



TESTIMONY TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HB 635 Motor Vehicles - Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters supports a criminal justice system that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages, including policing practices. We support the elimination of systemic bias, including the disproportionate policing and incarceration of marginalized communities. Policing practices should promote safety for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.

HB 635 outlines a comprehensive list of equipment infractions (secondary infractions) that do not pose a threat to drive safety. Traffic stops for non-safety related reasons have been [documented](#) to be more frequent among black 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.

According to a fact sheet put out by the Maryland Public Defenders Office “stops increase the risk of physical, psychological, and economic harm, especially in Black communities. In addition to the social costs inherent in any interaction with the police, the frequency of these stops and their disparate impact on communities of color also compound distrust in government institutions such as police and prosecutor offices, which depend on the public’s cooperation.”

We urge a favorable report on HB 635.