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People of Connecticut,

I'm David Samuels, the founder of the Community Party. We're a statewide group of activists dedicated to addressing criminal justice reform and economic justice issues. I know that people who get all of their news from the mainstream media don't know this, but we were the first group to start working on the Alvin W. Penn Act two years ago after I was racially profiled in Bloomfield. Unfortunately the Penn Act has become just another political football, especially since the East Haven police scandal made the issue of racial profiling in Connecticut national news. Elected officials, State Capitol bureaucrats and so called activists have been knocking each other over trying to get a piece of this issue, as they attempt to produce a bill which will be palatable to the police and conservative legislators. Assemblymen Gary Holder-Winfield and Matt Ritter are the only ones who have acknowledged the Community Party publicly since the public hearing on our racial profiling bill 11 months ago. Our bill has the strongest enforcement provisions of any profiling legislation, state or federal. The bill language is posted in The Notes section of our Facebook page, Stop Racial Profiling - Obey the Law!

The fatal flaw of the Penn Act is that the citizen is excluded from the traffic stop data collection process. We're calling for all motorists who are stopped by the police to receive a receipt of the stop. This receipt will include important information like the patrol officer's identifying information - specifically their name and badge number, which will be vital to those who want to file a confidential racial profiling complaint. Law enforcement expert Andrew Crumbie, a former state trooper, told us that a traffic stop where the motorist does not receive a ticket is the most blatant form of profiling. Don't believe the lie being told by the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and dutifully spread by their mouthpiece CT News Junkie about this language requiring that printers be installed in police cruisers. Our bill calls for the traffic stop demographic data form that cops are already required to fill out be issued in duplicate, with a copy being given to the driver. All that the state would have to do is spring for carbon paper. Our legislation also protects people of color from being harassed about their immigration status and provides protection to religious minorities.

Finally, we want a Penn Act / racial profiling oversight committee with at least two community stakeholders to be established in order to address the layered issue of racial profiling. Traffic stops are only one tool of racially biased policing. We will need all of the public support we can get as the Capitol cast of characters have been working to marginalize our group. Last year we received a nice pat on the head from Senator Coleman during the public hearing for our legislation. After the bill made it to the Senate floor and was mysteriously sent back to the Planning and Development Committee where it was killed, we couldn't get the Senator on the phone. A few weeks ago he cancelled a meeting on us with about an hour notice and still hasn't explained why. Apparently folks at the Capitol aren't crazy about an upstart group getting the credit for being the agents of reforming a law which should have been fixed years ago. We're not in pursuit of glory - our only agenda is to pass the strongest racial profiling bill possible. My question to Senator Coleman is, which side are you on?