



Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches

www.naacp-ct.org

Testimony before the Judiciary Committee

Monday April 4, 2011
10:00 A.M, Room 2C

Officers:

PRESIDENT

Scot X. Esdaile

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Joan H. Gibson

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

Ronald P. Davis

3RD VICE PRESIDENT

Roland Cockfield

TREASURER

Rosa Browne

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Jacquellne D. Owens

SECRETARY

Shiela S. Hayes

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Faith Jackson

Good morning, Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Scot X. Esdaile, President Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches. The NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. I would like to speak in favor of **Senate Bill (SB) 1230 – An Act Concerning Traffic Stop Information** and offer suggestions to help get at the heart of the matter.

African-Americans know all too well the insidious effects of racial profiling. The government should do all it can to prevent police from investigating people based on color. Laws that fail to enforce racial profiling should be scrutinized. Currently the Penn Act does not protect citizens of color from racial profiling.

There are several reasons why the Penn Act needs to be revisited. Police departments throughout Connecticut are not using a standardized traffic stop form. This makes data collection nearly impossible. Currently there is no modern computerized system to analyze the forms. Less than half of the police departments in Connecticut submit reports consistently. African-Americans who believe that they are victims of unwarranted traffic stops cannot contest the actions of officials without fear of reprisals. Traffic stop data are kept by law enforcement and are not analyzed by an independent agency for patterns of racial bias. The state has not invested resources to enforce and maintain traffic stop data. For these reasons and more the Penn Law needs to be amended.

The Connecticut State Conference of the NAACP urges the Judiciary Committee to establish an independent oversight board to monitor and review traffic stop report procedures. This board will have the resources to ensure that traffic stop data is collected and submitted by every law enforcement agency and department in the state on a regular and consistent basis. Failure to do so should deny the offending department funds from the Office of Policy and Management. The oversight board should have the resources to hire an independent entity to carefully examine traffic stop data for patterns of racial profiling and report the findings. Where there are patterns of racial profiling immediate corrective action must take place at the local level, state level or through the US Attorney's Office of Civil Rights. The law must ensure that any act of racial profiling is uncovered and eliminated.

I believe that racial profiling is a form of institutional racism. Left unchecked it will lead to hate crimes. An ineffective racial profiling law will lead to injustices that will continue to perpetuate disparities in the judicial system. The people who expect to be protected by the laws of the state will end up being victims. We demand that you make this law effective by having it address the issues that I have presented. In 2011 we can no longer subject human beings to discrimination and punishment based upon race. It is morally offensive and unconstitutional. Thank you for considering my testimony.

~ 2074 Park Street · Hartford, CT 06106 ~
Office: 860-523-9962 Fax: 860-523-9934
Email: ctnaacp2@sbcglobal.net