



February 24, 2025

The Honorable Robert Craven Sr., Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 5220- AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY POLICE RELATIONSHIP ACT OF 2015

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we proudly support House Bill 5220, which advances equity and social justice for all Rhode Islanders. Through the ADVOCATE UNITED initiative of our LIVE UNITED 2025 Strategic Plan, we are dedicated to breaking down systemic barriers and championing policies that advance racial, social, and economic justice in every community.

House Bill 5220 is critical to building an inclusive and accountable Rhode Island. By mandating the comprehensive collection and transparent reporting of data on traffic stops, this legislation directly addresses the longstanding disparities in law enforcement practices that disproportionately affect Black, Brown, and other non-white communities. National research from the Stanford Open Policing Project (2019) demonstrates that Black drivers are significantly more likely to be stopped, ticketed, and searched compared to their white counterparts—highlighting systemic inequities that erode public trust and undermine the promise of equal treatment under the law. House Bill 5220’s mandate for comprehensive, disaggregated data collection will provide the evidence necessary to identify these imbalances and guide meaningful reforms that promote transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, ensuring transparency in police engagements is fundamental to fostering community trust and improving public safety. By instituting standardized reporting protocols for traffic stops, House Bill 5220 empowers both law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders with critical data. This evidence-based approach enables policymakers to craft targeted interventions that reduce discriminatory practices, while also aligning with our commitment through the ADVOCATE UNITED initiative to dismantle systemic barriers. In doing so, this legislation not only advances racial and social justice but also reinforces our shared commitment to a more equitable Rhode Island (Stanford Open Policing Project, 2019).

Equity is the foundation of a just society. Supporting House Bill 5220 will help ensure that all Rhode

[Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.](#)

Islanders have a fair, safe, and transparent engagement with local law enforcement. This legislation is vital to creating a more inclusive and just Rhode Island where community safety is prioritized and every individual can thrive. We strongly encourage your support in advancing policies that promote social justice and reform, enhancing both racial equity and public trust in our law enforcement practices.

Sincerely,

Elijah McLean

Manager, Government Relations & Policy

United Way Rhode Island