

**Get the Toolkit: Driving Equity and Secondary Stops**  
*An Act Establishing Secondary Violations*

**What is this bill?**

- Based on recommendations by the Police Accountability and Transparency Task Force and grounded Connecticut-based crash data.
- Designates minor administrative and equipment violations, like an expired registration or a busted headlight, as a secondary traffic violation.
- Prohibits police from engaging in a traffic stop for these violations, but does not prevent the driver from being mailed a ticket for a violation.

**Why do we need to support this bill?**

- Traffic stops are dangerous for all involved and are unnecessary for minor equipment and administrative offenses. In 2021 alone, stops for traffic violations resulted in 117 deaths at the hands of police nationwide.
- The Connecticut Racial Profiling Project analyzed five years of crash data and found that the secondary offenses do not contribute to crashes. For example:
  - Tinted windows accounted for 4,378 traffic stops but contributed to only 0.1% of crashes.
  - A single headlight, tail light, reflector, or broken brake light accounted for 24,000 stops but contributed to 0.1% of crashes.
  - License plate display violations accounted for over 14,000 stops but did not appear to have a significant contribution to crashes.
  - Many administrative violations, like an expired registration or failure to update an address, could not be traced to accidents.
- In Connecticut, traffic stops result in many more searches of Black and brown drivers relative to white drivers.
  - Black drivers are almost twice more likely and Latinx drivers are 1.5 times more likely to be stopped for equipment-related violations compared to white drivers.
  - Black drivers are 1.2 times more likely and Latinx drivers are 1.3 times more likely to be stopped for administrative compared to white drivers.

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**Why do we need to support this bill? (cont.)**

- Traffic stops result in many more searches of Black and brown drivers relative to white drivers, even though searches of drivers of color are much less likely to find criminal activity or contraband.
  - Black people are overrepresented in both stops that do not escalate to enforcement and ones that end in an arrest. Many of these arrests begin with secondary traffic violations.
  - Another study analyzing 4 million traffic stops in California corroborated this, finding that police were twice as likely to search Black people as white people, even though searches of Black people are less likely to yield contraband and evidence than searches of white people.
- Connecticut Racial Profiling Project data also found that when municipalities with high racial disparities in traffic stops shifted their enforcement priorities away from secondary violations and to hazardous driving behaviors, crime and accident rates fell as did racial disparities.
  - For example, in Hartford, defective lighting violations accounted for 40% of traffic stops, but only one of the 1,608 stops made during the year resulted in a DUI charge. Police significantly decreased the defective lighting stops in the following year and racial disparities fell.
- Virginia, Philadelphia, and Pittsburg have passed secondary stop laws, and California, Washington, and others are considering these measures.
- Equipment offenses include: tinted windows; license plate display violations; one broken tail, head, or brake light
- Administrative offenses include: expired registration and license; failure to carry a driver's license; driving with a suspended license; failure to change address

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**What would we like from this bill?**

- To reduce the number of traffic stops conducted by police in Connecticut that disproportionately harm people of color.
- To shrink the responsibilities, scope, and tools of police in Connecticut.
- To target traffic violations that are often crimes of poverty, like failing to fix a busted light or driving an unregistered vehicle.

**What can I do to support this bill?**

- Write or call your representatives and tell them that you support this bill. Find your legislators at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>.
- Submit testimony to the Judiciary Committee in support of the bill during its public hearing in late February to early March.

***You can find all this information and more, including model testimony and a summary of the bill, on our website at <https://www.acluct.org/en/take-action>.***