



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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PLACEMENT OF "NO TURN ON RED" SIGNS

House Bill 4881 as passed by the House
Second Analysis (1-9-90)

Sponsor: Rep. Willis Bullard, Jr.

House Committee: Transportation

Senate Committee: State Affairs, Tourism &
Transportation

H.B. 4881 (1-9-90)

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Michigan drivers are permitted to turn right on a red traffic signal (or left, if turning onto a one-way roadway) at most intersections unless specifically prohibited by a "no turn on red" traffic sign. At intersections considered more dangerous where these turns are prohibited, motorists are warned either by a sign placed in the air next to the traffic light itself or by a sign on the ground. Apparently, "no turn on red" signs placed only on the ground at an intersection are ineffective as they are often placed too far from where the turn actually is to be made. Motorists near the front in a line awaiting a red light (who have missed the sign in the approach), are often past the point where a ground sign can be seen. Consequently, illegal turns are made, creating a possibly hazardous situation for vehicles and pedestrians crossing the intersection, and putting drivers who make the turns at risk of being, some believe, unfairly tickered. Some feel the act should be amended to require that "no turn on red" signs be placed either near the traffic light or as close to where the turn is to be made or at both locations, to ensure that drivers are adequately warned before turning that a turn on red is prohibited.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the vehicle code to specify that a "no turn on red" traffic sign, marking, or other device would have to be located above or adjacent to the traffic control signal or as close as possible to the point where the turn was to be made, or at both locations, so that one or more of the signs were visible to a driver intending to turn at the point where the turn was to be made. An additional sign could also be used at the far side of the intersection in the direct line of vision of the turning driver. Further, the bill specifies that red and yellow arrow indications (on traffic signals) would have the same meaning as the corresponding circular indications except that these would apply only to motorists intending to move in the arrow's direction.

MCL 257.612

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Department of Transportation, the bill would not affect state expenditures. (1-9-80)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would help correct a possibly dangerous situation which exists at some intersections where a turn on a red light is not allowed. In some cases, a "no turn on red" sign is hung near the traffic light giving motorists a good chance of seeing the sign. In other instances, however, the sign is placed on the ground, often too far from the corner and out of view of the first one or two vehicles stopped at a red

light. Unwittingly, drivers at these intersections make illegal and possibly dangerous turns. The bill would require the sign to either hang near the traffic light or, if placed on the ground, as close to the point a turn would be made, or at both locations; also, an additional sign could be placed on the intersection's far side in the driver's line of sight. Proper placement of the signs could help make motorists more aware that a turn was not allowed.

Against:

Allowing the signs to be placed either in the air or on the ground (or across an intersection) would result in confusing variance from one intersection to the next. Some drivers may be used to seeing the sign in one place, only to miss it entirely when it's placed elsewhere. To correct this problem, the bill should require the signs to be placed in the same general area in every situation.

Response: Intersections vary in their physical layout from one to the next. In some instances, placing a sign near the traffic light so that drivers approaching an intersection could see it would not be possible from a design standpoint. The same holds true in some instances for signs placed on the ground. Requiring signs in both places in all cases would incur a needless additional cost of time and money. Before signs are placed, qualified engineers determine where they would be most effective in alerting motorists. The bill would allow placement of these signs to be based on each intersection's physical layout as the law now permits. In addition, the bill would bring the act into conformance with federal standards on the placement of "no turn on red" signs.

For:

The bill would add language to the code regarding red and yellow arrow indicators in order to conform to federal regulations.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Transportation supports the bill. (1-9-90)

AAA Michigan supports the bill. (1-9-90)