



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

365 Silas Deane Highway-Suite 1A, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109
(860) 757-3909 Fax: (860) 529-4265
www.cpcanet.org

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Judiciary, March 20, 2015 **Chief Douglas S. Fuchs,** **Redding Police Department & Connecticut Police Chiefs Association** **Bills 5437**

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and distinguished members of the Committee, I am here today to testify in regards to Bill 5437 – An Act Concerning Review of Traffic Stop Complaints and the Collection of Traffic Stop Information also referred to as Racial Profiling Legislation.

Good Morning. My name is Douglas Fuchs and I am the Chief of Police for the Town of Redding, a Past President of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and a charter member of the Connecticut Racial Profiling Advisory Board.

As a member of the Racial Profiling Advisory Board I have the benefit of being one who helped craft and/or request the current revisions to the bill as it is enacted today. I have historical knowledge of why certain choices and requests were made. Every aspect of the current version of this legislation was debated, discussed and was ultimately agreed upon by the Advisory Board. Most importantly, we have produced a product which works for all involved.

We have crafted a system that provides for the collection of data elements which were deemed necessary and relevant while not creating a mandate that would be overly burdensome on the officer who has been tasked with its collection, the system into which the data will be entered, and upon those who have been tasked with its storage.

Proposed language in Committee Bill 5437 would require an officer who makes a motor vehicle stop to not only continue to give the motorist an advisory which informs them of their right to file a complaint, (as is currently the law and the practice) but would require that officer to provide the motorist with a copy of the data points which this officer is going to submit to the State. The Advisory Board had debated this very point and made a conscious decision to not require this for a multitude of reasons, the top two of which both revolve around the duration of the traffic stop.

By mandating that the officer enters all of their traffic stop data and provides a copy to the motorist during the traffic stop will only serve to significantly lengthen the duration of the encounter. This additional exchange would also encourage the motorist to engage the officer in a conversation regarding these data points. As law enforcement and as an Advisory Board we sought to keep the duration of the traffic stop and any associated roadside conversations to a minimum and this additional burden would not be in keeping with that spirit. It actually was the hope that the burden of presenting motorists with their advisory would shift from the police officer on the side of the road to a more standardized method thru the Motor Vehicle Department and by being embedded on the back of a summons, infraction or warning ticket. I would also encourage this committee to continue the practice of encouraging any complaint regarding the performance of one of our officers to come first to the police department whose responsibility it is to supervise that officer. We have a process to receive and investigate any allegation and would request that this process be followed prior to engaging an outside agency.

As police administrators we have placed a great focus on ensuring that our officers, who I feel compelled to add, are 99.9% of the time out there doing the right thing for the right reasons, treating our citizens with respect, and walking the line between civility and incivility, that our officers are properly collecting traffic stop data on the 700,000 plus stops annually, and ensuring that our data is correctly reported to OPM. We care deeply about how our residents feel they are policed. I would request that any change to this legislation first be properly vetted thru the Racial Profiling Committee and that every effort be made to find an alternative way to disseminate any advisory to motorists while assisting us in keeping the duration of a traffic stop to an absolute minimum.