



DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES
State of Connecticut

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Testimony of the Office of Chief Public Defender
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Judiciary Committee – March 13, 2023
Raised S.B. 1195 – An Act Establishing Secondary Traffic Violations

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports **Raised S.B. 1195 - An Act Establishing Secondary Traffic Violations (LCO 5390)**. The bill would eliminate secondary violations as a primary reason for a traffic stop. Secondary violations include, but are not limited to, defective lighting violations including where a single light is not working, display of a license plate in a front or rear window, tinted windows, and minor windshield obstructions. These secondary violations have a lesser impact on public safety as compared to those violations which constitute primary violations such as speeding, going through a red light or stop sign, and other moving violations.

In Connecticut, racial disparities¹ have been shown to exist in the enforcement of such secondary traffic violations.² Consistent with the need to advance racial justice within the criminal legal system, passage of this bill is necessary. This office urges the Committee to vote favorably on this bill as proposed. Thank you.

¹ The Chief Public Defender is a member of the *CT Racial Profiling Prohibition Advisory Board (CTRP3)*.

² See Memo dated February 4, 2021, from *CT Racial Profiling Prohibition Advisory Board* to the *Logistics Subcommittee, Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force* regarding ***Evaluation and Recommendations of a Primary and Secondary Traffic Offense***:
https://www.cga.ct.gov/jud/tfs/20200116_Police%20Transparency%20and%20Accountability%20Task%20Force/Related%20Materials/Primary%20vs.%20Secondary%20Offense%20System%20Merits.pdf

Mission Statement of the Division of Public Defender Services

Striving to ensure justice and a fair and unbiased system, the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services zealously promotes and protects the rights, liberty and dignity of all clients entrusted to us.

We are committed to holistic representation that recognizes clients as individuals, fosters trust and prevents unnecessary and wrongful convictions.