



3/19/2024

Chair Moller and the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Letter in Support of HF 1832

Dear Chair Moller and Members of the Committee;

Center for Policing Equity, a nonprofit that gathers and analyzes data on public safety systems and uses those data to help communities achieve safer policing outcomes, urges you to advance House File 1832 which would limit the enforcement of non-safety related vehicle equipment violations. Traffic stops are one of the most common interactions that law enforcement has with the public and come with a high risk, especially for Black drivers who are disproportionately stopped and searched by police in Minnesota and across the nation.¹

Limiting the use of pretextual stops can reduce racial disparities in policing, allow law enforcement agencies to make better use of limited resources, and foster more trusting relationships between communities and law enforcement. That is why we're seeing laws like HF 1832 passed across the country- including in Virginia, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Ann Arbor. We are also seeing related policy changes in the Ramsey County police department as well as others like Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. National and state data show that non-safety related infractions like vehicle equipment violations do not have a clear connection to traffic safety.²

After the Ramsey County, Minnesota district attorney ended felony prosecutions that resulted from low-level traffic violations and the local law enforcement leaders limited certain low-level stops, policy-aligned departments saw an 86% reduction in traffic stops

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<https://www.justiceinnovationlab.org/news-and-updates/ramsey-county-reports-on-traffic-stop-policy-2023-0607>;

https://github.com/jnaddeo/job-market-materials/blob/main/working_papers/RCAO_Pretextual_Stops_101023.pdf;

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-11-14/minor-traffic-stops-plummet-in-months-after-lapd-policy-change>

² <https://policingequity.org/traffic-safety/79-factsheet-which-stops-impact-serious-crashes/file>

and a 92% reduction in searches, with little to no change in their contraband yield rate.³ Analysis of stop data from other communities that have limited traffic stops for secondary offenses show that freeing up law enforcement's time to focus on more urgent, serious crimes and taking a targeted approach to crime and road safety rather than a needle in a haystack approach, improves public safety outcomes. For example, after implementing policies to limit certain low-level stops, some agencies have seen an increase in their contraband yield rates and DUI arrests.⁴ This suggests that officers are more effective when they are purposeful in whom they choose to stop and focus their attention on enforcing violations that are more closely connected with roadway safety, like speeding and driving under the influence.⁵

Amendment DE3

We applaud the approach of amendment DE3 which would modernize the vehicle code in order to improve racial disparities in traffic stops and allow law enforcement to focus on the traffic infractions that actually impact safety. This amendment would take HF 1832 a step further by actually cleaning up the vehicle code, including by removing some non-safety related traffic stops entirely. This would limit the confusion and complications that come with a lengthy and outdated vehicle code.

Amendment DE4

We appreciate the creation of a working group by amendment DE4 to develop recommendations on ensuring compliance for registration and taxes of motor vehicles. However, from what we've seen in jurisdictions around the country, working groups of that kind function best with a large community voice. To strengthen amendment DE4, we suggest you add multiple members that are civilians and can represent the voice of the community in the formation of these recommendations.

Diverting law enforcement's time and resources to enforce minor violations is not in line with evidence-led policing and puts community members at risk for unnecessary financial, physical, psychological, and other harms. I urge you to act on the evidence we

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https://github.com/jnaddeo/job-market-materials/blob/main/working_papers/RCAO_Pretexual_Stops_101023.pdf;

<https://www.justiceinnovationlab.org/news-and-updates/ramsey-county-reports-on-traffic-stop-policy-2023-0607>

⁴ <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ripa-draft-report-section-on- pretext-09112023.pdf>;

<https://ctmirror.org/2022/01/30/after-a-poor-start-cts-anti-racial-profiling-effort-is-making-progress>

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<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-11-14/minor-traffic-stops-plummet-in-months-after-lapd-policy-change>

have seen from Minnesota and the rest of the country and advance HF 1832 in support of creating a more equitable and effective public safety system for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Center for Policing Equity