

Traffic Safety Bills – HB 1513 and SB 5572 (note: The SB is in the Transportation committee)

CPC staff requests a Commission discussion and vote on the Commission’s position on these bills. The stated intent of these bills is to reduce biased traffic stops and unnecessary interactions between police and black, brown, and indigenous road users, as well as low-income drivers. In addition to restricting the ability to stop drivers for most non-moving violations, the bill restricts consent searches, improves data collection about stops, and supports a grant program to local communities to assist low-income drivers in resolving nonmoving violations. This is a WCPA priority bill.

Current SPD Policy as per [SPD Directive Number 22-006](#)

Also see: [January 14, 2022 letter to IG Judge](#)

Officers **cannot** conduct a stop as a primary violation for:

- Missing front plate (can stop for missing rear plate)
- License tabs not properly displayed
- Items hanging from rear view mirror or windshield cracks (can stop for full windshield obstruction or shattered windshield)

HB 1513 (Rep. Street)

Officers **cannot** conduct a stop as a primary violation for:

- Any nonmoving violation
- Suspended or revoked license
- Misdemeanor warrant (other than DUI, DV, or civil court order)

Officers can stop for moving violations or a serious equipment failure posing an immediate and serious threat (officers must digitally log or notify dispatch of the specific details of the threat before stopping)

In case of a serious equipment failure stop or a moving violation stop, officers **cannot**

- Request a consent search of operator, passengers, or vehicle
- Question anyone in the vehicle about anything other than the serious equipment failure or moving violation (other than plain sight criminal violations) – i.e. “Do you know why I pulled you over?”

Before engaging in a consent search, officers must obtain written consent and provide a written consent form that includes, among other things, an explicit statement that they will not be punished for declining the search.

For each stop, officers must submit a detailed report with 13 specific items.

The bill also has a vaguely defined grant program to “support local initiatives that provide solution-oriented responses to nonmoving violations for low-income road users.” This could potentially include items like helmet voucher programs, fix-it tickets, repair vouchers, etc. It is unclear how motorists would be informed of their eligibility for the grant program as it would have to occur outside of a traffic stop that identifies the problem.

On Monday, 1/30/2023 the House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry Committee held a public hearing on this bill.

Advocates for the bill, including the Seattle OIG which provided testimony, emphasized that this bill reduces the opportunity for violence arising from traffic stops. Opponents of the bill stated that nonmoving violations (such as license plate display, fenders, enforcing seatbelt laws, and window tinting) can be dangerous. Data shows that most DUIs are initiated from a traffic stop for nonmoving violations., and opponents emphasized that this would make the roads less safe.

Further Reading: [WCPA: It’s Time to Prioritize Traffic Safety for All \(PDF\)](#)