



## CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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Chairpersons Winfield and Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) represents the interests of all police chiefs in the state. Collectively, the members of the association oversee the operation of over 7,000 law enforcement personnel and close to 100 law enforcement agencies. CPCA would like to offer its comments on the following bill:

### **Senate Bill 1195 “An Act Establishing Secondary Traffic Violations”**

Connecticut’s police officers are sworn to enforce both criminal and motor vehicle laws that are enacted by the General Assembly to keep the citizens of our state safe. To that end, we are concerned that the establishment of a tiered primary and secondary offense system and the removal of certain motor vehicle equipment violations will make our roads less safe. Moreover, motor vehicle equipment violations were written into statute because the General Assembly believed that they were important to traffic safety. There are compelling reasons for officers to enforce many of the offenses that could be categorized as “secondary” under this bill. On the other hand, there are violations that could be revisited and stricken from the Infractions Schedule, making the enforcement of them no longer an issue.

For example, a car without both working headlights at night clearly creates a dangerous situation for the driver, as is the case when an operator does not have working taillights. Both scenarios are also hazardous for other motorists and may be indicative of an impaired operator who just struck an object, causing lights on the vehicle to be out.

It is also important to note that this proposal comes at a time when there is renewed emphasis on traffic safety because of the dramatic increase in fatal and serious injury accidents on

Connecticut's roadways. Since 2019, traffic related deaths continue to increase on Connecticut roads while traffic stops decrease. These changes will not reverse that trend.

Finally, in the testimony from the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy, there were 45,000 lighting stops that were conducted in a year in Connecticut, and of those stops, 95% resulted in a verbal warning. Again, the goal of law enforcement is to ensure safety on our roadways, and officers use discretion when determining the outcome for motorists who have been stopped for equipment violations. CPCA believes that changing any of the listed motor vehicle violations to secondary traffic offenses would result in Connecticut's roads being less safe for the motoring public.