

Members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Wilson. I live in Bethel and am a member of The Community Party. I'm speaking in support of S.B. 1230 An Act Concerning Traffic Stop Information.

As you know, Alvin W. Penn was a state senator who was racially profiled. This bill is named for him but the current wording in this law has acted to make it weak and even unenforceable. The Community Party, working on statewide issues, has devoted a large part of energy to addressing the weakness in the language of this bill in an attempt to strengthen this law. Instead the agreed upon strengthening language is for the most part absent in this current bill.

This committee could have had accurate reports years ago, but there has been no due diligence in obtaining the information nor was there a safe place for anyone to report these wrongs because the law you have says we must go to the police departments or the Office of the State's Attorney and offers no other recourse for victims of racial profiling. Had this law been enforceable, the town of East Haven might not be now waiting for the bruising report from the US Department of Justice.

Not any of you have done anything thing at all in order to hold police departments accountable when they refuse to comply with the law. What would the more than 80% of police departments who do not even try to file reports do if their state funding was cut for their failure to comply with the law? Seriously, what type of example are they or you setting for the rest of the citizens of this state? We have a law that is on the books whereby the commission in charge of compiling the information instead speaks to the lack of funding available to them. In fact there is no autonomy because they are dependent on this body in order to remain in tact. I guess this explains their requests that you do the right thing instead of a righteous demand that you make this law enforceable and hold the perpetrators accountable.

The Community Party has been a part of the discussions of this amendment for some time and it was agreed by all sitting at that table (including the commissions you have appointed):

1. The law needed to be strengthened.
2. In order to really strengthen the law- an entity independent of law enforcement investigate racial profiling complaints.
3. That an oversight committee including at least two community stakeholders be established
4. In addition, the driver be given a traffic stop receipt which will provide a record of all traffic stops and provide citizens who believe that they have been profiled with a form of recourse which can be anonymous so as to protect the citizen.

The above recommendations would provide this state with the checks and balances needed to insure that the police departments who do comply are handing in accurate reports with regard to the race of the driver and that the driver has recourse available to them which does not force them to make a complaint with the risk of retaliation.

If you continue to ignore these 4 statements you might as well delete this law.