

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 03/03/2026 02:26 PM

**Council File No:** 20-0875

**Comments for Public Posting:** My name is Oscar Alvarez, and I am a resident of Council District 8 in the City of Los Angeles. I am writing in strong support of Council File 20-0875 to ban pretextual stops and invest in alternative, care-centered approaches to traffic safety. In 2016, when I was 21 years old, I was stopped by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for a broken headlight. While the headlight was cited as the reason for the stop, officers proceeded to search my car. I did not have anything to hide, but I did not consent to having my personal belongings searched. Despite this, my vehicle was held for more than 15 minutes without a clear or valid explanation beyond the minor equipment issue. At the time, I felt powerless. Ten years later, I can say that the experience left me scarred. To this day, I feel anxiety when I see an LAPD vehicle behind me in traffic. I fear being stopped again for a minor issue, being searched without cause, or being confused for someone else and arrested. No resident should have to carry that kind of fear while simply driving in their own city. Unfortunately, my experience is not unique within my own family. Three of my family members have gone through similar traffic stops with LAPD that they describe as traumatic. Each of them has shared that these experiences left them feeling unsafe and distrustful of the very department that is meant to serve and protect them. Pre-textual stops do not build trust, and they do not make communities feel safer. Instead, they create long-lasting emotional harm and deepen the divide between law enforcement and the communities they serve. As a lifelong Angeleno and resident of Council District 8, I respectfully urge you to vote YES on Council File 20-0875 to ban pretextual stops and invest in equitable, community-centered traffic safety solutions that prioritize dignity, fairness, and true public safety. Respectfully, Oscar Alvarez City District 8 Resident

Honorable Members of the Transportation Committee & Ad Hoc Committee on Unarmed Crisis Prevention, Intervention, and Community Services  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File 20-0875: Banning Pretextual Stops & Investing in Traffic Safety Alternatives – SUPPORT

Dear Councilmembers:

My name is Oscar Alvarez, and I am a resident of Council District 8 in the City of Los Angeles. I am writing in strong support of Council File 20-0875 to ban pretextual stops and invest in alternative, care-centered approaches to traffic safety.

In 2016, when I was 21 years old, I was stopped by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for a broken headlight. While the headlight was cited as the reason for the stop, officers proceeded to search my car. I did not have anything to hide, but I did not consent to having my personal belongings searched. Despite this, my vehicle was held for more than 15 minutes without a clear or valid explanation beyond the minor equipment issue.

At the time, I felt powerless. Ten years later, I can say that the experience left me scarred. To this day, I feel anxiety when I see an LAPD vehicle behind me in traffic. I fear being stopped again for a minor issue, being searched without cause, or being confused for someone else and arrested. No resident should have to carry that kind of fear while simply driving in their own city.

Unfortunately, my experience is not unique within my own family. Three of my family members have gone through similar traffic stops with LAPD that they describe as traumatic. Each of them has shared that these experiences left them feeling unsafe and distrustful of the very department that is meant to serve and protect them.

Pretextual stops do not build trust, and they do not make communities feel safer. Instead, they create long-lasting emotional harm and deepen the divide between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

As a lifelong Angeleno and resident of Council District 8, I respectfully urge you to vote YES on Council File 20-0875 to ban pretextual stops and invest in equitable, community-centered traffic safety solutions that prioritize dignity, fairness, and true public safety.

Respectfully,

**Oscar Alvarez**  
***City District 8 Resident***

cc: The Honorable Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Council President

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Chauncey Smith  
**Date Submitted:** 03/03/2026 10:13 PM  
**Council File No:** 20-0875  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Please see attached letter to City Council in support of banning pretextual stops by LAPD.



March 3, 2026

Honorable Members of the Transportation Committee &  
Ad Hoc Committee on Unarmed Crisis Prevention, Intervention, and Community Services  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Council File 20-0875: Banning Pretextual Stops & Investing in Traffic Safety Alternatives - SUPPORT**

Dear Councilmembers:

Catalyst California is proud to support the PUSH LA coalition’s efforts to prevent racial profiling in the City of Los Angeles by banning pretextual stops based on vehicle equipment violations and administrative (i.e., non-moving) violations, and shifting toward equity and care-centered approaches to traffic safety. Catalyst California advocates for racial justice and economic equity by building power and transforming public systems. We partner with communities of color to conduct innovative research, develop policies for actionable change, and shift public dollars toward investments that benefit low-income communities of color.

A pretextual stop typically occurs when an officer uses a minor traffic violation (such as a broken taillight or defective bumper) as the reason to stop a person (i.e., pretext) when the officer’s underlying intention is to investigate for evidence of a more serious offense. Pretextual stops are problematic for numerous reasons:

- **Racial Bias:** A recent [report](#) from Catalyst California shows that in 2025, Black people accounted for 31% of stops for minor traffic violations while only comprising 8% of the city’s population. Latine people were also overrepresented—making up 58% of minor violation stops while accounting for 47% of the city’s population. White people were significantly underrepresented, accounting for only 8% of minor traffic stops while comprising 28% of the city’s population.
- **Harm to Impacted Communities:** Pretextual stops often operate as a form of racial profiling that inflicts severe mental and emotional trauma, extracts wealth through ticket fees and fines, and all too often results in physical harm through uses of force.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Smith et al., “Reimagining Community Safety in California: From Deadly and Expensive Sheriffs to Equity and Care-Centered Wellbeing,” Catalyst California & ACLU SoCal (Oct. 2022), [https://catalyst-ca.cdn.prismic.io/catalyst-ca/126c30a8-852c-416a-b8a7-55a90c77a04e\\_APCA+ACLU+REIMAGINING+COMMUNITY+SAFETY+2022\\_5.pdf](https://catalyst-ca.cdn.prismic.io/catalyst-ca/126c30a8-852c-416a-b8a7-55a90c77a04e_APCA+ACLU+REIMAGINING+COMMUNITY+SAFETY+2022_5.pdf).

- **Ineffectiveness:** Pretextual stops have little to no bearing on traffic safety outcomes. For example, a 2021 study by the National Institute of Health compared over 150 million traffic stops in 33 states to vehicle collision death rates in the same geographic areas. It found that, in aggregate, there was no significant correlation between high stop rates and vehicle collision death rates.<sup>2</sup> Research also [shows](#) that discovery rates (i.e., the rate at which contraband or evidence of a crime is found) during pretextual stops are very low, and that limiting pretextual stops does not lead to increased crime.<sup>3</sup>

In light of these problems, and many others, states and localities throughout the nation—including San Francisco, Philadelphia, Virginia, and Oregon—have recently taken action to significantly curtail the use of pretextual stops. Instead of pretextual stops, communities need greater investments in street design, engineering, and infrastructure (without surveillance) in high-need areas.

For the above reasons, Catalyst California respectfully requests that the Council votes YES to ban pretextual stops and invest in equity and care-centered approaches to traffic safety.

Respectfully,



Chauncey Smith  
Associate Director, Reimagine Justice & Safety

cc: The Honorable Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Council President

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<sup>2</sup> Sarode AL, et al. Traffic stops do not prevent traffic deaths, 9(1) J. Trauma Acute Care Surg. 141-47 (Nat'l Inst. Health July 2021), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34144561/>,

<sup>3</sup> Fliss, M.D., Baumgartner, F., Delamater, P. et al. (2020). Re-prioritizing traffic stops to reduce motor vehicle crash outcomes and racial disparities. *Injury Epidemiology*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-019-0227-6>; Chohlas-Wood, A., Goel, S., Shoemaker, A., & Shroff, R. (2018, November 19). *An Analysis of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department's Traffic Stop Practices*. Stanford Computational Policy Lab. <https://policylab.stanford.edu/media/nashville-traffic-stops.pdf>.