

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Delegate has novel way to slow I-81 traffic

Unmanned state police cars parked along the median could keep drivers alert and deter them from speeding.

By [Michael Sluss](#)

RICHMOND - Del. Ben Cline figures that 10 more state troopers and some cleverly disguised cars could slow lead-footed drivers and make Interstate 81 a less dangerous highway.

Cline, R-Rockbridge County, is sponsoring amendments to the state budget that would put additional troopers on the interstate and enable police to place out-of-service patrol cars in the median to deter speeders.

"I think it's something we can do to affect safety on 81," Cline said. "If we could just get them [drivers] to pay attention, it would go a long way toward making the highway safer."

Cline wants to set aside \$800,000 for hiring and equipping 10 additional troopers for the interstate. He also wants to spend \$100,000 for painting and detailing an undetermined number of old patrol cars to replicate the cruisers now used by the Virginia State Police. The House Appropriations Committee will decide whether to include Cline's requests in its two-year budget plan, which it will release next month.

"They have these cut-throughs in the median every three or four miles," Cline said, as he described possible locations for placing the faux patrol cars.

Cline said he did no research on the benefits and drawbacks of using phony police cars to discourage speeding. When asked what prompted him to suggest placing out-of-service cars in the median, Cline said: "Me driving."

Cline is not the first Western Virginia lawmaker to pursue stopgap safety measures on I-81. The [General Assembly](#) last year passed legislation sponsored by [Sen. John Edwards](#), D-Roanoke, that would allow the state to designate highway segments as "safety corridors" and impose stiff fines for speeding and other violations that occur in those areas. Edwards sponsored the bill with an eye toward having the state designate parts of I-81 as a safety corridor - which it has done.

Cline also wants to see "truck climbing" lanes on steep sections to help separate commercial trucks and other heavy vehicles from faster-moving traffic. He says that separating slow-moving trucks from faster traffic could "also help drivers avoid 'road rage' that sometimes results from angry motorists."

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1. Identify the hyphenated words.

_____ -footed drivers

_____ -of-service patrol cars

_____ -moving cars

_____ -moving trucks

_____ -year budget plan

_____ -throughs

2. Identify the gerunds.

1. _____

6. _____

2. _____

7. _____

3. _____

8. _____

4. _____

9. _____

5. _____

10. _____

3. Identify vocabulary.

“Road Rage”

General Assembly

John Edwards, *D-Roanoke*

4. Questions:

A. Do you drive Interstate 81? Do you think it is dangerous?

B. What is the problem with I-81 according to Delegate Cline?

C. Do you think Delegate Cline’s idea will work? Why or why not?