- 1 HB511
- 2 126173-2
- 3 By Representative Payne (N & P)
- 4 RFD: Jefferson County Legislation
- 5 First Read: 14-APR-11

1	ENGROSSED
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4	A BILL

5 TO BE ENTITLED

6 AN ACT

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Relating to the City of Center Point, Alabama, in Jefferson County; to provide for camera automated civil enforcement of violations of red lights, stop signs, and speeding to be administered and enforced by the Jefferson County Sheriff or a qualified contractor; to provide for the issuance of notices of violations; to provide for civil fines and late fees for violations; to provide for an administrative adjudication hearing by the city through a hearing officer appointed by the mayor; to provide for affirmation defenses of civil liability; to provide for orders issued by the hearing officer; to provide that a civil penalty does not constitute a criminal conviction; to create a traffic safety account for receiving administrative fines and the expenditure of account funds for operational costs of vendor operators and other purposes; to provide definitional terms; and to provide for appeals of orders of the hearing officer in the District Court of Jefferson County to be heard in the same manner as a small claims action.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. PART I. Red Light and Stop Sign
Enforcement.

The Center Point City Council finds the following:

- (1) There has been a high incidence of drivers disregarding or "running" red lights and stop signs at street intersections.
- (2) Red light and stop sign running endangers motor vehicle operators and pedestrians alike by decreasing the efficiency of traffic control and traffic flow efforts and by increasing the number of serious traffic crashes to which public safety agencies must respond at the expense of the taxpayers.
- (3) A reduction in the running of red lights and stop signs through a program utilizing photographic evidence and enforcement through the imposition of civil penalties will help promote and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Center Point. A duly enacted local act of the Legislature would grant to the City of Center Point the authority to establish a program of enforcement of red light and stop sign running by the use of photographic evidence and the imposition of civil penalties.

Section 2. For purposes of Sections 3 to 8, inclusive, of this act, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) CITY COUNCIL. The governing body of the City of Center Point.

- 1 (2) DEPARTMENT. The Jefferson County Sheriff's
 2 Department, its successor, or an authorized representative of
 3 the city as appointed by the mayor.
- 4 (3) DIRECTOR. The Jefferson County Sheriff, or his or her designee.

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- (4) INTERSECTION. The place or area where two or more streets intersect.
 - (5) OWNER. The owner of a motor vehicle as shown on the motor vehicle registration records of the Alabama

 Department of Public Safety, Office of Motor Vehicles, or the analogous department or agency of another state or country.
- (6) PHOTOGRAPHIC RED LIGHT TRAFFIC SIGNAL ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM OR SYSTEM. A system that:
- a. Consists of a still camera system and full motion video camera system (30 frames per second or greater) installed to work in conjunction with an electrically operated traffic control signal.
- b. Is capable of producing at least three separaterecorded images:
 - 1. An image of the rear of a vehicle prior to entering the intersection on a red signal.
- 22 2. An image of the rear of the vehicle showing the license plate.
- 3. An image of the rear of the vehicle in or through the intersection with the red signal visible that is not

- operated in compliance with the red displays of the traffic control signal.
- c. All images must be synchronized to a single time
 source and provide the elapsed time between the first, second,
 and third photographs or digital images specified in paragraph
 b.
- 7 (7) PHOTOGRAPHIC STOP SIGN TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT 8 SYSTEM OR SYSTEM. A system that:
- 9 a. Consists of a still camera system and full motion 10 video camera system (30 frames per second or greater).
- b. Is capable of producing at least two separaterecorded images:
- 1. An image of the rear of a vehicle prior to entering the intersection.
- 2. An image of the rear of the vehicle showing the license plate.
- 17 (8) RECORDED IMAGE. An image recorded by a

 18 photographic traffic monitoring system depicting the rear of a

 19 motor vehicle that is automatically recorded as a photograph

 20 or digital image.
 - (9) SYSTEM LOCATION. The approach to an intersection where a photographic traffic signal or stop sign enforcement system is directed and in operation.
- 24 (10) TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNAL. A traffic control 25 device displaying alternating red, amber, and green lights

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directing traffic when to stop at or proceed through an intersection.

3 (11) STOP SIGN. A fixed sign of the type authorized 4 by the Alabama Department of Transportation which requires a 5 vehicle to come to a complete stop before entering the 6 intersection.

Section 3. (a) In Center Point, Alabama, in

Jefferson County it is unlawful for a vehicle to fail to stop
at an intersection when the traffic control signal for that
vehicle's direction of travel is emitting a steady red signal
or to enter into an intersection controlled by a stop sign
without coming to a complete stop prior to entering the
intersection.

- (b) An owner of a motor vehicle is liable for a civil penalty of one hundred dollars (\$100) if he or she violates subsection (a).
- (c) An owner who fails to timely pay a civil penalty pursuant to this act shall be subject to a late payment penalty of twenty-five dollars (\$25) in addition to the original violation penalty.

Section 4. (a) The department is responsible for the enforcement and administration of this act. The department may enforce and administer this act, or any parts thereof, through a contractor selected in accordance with applicable law. If the department uses a contractor for any portion of the

enforcement or administration of this act, the contractor

shall meet the following minimum criteria that the contractor:

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- (1) Must be able to demonstrate three years of continuous operations of similar digital photo enforcement programs in jurisdictions in the United States.
 - (2) Must have three years of audited financials that show acceptable profitability.
 - (3) Must have sufficient financial resources to perform the contract or provide the services.
 - (4) Must be able to provide a performance bond comparable to the scope of the photo enforcement program.
 - (b) The actions which may be used to enforce the payment of this civil penalty and related fees may consist of, but not be limited to, immobilization of vehicles (booting), reporting the unpaid or delinquent debt to collection agencies/credit reporting agencies, or initiating actions through the small claims court, or any combination thereof.
 - (c) In order to impose a civil penalty under Sections 3 through 8 of this act, the department shall mail a notice of violation to the owner of the motor vehicle liable for the civil penalty not later than the 14th calendar day inclusive of legal holidays and weekends after the date the violation is alleged to have occurred.
 - (d) A notice of violation issued under this act shall contain the following:
 - (1) A description of the violation alleged.

- 1 (2) The date, time, and location of the violation.
- 2 (3) A copy of a recorded image of the vehicle involved in the violation.
- 4 (4) The amount of the civil penalty to be imposed for the violation.
- 6 (5) The date by which the civil penalty must be 7 paid.

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- (6) A statement that the person named in the notice of violation may pay the civil penalty in lieu of appearing at an administrative adjudication hearing.
- (7) The following information informing the person named in the notice of violation:
- a. Of the right to contest the imposition of the civil penalty in an administrative adjudication.
 - b. Of the manner and time in which to contest the imposition of the civil penalty.
 - c. That failure to pay the civil penalty or to contest liability is a waiver of the right to appeal.
 - (8) A statement that a recorded image is evidence in a proceeding for the imposition of a civil penalty.
 - (9) A statement indicating failure to pay the civil penalty within the time allowed shall result in the imposition of an additional late penalty for each violation.
- 24 (10) Any other information deemed necessary by the department.

(e) A notice of violation under this act is presumed to have been received on the 10th calendar day inclusive of weekends and legal holidays after the date the notice of violation is mailed.

(f) Once an intersection has been equipped with a system, the city council shall adopt by resolution a date for the department to begin issuing civil citations. Prior to this established date, the department may shall issue warning notices of the alleged violations as part of an education or public notification effort and display easily readable signage that cameras are present on stop signs and red lights and in speeding zones.

Section 5. (a) A person who receives a notice of violation may contest the imposition of the civil penalty by a request in writing for an administrative adjudication of the civil penalty within 30 calendar days inclusive of weekends and legal holidays after receipt of the notice of violation. Upon receipt of a timely request, the department shall notify the person of the date and time of the administrative adjudication hearing.

(b) Administrative adjudications of violations of this act shall be conducted by a hearing officer appointed by the mayor. In conducting administrative adjudications of violations of Section 3, the hearing officer shall have the powers and duties conferred by this act.

1 (c) Failure to pay a civil penalty or to contest
2 liability in a timely manner is a waiver of the right to
3 appeal under subsection (i).

- (d) The civil penalty shall not be assessed if, after a hearing, the hearing officer enters a finding of no liability.
- (e) In an administrative adjudication hearing, the issues must be proved at the hearing by a preponderance of the evidence. The reliability of the system used to produce the recorded image of the violation may be attested to in an administrative adjudication hearing by affidavit of an officer or the department and a representative of any contractor engaged by the city. An affidavit from a sworn law enforcement officer or from the department that alleges a violation based on an inspection of the pertinent recorded image is admissible in a proceeding under this act and is evidence of the facts contained in the affidavit.
- (f) A person who is found liable after an administrative adjudication hearing or who requests an administrative adjudication hearing and thereafter fails to appear at the time and place of the hearing shall pay the fine amount plus any late fee in addition to a thirty dollar (\$30) adjudication hearing administrative fee. If the person is found not liable at the administrative adjudication hearing, the thirty dollar (\$30) adjudication hearing administrative

fee will not be assessed or any penalty and fee paid related to that citation shall be refunded.

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- (g) Any of the following shall be an affirmative defense to the imposition of civil liability under this act, to be proven by a preponderance of the evidence, that:
- (1) The traffic control signal was not in proper position and sufficiently legible to an ordinarily observant person.
- (2) The operator of the motor vehicle was acting in compliance with the lawful order or direction of a law enforcement or public safety officer.
- (3) The operator of the motor vehicle violated the instructions of the traffic control signal so as to yield the right-of-way to an immediately approaching authorized emergency vehicle.
- (4) The motor vehicle was being legally operated as an authorized emergency vehicle and the operator was acting in compliance with the laws of this state.
- (5) The motor vehicle was being operated by a person other than the owner of the vehicle without the effective consent of the owner.
- (6) The license plate depicted in the recorded image of the violation was a stolen plate and being displayed on a motor vehicle other than the motor vehicle for which the plate had been issued.

1 (7) The presence of ice, snow, unusual amounts of
2 rain or other unusually hazardous road conditions existed that
3 would make compliance with this act more dangerous under the
4 circumstances than noncompliance.

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- (8) The person who received the notice of violation was not the owner of the motor vehicle at the time of the violation.
- (9) At the time of the violation, the motor vehicle was a stolen vehicle or the license plate displayed on the motor vehicle was a stolen plate, which must include proof acceptable to the hearing officer that the theft of the vehicle or license plate had been timely reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- (h) Notwithstanding anything in this act to the contrary, a person who fails to pay the civil penalty or to contest liability in a timely manner is entitled to an administrative adjudication hearing on the violation if the person meets the following requirements:
- (1) The person files an affidavit with the hearing officer stating the date on which the person received the notice of violation mailed to the person.
- (2) The person files a request for an administrative adjudication hearing within 30 days from the date of receipt of the notice of violation, as stated in the affidavit.
- (i) The decision of the hearing officer shall be the final decision by the city council. A person or persons

aggrieved by a decision may file a petition for judicial review to the District Court of Jefferson County within 30 days after the date of entry of the decision. The district court shall conduct the appeal in the same manner as the court hears a small claims civil action.

Section 6. (a) The hearing officer at any administrative adjudication hearing under this act shall issue an order stating the following:

- (1) Whether the person charged with the violation is liable for the violation.
- (2) The amount of any civil penalty, late penalty, and administrative adjudication hearing cost assessed against the person.
- (b) The orders issued under subsection (a) may be filed with the office of the hearing officer. The hearing officer shall keep the orders in a separate index and file. The orders may be recorded using microfilm, microfiche, or other data processing techniques.

Section 7. (a) The imposition of a civil penalty under Part I or Part II, or both, of this act shall not be considered a criminal conviction.

(b) A civil penalty may not be imposed under this act upon the owner of a motor vehicle if the operator of the vehicle was arrested or was issued a citation and notice to appear by a law enforcement or public safety officer as a

- violation of Title 32 of the Code of Alabama 1975, if such violation was captured by the system.
- (c) The city attorney of Center Point is authorized to file suit to enforce collection of unpaid fines or related fees and penalties by any lawful means to secure such payments.

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Section 8. The penalties, fines, and fees collected from the imposition of civil liability under Part I and Part II of this act shall be deposited into the Center Point Traffic Safety Fund Account established by the city council. Funds deposited into the account shall be expended first for the costs of the system for payment to the vendor/operator of the system, public relations, and general implementation of the program. The remaining funds shall be used for the following purposes, including, but not limited to, traffic or pedestrian public safety programs, intersection safety improvements, driver education, police officers dedicated to traffic safety, or projects or programs subject to the joint written determination by the Mayor of the City of Center Point and the director, but only if such expenditures are public safety related.

Section 9. PART II. Speeding Enforcement.

The Center Point City Council finds as follows:

(1) There has been a high incidence of drivers disregarding speed limits on streets and at street intersections.

(2) Exceeding the speed limit endangers vehicle

operators and pedestrians alike by decreasing the efficiency

of traffic control and homogeneous traffic flow and by

increasing the number of serious traffic crashes to which

public safety agencies must respond at the expense of the

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taxpayers.

(3) A reduction in the number of drivers exceeding speed limits through a program utilizing photographic evidence and enforcement through the imposition of civil penalties will help promote and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City of Center Point.

Section 10. For purposes of Sections 11 to 16, inclusive, of this act, the following definitions shall apply:

- (1) CITY COUNCIL. The City Council of the City of Center Point.
- (2) DEPARTMENT. The Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, its successor, or an authorized representative of the city as appointed by the mayor.
- (3) DIRECTOR. The Jefferson County Sheriff, or his or her designee.
- (4) INTERSECTION. The place or area where two or more streets intersect.
- (5) OWNER. The owner of a vehicle as shown on the motor vehicle registration records of the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Office of Motor Vehicles, or the analogous department or agency of another state or county.

(6) PHOTOGRAPHIC VEHICLE SPEED ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM OR SYSTEMS. A system meeting the following requirements:

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- a. The system has a mobile or fixed electronic speed enforcement system, or both, which is certified and in compliance with the FCC.
 - b. The system is capable of producing at least two recorded images depicting the license plate attached to the rear of a vehicle being operated at a speed in excess of the speed limit.
 - (7) RECORDED IMAGE. An image recorded by the system depicting the rear of a vehicle which is automatically recorded on a photograph or digital image, which also depicts the recorded speed, date, location, and time of the recorded image.
 - (8) SPEED LIMIT. The established maximum speed limit on a given roadway prescribed by law.
 - (9) SYSTEM LOCATION. The approach to an intersection toward which a photographic traffic vehicle speed enforcement system is directed and in operation or a segment of roadway on which a vehicle speed enforcement system is in operation.

Section 11. (a) In addition to the findings of Section 9, the city council further finds and determines a vehicle traveling over the speed limit for the vehicle's direction of travel damages the public by endangering vehicle operators and pedestrians alike, by increasing the number of serious traffic crashes to which public safety agencies must

respond at the expense of the taxpayers, therefore decreasing the efficiency of traffic control and traffic flow efforts.

(b) The owner of a vehicle is liable for a civil penalty as shown in the following table if the vehicle is traveling at a speed in miles per hour (mph) greater than the speed limit as shown in the following table at a system location. The following civil penalties shall apply to the owner when captured by the system where the vehicle was recorded as traveling at the following speeds over the speed limit:

10	Speed Over Speed Limit	Civil Penalty
11	5 through 10 mph	\$50
12	Greater than 10 mph	
13	through 15 mph	\$100
14	Greater than 15 mph	
15	through 20 mph	\$125
16	Greater than 20 mph	\$150

(c) The civil penalty for "speed over speed limit" as stated above shall double for violations of this act when that violation occurs and was electronically recorded within a segment of the roadway or intersection designated with signage or signals as a school zone only during school hours when school is in session and one hour before and after school hours.

(d) An owner who fails to timely pay a civil penalty pursuant to this act shall be subject to an additional late payment penalty of twenty-five dollars (\$25) in addition to the original violation penalty.

Section 12. (a) The department is responsible for the enforcement and administration of Sections 11 through 16. The department may enforce and administer Sections 11 through 16, or any parts thereof, through one or more contractors selected in accordance with applicable law. The actions which can be used to enforce the payment of this civil penalty and related fees may consist of, but not be limited to, immobilization of vehicles (booting), reporting an unpaid or delinquent debt to collection agencies and credit reporting agencies, or initiating actions through the small claims court.

- (b) In order to impose a civil penalty under this act, the department shall mail a notice of violation to the owner of the vehicle liable for the civil penalty not later than the 30th calendar day inclusive of weekends and legal holidays after the date the violation is alleged to have occurred.
- (c) A notice of violation issued under this act shall contain the following information:
 - (1) A description of the violation alleged.
 - (2) The date, time, and location of the violation.

- 1 (3) A copy of a recorded image of the vehicle involved in the violation.
- 3 (4) The amount of the civil penalty to be imposed 4 for the violation.
- 5 (5) The date by which the civil penalty must be paid.

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- (6) A statement that the person named in the notice of violation may pay the civil penalty in lieu of appearing at an administrative adjudication hearing.
- (7) Information informing the person named in the notice of violation:
 - a. Of the right to contest the imposition of the civil penalty in an administrative adjudication hearing.
- b. Of the manner and time in which to contest the imposition of the civil penalty.
 - c. That failure to pay the civil penalty or to contest liability is a waiver of the right to appeal.
- (8) A statement that a recorded image is evidence in a proceeding for the imposition of a civil penalty.
 - (9) A statement indicating failure to fully pay the civil penalty within the time allowed shall result in the imposition of an additional late penalty of twenty-five dollars (\$25) for each violation.
- 24 (10) Any other information deemed necessary by the department.

(d) A notice of violation under Sections 11 through 16 of this act is presumed to have been received on the 10th calendar day inclusive of weekends and legal holidays after the date the notice of violation is mailed.

(e) Once a system has been installed or becomes operational, or both, the city council shall adopt by resolution a date for the department to begin issuing civil citations. Prior to this established date, the department may shall issued warning notices of the alleged violations as part of an education/public notification effort and display easily readable signage that cameras are present on stop signs and red lights and in speeding zones.

Section 13. (a) A person who receives a notice of violation may contest the imposition of the civil penalty by a request in writing for an administrative adjudication hearing of the civil penalty within 30 calendar days inclusive of weekends and legal holidays after receipt of the notice of violation. Upon receipt of a timely request, the department shall notify the person of the date and time of the administrative adjudication hearing.

(b) Administrative adjudications hearings of violations of Sections 11 through 16 of this act shall be conducted by a hearing officer appointed by the mayor. In conducting administrative adjudications hearings of violations of this act, the hearing officer shall have the powers and duties conferred by this act.

1 (c) Failure to pay a civil penalty or to contest
2 liability in a timely manner is a waiver of the right to
3 appeal under this act.

- (d) The civil penalty shall not be assessed if, after a hearing, the hearing officer enters a finding of no liability.
- (e) In an administrative adjudication hearing, the issues must be proved at the hearing by a preponderance of the evidence. The reliability of the system used to produce the recorded image of the violation may be attested to in an administrative adjudication hearing by affidavit of an officer or the department and a representative of any contractor engaged by the city. An affidavit from a sworn law enforcement officer or from the department that alleges a violation based on an inspection of the pertinent recorded image is admissible in a proceeding under this act and is evidence of the facts contained in the affidavit.
- (f) A person who is found liable after an administrative adjudication hearing or who requests an administrative adjudication hearing and thereafter fails to appear at the time and place of the hearing shall pay the fine amount plus any late fee in addition to a thirty dollar (\$30) administrative adjudication hearing fee. If the person is found not liable at the administrative adjudication hearing, the thirty dollar (\$30) fee shall not be assessed and any

penalty or fee, or both, paid related to that citation shall be refunded.

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- (g) Any of the following shall be an affirmative defense to the imposition of civil liability under this act, to be proven by a preponderance of the evidence, that:
- (1) The operator of the vehicle was acting in compliance with the lawful order or direction of a law enforcement or public safety officer.
- (2) The operator of the vehicle violated the speed limit so as to move out of the way of an immediately approaching authorized emergency vehicle.
- (3) The vehicle was being operated as an authorized emergency vehicle and the operator was acting in compliance with state law.
- (4) At the time of the violation, the vehicle was in the care, custody, or control of another person where the owner furnishes a truthful affidavit which identifies the name and mailing address of the person or entity who leased, rented, or otherwise had the care, custody, and control of the vehicle at the time of the violation. Responsibility for the violation under this section shall be transferred to the person identified in the affidavit.
- (5) The person who received the notice of violation was not the owner of the vehicle at the time of the violation.
- (6) At the time of the violation the vehicle was a stolen vehicle or the license plate displayed on the vehicle

was a stolen plate, which must include proof acceptable to the hearing officer that the theft of the vehicle or license plate had been timely reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- (h) Notwithstanding anything in this act to the contrary, a person who fails to pay the amount of a civil penalty or to contest liability in a timely manner is entitled to an administrative adjudication hearing on the violation if:
- (1) The person files an affidavit with the hearing officer stating the date on which the person received the notice of violation mailed to the person.
- (2) The person files a request for an administrative hearing within 30 days from the date of the receipt of the notice of violation, as stated in the affidavit.
- (i) The decision of the hearing officer shall be the final decision by the city council for judicial review to the Jefferson County District Court within 30 days after the date of entry of the decision. The district court shall conduct the appeal in the same manner as the court hears a small claims civil action.
- Section 14. (a) The hearing officer at any administrative adjudication hearing under this act shall issue an order stating both:
- (1) Whether the person charged with the violation is liable for the violation.

1 (2) The amount of any civil penalty, late penalty,
2 and administrative adjudication cost assessed against the
3 person.

(b) The orders issued under subsection (a) may be filed with the office of the hearing officer. The hearing officer shall keep the orders in a separate index and file. The orders may be recorded using microfilm, microfiche, or other data processing techniques.

Section 15. (a) The imposition of a civil penalty under this act shall not be considered a criminal conviction.

- (b) A civil penalty may not be imposed under this act upon the owner of a vehicle if the operator of the vehicle was arrested or was issued a speeding citation and notice to appear by a law enforcement or public safety officer as a violation of Title 32 of the Code of Alabama 1975, if such violation was captured by the system.
- (c) The city attorney is authorized to file suit to enforce collection of unpaid fines or related fees and penalties, or both, imposed under this act by lawful means to secure such payments.

Section 16. (a) The penalties, fines, and fees collected from the imposition of civil liability under Section 11 shall be deposited into the Traffic Safety Fund Account established by Section 8, and expended as provided in Section 8.

(b) Court costs collected pursuant to Part I and Part II of this act shall be distributed in the same manner as prescribed by law for the distribution of municipal court costs for misdemeanor violations. An additional fee of ten dollars (\$10) shall be collected by the Center Point Municipal Court in connection with notices issued under this act to be paid to the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center and deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the Criminal Justice Information System Automation Fund as compensation for record keeping and transaction processing with respect to violation notices issued under this act.

Section 17. This act shall become effective three months following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

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3	House of Representatives
4 5 6 7 8	Read for the first time and re- ferred to the House of Representa- tives committee on Jefferson County Legislation
9 10 11	Read for the second time and placed on the calendar 1 amendment 25-MAY-11
12 13 14	Read for the third time and passed as amended
15 16 17 18	Greg Pappas Clerk