



Testimony of Montgomery County Young Democrats Before House Judiciary Committee in Support of HB 0635–Motor Vehicles - Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence

February 12, 2025

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Montgomery County Young Democrats (MCYD) urge your support for [HB 0635](#), Motor Vehicles - Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence. This bill will designate various low-level traffic infractions as “secondary”, prohibiting officers from stopping drivers for infractions that do not pose a threat to driver safety. It will also require a police officer to document all reasons for the traffic stop on any citation or police report resulting from the traffic stop.

We are deeply concerned about the prevalence of systemic racism in traffic enforcement. In 2021, Montgomery County’s Office of Legislative Oversight issued [a report on traffic enforcement and police interactions in Montgomery County](#). The report found “substantial disparities in police interactions by race and ethnicity” and “that Black and Latino drivers are stopped and searched during traffic violations at disproportionately higher rates than white drivers.” As a result, Black and Latino drivers are more likely to become trapped in the criminal justice system, to be incarcerated, or to be victims of police brutality. In many cases police officers stop drivers even if they are doing nothing wrong—and in some cases, these stops can go horribly wrong and leave someone dead.

The consequences of not taking action on this issue are severe. Non-safety-related traffic 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 [increase distrust in government institutions such as police](#) and prosecutor offices, which depend on the public's cooperation.

Furthermore, one of the common arguments against this bill is that these searches help police curb crime and get guns off the streets. However, data from the Montgomery County Police Department shows that [1 out of every 205 stops](#) yields contraband, weapons, or drugs, which is less than .05 percent. By limiting non-safety-related traffic stops, we could improve road safety and public safety by preserving resources (time and money) and redirecting enforcement toward stopping dangerous driving and solving serious crime.

In conclusion, we strongly support HB 0635, Motor Vehicles - Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence. We thank the sponsors, Delegate N. Scott Phillips and Senator Charles Sydnor, for listening to the community's concerns and bringing this much needed bill forward. We also thank Attorney General Anthony Brown for weighing in and offering his support for the bill "in concept". We urge you to vote in favor of HB 0635 that will help us build safer streets for all.

Please contact us at mocoyoungdems@gmail.com with any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Montgomery County Young Democrats