

**Commission on Human Rights
and Opportunities**

Memo

To: Judiciary Committee
From: Robert J. Brothers, Jr., Executive Director
Date: March 12, 2012
Re: **SB 364, AN ACT CONCERNING TRAFFIC STOP INFORMATION**

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities **SUPPORTS** SB 364.

We agree with Governor Malloy, the African American Affairs Commission, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission among the many advocates favoring the strengthening of the Alvin Penn Act.

More than ten years ago CHRO was involved in a complaint regarding the Avon Police Department. In conducting the investigation the Commission counsel was provided with many boxes of traffic stops and related data. The problem was that a lot of the information was missing and there was no way to assess whether alleged traffic profiling was taking place. This example is from many years ago and should not be used to represent the current status of the Avon Police Department.

The point being is that in collecting data there must be standards, which this bill proposes, but the implementation of the program must solicit meaningful data that can lead to conclusions that can be acted on. Merely finding that certain groups are pulled over or ticketed absent an understanding of why is of little help. For instance it may not be a leap to find that new immigrants to Connecticut drive older cars which may have more mechanical problems and therefore create more reasons for a police pullover.

All we are saying in this regard is that it would be best to collect abundant information, or information in a way that could provide for cross tabulation of data for a full picture to emerge. Because we believe this is essential we would recommend that the inclusion of "within available funding" be deleted from subsection (i) or we will be in the position of continuing the exact problem that has plagued this law. Collecting data without analysis is of no real value.

The other point we would like to make is that there should be consequences when racial profiling is identified. Though this bill provides for a penalty for noncompliance with the reporting of data it does not provide for a penalty or means of correction for departments that are guilty of profiling.