
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 953

AN ACT CONCERNING RACIAL PROFILING.

SUMMARY

The law prohibits members of the State Police, municipal police departments, and any other law enforcement agency from engaging in racial profiling. Under current law, “racial profiling” is the detention, interdiction, or other disparate treatment of anyone solely based on their racial or ethnic status.

The bill broadens this law’s applicability by generally prohibiting police officers from doing these actions based in whole or in part, rather than solely, on the person’s racial or ethnic status. It also specifies that the determination is based on the person’s perceived racial or ethnic status.

The bill creates an exception by allowing police officers to take these actions when the perceived racial or ethnic status is used in combination with other information when the officer is seeking to apprehend a specific suspect whose racial or ethnic status is part of the suspect’s description.

It also makes technical and conforming changes in line with the new definition, including conforming changes in the laws governing police traffic stops.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

TRAFFIC STOP POLICY

Existing law requires police departments (including the State Police, municipal police, and other departments with authority to conduct traffic stops) to adopt a written policy prohibiting certain police actions during traffic stops if those actions are based on race, color, ethnicity,

age, gender, or sexual orientation. The bill requires departments' policies to prohibit these actions motivated, in part or in whole, on any of these attributes, with a similar exception as noted above for efforts to apprehend a specific suspect who matches the description.

In addition to making conforming changes in this policy requirement, the bill also removes the provision that requires the policy to consider any violation of this traffic stop policy to be a civil rights violation.

The bill also makes related conforming changes to the Office of Policy and Management's required standardized method for recording traffic stop information.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sHB 6888, favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee, makes similar changes to the definition of "racial profiling" (§ 7) and to requirements for traffic stop policies (and extends these requirements to pedestrian stops) (§ 8).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/30/2023)