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TESTIMONY ON SB 292
(Motor Vehicles - Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence)

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Carol Stern

My name is Carol Stern and I am a resident of District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda. I provide this testimony **in support of SB 292** as a mother and grandmother.

The Jewish text that shapes my religious and moral conviction that all people and especially juveniles must be treated fairly is the directive issued in Deuteronomy 16:20, "Tzedek, tzedek tirdof - Justice, justice shall you pursue." The Jewish sages explain that the word tzedek is repeated not only for emphasis but to teach us that in our pursuit of justice, our means must be as just as our ends. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote "teach us to respect the integrity of every human soul be it that of a friend or stranger, child or adult." When we are working to reform our justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

Police officers have a longstanding and well-documented history of **stopping drivers of color at significantly higher rates than white drivers**. A national study of nearly **100 million traffic stops** found that **Black drivers were stopped more often than white drivers**, relative to their share of the population. These racial disparities similarly apply to traffic-stop related searches and arrests. These racial disparities contribute to **life-long trauma** for the victims of these stops and an enduring **distrust**.

Additionally, younger and inexperienced drivers are more likely to commit traffic violations and, as a result, are stopped more frequently than older, more experienced drivers. Research shows that men and younger adults, including adolescents, tend to engage in higher levels of risky or unlawful behaviors, which may lead law enforcement officers to scrutinize younger men more closely during traffic stops compared to older individuals or women, regardless of race or ethnicity. This heightened scrutiny, combined with **existing racial disparities in traffic stops**, places **younger Black and Latinx men at an even higher risk of being stopped by police**.

As a mother of two children and a grandmother of three teenagers I understand the importance of the change this bill will provide. The passage of SB 292 will help to end the racial disparities in traffic stops, which disproportionately targets young Black and Latinx men.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 292.