

# **BOYCOTT SOUTH CAROLINA**

## **DON'T SPEND YOUR MONEY THERE.**

ALL SHERIFF'S OFFICES ALONG INTERSTATE 95 IN SOUTH CAROLINA ARE INSTRUCTED TO TICKET ALL CARS GOING SOUTH. **PLEASE DON'T BUY ANYTHING IN THAT CORRUPT STATE** OF ALL OF THEM **JASPER COUNTY** IS THE WORST. THE OFFICERS BASICALLY LIE TO GIVE YOU A TICKET. BEFORE YOU FIGHT THE TICKET BY MAIL YOU MUST PAY IT. JIM CROW'S LAWS STILL ALIVE IN SOUTH CAROLINA. ON MY WAY BACK FROM FLORIDA I ATE AND FILLED MY GAS TANK IN GEORGIA AND DROVE AT 55 MILES PER HOUR FOR 5 HOURS TO THE FAYEVILLE AREA OF NORTH CAROLINA TO HAVE LUNCH. FROM NOW ON I WILL FLY TO FLORIDA. I'M SUING THEM. FOR INFO [prfree2@hotmail.com](mailto:prfree2@hotmail.com)

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To whom it may concern:

On Saturday, January 31, 2015 I was travelling south on Interstate 95. As I was approaching the overpass that now I know to be Jasper Highway at Jasper County, South Carolina, -at approximately half a mile from that overpass- I saw a chubby Whiteman dressed up as a civilian pointing at the cars passing by under him. I thought that the guy was a terrorist or somebody trying to commit suicide. The army veteran in me thought of doing something. At the same time I saw 5 or 6 police cars crisscrossing Interstate 95 dangerously to stop cars. I had my car on cruise control at 65 miles per hour because I'm a Disabled American Veteran; both of my knees have been totally replaced. All this happened in a few seconds.

When I had travelled around 200 meters under the overpass -by then my speed was around 50 miles per hour- I noticed a police car behind me. At the same time there were 3 or 4 police cars zooming by me and crisscrossing I 95 to stop other drivers. I couldn't believe the aggressiveness and cold blood of those officers. I thought that the police car behind me was going to drive pass me but to my surprise it was following me slowly.

Around half a mile from the overpass I parked on the shoulder of I 95. The police car stopped behind me. A Black police officer approached me and asked me if there was any reason why I was speeding. I responded by saying that I wasn't speeding that I was on cruise control at 65 miles per hour. He told me that I was speeding at 86 miles per hour. I answered that it was impossible because I'm a Disabled American Veteran and that I was on cruise control at 65. I told him that only if the car came from Japan with a damaged cruise control system then I was doing 86.

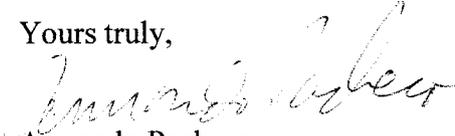
He asked me for my driver's license and registration and issued me a Traffic Ticket for \$185.00. He explained to me where to pay and what would happen to my driver's license if I didn't pay. He signed the summons as the officer who supposedly saw me speeding but that's almost impossible because the man pointing at the cars on the overpass was a Whiteman and Officer A. Ager / L.E.N. is a Blackman. Therefore, unfortunately, Officer A. Ager / L.E.N. lied on the Ticket issued to me. He didn't have radar, a printout, a photograph nor any evidence that I was speeding. Obviously police cars of Jasper County are parked on a ramp facing I 95 (instead of being in the streets of Ridgeland, SC fighting crime) and when they receive communication from the Whiteman on the overpass they fly into Interstate 95 like demons to harass and threaten the lives of their fellow Americans. I thought that in our country we were innocent until proven guilty but in my case I was terrorized by a Whiteman on an overpass and given a summons by a Blackman who decided that he is the enforcer, the judge and the jury.

While Officer A. Ager / L.E.N. was issuing the summons police cars continued crisscrossing I 95 as if possessed by the devil himself; like a pack of wolves devouring its victims.

This time around I was the victim; I saw in action what "highway robbery" really is; stealing the money of hard working Americans who don't have the money to take an airplane to visit the love ones.

I understand that it was the last day of the month and that Police Chief Richard Woods and County Administrator Andrew P. Fulghum and Ridgeland Mayor Joey Malphrus most likely have a ticket quota system. I understand that the officers MUST meet a tickets quota or they face some type of disciplinary action, but to use a federally funded INTERSTATE HIGHWAY to balance a budget is illegal, immoral and inhumane. I hope that your office correct this abuse of the law by dismissing this speeding ticket. I will not allow this vicious practice. I will use all the means provided by the law, including bringing the unknown Whiteman on the overpass, Officer A. Ager / L.E.N., Police Chief Woods, and the Clerk of the Court to a court of my peers in New York City.

Yours truly,



Armando Pacheco

PS. I wonder if they only ticket drivers from out of State since those drivers don't want to bother and they pay without questioning this miscarriage of the law.

Wed, 12/29/2010 - 11:11am

# Town sued over tickets

Stephanie Ingersoll



Two drivers from Florida and one from upstate South Carolina have filed a federal class action lawsuit against the Town of Ridgeland, Mayor Gary Hodges, Police Chief Richard Woods, three police officers and iTraffic after receiving what they call "illegal" speeding tickets on Interstate 95.

In the lawsuit, filed Dec. 20 in U.S. District Court in Beaufort, three motorists who received tickets in the mail after they were photographed

speeding on I-95 in Ridgeland claim their civil rights were violated and are seeking actual, compensatory and punitive damages and a permanent injunction to stop to program.

The attorneys representing them are J. Prestron Strom Jr. of Columbia and lawmaker J. Todd Rutherford, who successfully pushed for a law to ban speeding tickets based on solely on photographic evidence earlier this year.

The lawsuit claims that while the town and iTraffic "contend that the traffic enforcement is to promote safety, the program was truly designed to generate revenue," and "Moreover, the traffic enforcement actually creates additional danger due to the placement of the traffic control vehicle and the blinding flash of light used to take a photograph of prospective and alleged violators."

Cameras and radar equipment owned by the private company iTraffic are set up along the town's 7-mile stretch of I-95 to photograph the faces and license plates of drivers traveling 81 mph or over while a town police officer inside an RV parked nearby monitors the traffic, radar and cameras. Photos of the drivers are then matched to driver's licenses and tickets are then sent to the home of violators.

The lawsuit claims that the town is breaking the law by mailing tickets to drivers outside Jasper County because those homes are not in the town's jurisdiction and it has no authority to deliver citations through the U.S. mail.

It also said that thousands of violators, who could also be part of the class action suit, received State of South Carolina Uniform Traffic tickets, even though they were charged with a town ordinance and that while a letter signed by Woods says the citation will not affect the driver's driving record, they could have a bench warrant taken out against them or have their driver's license suspended if they don't pay the fine or appear in court. The lawsuit claims the town doesn't have that jurisdiction.

The lawsuit said the program violates state law because violators are not served in an officer's jurisdiction and the date listed on the citation is not the same date it is received. It also claims that the plaintiffs were deprived of their property - fines - through illegal and "unlawful arrests" in violation of the Fourth, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution and that they have been "damaged as a result of the conspiracy."

Mayor Gary Hodges declined to comment on the lawsuit Monday, as is standard.

"We don't comment on pending litigation," he said. "That's all I can say about it."

In the past, he has said he is confident the iTraffic program would stand up to legal challenges. Similar programs are in place in more than 50 other communities, though without an officer present to monitor the violation. He has contended that the state law banning unmanned cameras does not apply in this case because an officer is watching.

He has also touted the success of the program in cutting down the number of speeders and wrecks since the program went online in August.

Strom and Rutherford could not be reached for comment.

In the lawsuit, they contend that 1,373 people were charged for a traffic violation in November and were scheduled to appear in court Dec. 6.

"At fines ranging from \$100 to \$300, this is an extremely profitable way for the town to

generate revenue, especially considering the fact that the majority of people stopped are traveling through South Carolina to an out of state destination and will likely pay the fine to avoid traffic court," the lawsuit says.

The plaintiffs are Mark William Emery of Dunnellon, Fla., who was allegedly photographed by the iTraffic unit Nov. 11, traveling 86 mph; James Gary Gain of Kissimmee, Fla., who was allegedly photographed driving 81 mph on Nov. 7; and Jeremy Glen Ahlum of Greer, who was allegedly photographed traveling 82 mph on Oct. 22. The speed limit is 70 mph. All paid a \$133 fine to avoid court.

*A pair of omnibus ethics bills now in the General Assembly purport to end legislative “self-policing.” They do not. Instead, both bills perpetuate a system in which lawmakers have special laws written only for themselves, and in which they “investigate” and “punish” each other.*

The issue of the day is “independent investigation” of lawmakers. Indeed, based on the language of some of Columbia’s politicians – including the governor – it’s the sum total of “ethics reform.”

Gov. Haley, along with several advocacy groups, have senators to pass an omnibus ethics bill only if it contains “independent investigation.” There is little doubt that the in which legislators investigate their own for ethics violations, encourages corruption and protects corrupt politicians. The fact that the current system is deeply flawed, however, does not mean that any change will be an improvement.

State officials, legislators, and other groups calling for “independent investigation” are muddling two important principles. What’s needed is independent *policing*, not independent investigation. Calls for reform limited to independent *investigation* tacitly accept a system in which legislators themselves are allowed to punish their colleagues for violations – including some criminal violations. The fixation on “independent investigation” has also led some well-meaning reform advocates to support proposals that don’t even achieve independent investigation – let alone independent punishment.

This is about more than rearranging a few ethics laws. **It’s about the separation of powers.** The reason lawmakers are being forced to deal with the question of self-policing at all, in other words, is that **state lawmakers, unlike any other elected officials in South Carolina, are governed by their own set of laws** – a set of laws *they* and *they alone* enforce and adjudicate. That’s a large part of what allows them to control the other two branches of government, ignore the concerns of citizens, and profit from state government.

The only way to end legislative self-policing is by putting lawmakers under the same laws that govern everybody else. After all, every other person in South Carolina is independently policed: why should state lawmakers be any different?

Now, on to the bills currently before the legislature. Both these bills give legislators the power to choose at least some of the members who will serve on an “independent” investigatory body, while also retaining the legislative power to punish their own. Genuine ethics reform must place investigation and enforcement of ethics law violations in bodies that are neither staffed with nor appointed by legislators. That would mean, among other things, getting rid of laws that carve out special criminal violations for lawmakers: “Converting campaign funds to personal use,” for example, is called “embezzlement” in the world of non-lawmakers, and shouldn’t be investigated or punished by a body over which the defendant has any direct or indirect control.

### **Senate proposals**

There are two versions of S.1 still being debated: the current bill as amended by Sen. Luke Rankin, and the committee version. While the Rankin-amended version is more egregious than the earlier committee version, both versions perpetuate some form of self-policing. (Although the amended version of S.1 was defeated, the bill may be “reconsidered” – meaning it may come up for a vote again. It is possible that the Senate will vote to amend S.1 back to the committee version, or the version prior to the Rankin amendment being adopted.)

#### *The Rankin Amendment*

- The bill’s amended version creates a joint legislative ethics commission to investigate ethics complaints against lawmakers and their staff.
- The commission would be comprised of two senators, two House members, and five non-legislative members (three appointed by the governor with advice and consent of the General Assembly, and two appointed by the attorney general).
- Ethics complaints against lawmakers could still be filed with the House and Senate Ethics Committees and would then be referred to the Joint Committee. At that point the Joint Committee would conduct an “initial investigation” and then refer its findings back to either the House or Senate Legislative Ethics Committees.
- The legislative ethics committees would retain the power to conduct follow-up hearings and issue the punishments – if any – they feel are appropriate.
- Current law does not put any limitations on the documents that can be released after a determination of probable cause. Both versions of S.1 would specify which documents associated with the investigation are to be released, thereby implying all other documents may be kept secret. Specifically, all documents would be kept secret except the complaint itself, a response by the subject of the complaint, the notice of hearing, the commission’s findings, the final order, and the exhibits introduced at the hearing cited in the final order.
- Both versions of S.1 also redact personal information from exhibits introduced at the hearing prior to their public release. As personal information is undefined this provision could be a serious impediment to the release of information citizens have a right to know.

#### *The committee version*

- The pre-amendment version of the Senate bill reconstitutes the State Ethics Commission into an eight-member commission with four gubernatorial appointments and four legislative