 electronic speed-measuring systems program. Those positions may not be filled until a contract  
7 has been awarded to a third-party vendor for the primary operation of the program.

8 **SECTION 6.** For the purposes of implementing this act, the Secretary of  
9 Transportation, or the Secretary's designee, may designate no more than 15 highway work  
10 zones at one time, and no more than 15 school zones on State-maintained highways at one time,  
11 throughout the State to pilot this program.

12 **SECTION 7.** The Secretary of Transportation shall report to the Joint Legislative  
13 Transportation Oversight Committee, the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee,  
14 and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations on the pilot program  
15 authorized by this act and shall include recommendations for extension, alteration, or  
16 continuance of the program. The report shall include the process and costs of purchasing  
17 equipment and contracting for services necessary for implementation; the number of violations  
18 detected; the number of violations appealed; the number and amount of fines and penalties  
19 collected; the amount paid into the Civil Penalties Litigation Fund; the amount paid into the  
20 State Public School Fund; the effect on the number of instances of speeding in the highway  
21 work zones and school zones located on State-maintained highways; the effect on the number  
22 and severity of accidents in highway work zones and school zones located on State-maintained  
23 highways; the cost to the Department of Transportation for operating the program; and any  
24 other matter that will assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. The report required  
25 by this section shall be made no later than May 1, 2012, and annually thereafter.

26 **SECTION 8.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2011, and applies to all civil  
27 penalties assessed for speeding violations in highway work zones and school zones on  
28 State-maintained highways on or after that date. This act expires October 1, 2026.