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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 18 H-7003, H-7084, H-7156 AND H-7194,
RELATING TO DRIVERS' EDUCATION
March 27, 2018**

These four bills contain various iterations of the same goal: requiring driver's instruction courses and tests to include information on a driver's responsible conduct and rights during a traffic stop. The ACLU of Rhode Island supports all these efforts, although we believe that the language of H-7194 best encompasses the intended goal and is in keeping with efforts made on the House floor last session to address this issue.

We are all aware of some of the tragedies that have occurred across the country in recent years, particularly among African-American drivers, during routine traffic stops. Providing new drivers information about how they should conduct themselves during such an encounter with law enforcement is therefore both timely and important. However, it is just as important that drivers be furnished with information about the rights they have during these stops.

After all, the interaction during a traffic stop works two ways, and driver education courses should therefore teach students not only what is expected of them, but what they can expect from the officer who has stopped them. That idea underlies the Comprehensive Community-Police Relationship Act that the General Assembly enacted two years ago, and is also inherent in the constitutional rights that drivers and passengers are entitled to during traffic stops.

Passage of legislation like this will do the important job of helping to ensure that drivers are equipped with the knowledge they need to dutifully exercise both their responsibilities *and* their rights during these encounters.

We thank Chair McNamara and Rep. Lombardi for their work on this issue.