



AMERICA'S JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE

Legislative Advocacy Day

September 16, 2015

ALABAMA
GEORGIA
SOUTH CAROLINA
NORTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA
WASHINGTON, DC

Support the *End Racial Profiling Act* (S. 1056 / H.R. 1933)

- We need this important legislation which takes concrete steps to put an end to the insidious practice of profiling by law enforcement at all levels
- As painfully and more publically discussed in recent months, profiling is a serious problem in the United States, and can lead to deadly consequences.
- It is difficult for our faith in the American judicial system not to be challenged when we cannot walk down the street, drive down an interstate, go through an airport, or even enter into our own homes without being stopped merely because of who we are or who we are perceived to be.
- The “*End Racial Profiling Act*” not only clearly defines this insidious practice, but it also prohibits profiling and collects data to fully assess the extent of the problem. It also provides training and other incentives for states and local governments to actively pursue policies to eliminate it and the legislation punishes those in law enforcement who continue to use it.

We urge you to support and be a co-sponsor of H.R. 1933 / S. 1056, the “*End Racial Profiling Act*”. This important legislation takes concrete steps to put an end to the insidious practice of racial profiling at the federal, state and local levels.

As painfully and more publically discussed in recent months, profiling is a serious problem in the United States, and can lead to deadly consequences. It is difficult for our faith in the American judicial system not to be challenged when we cannot walk down the street, drive down an interstate, go through an airport, or even enter into our own homes without being stopped merely because of who we are or who we are perceived to be. Training law enforcement officers how to more efficiently carry out the essential policing without avoid using this counter-productive procedure will not only help our nation’s criminal justice system at all levels, but it will trickle down to other groups as well, such as neighborhood watch organizations and citizens’ community groups, which often model themselves after their local police and which have taken on additional responsibilities in light of the budget cuts being faced by almost every locality and jurisdiction.

The majority of law enforcement officers are hard working men and women, whose concern for the safety of those they are charged with protecting is often paramount, even when their own safety is on the line. However, if and when even one of their colleagues engages in the practice of profiling, whether it be conscious or subconscious, the trust of the entire community can be, and will be, lost. Law enforcement agents should not endorse or act upon stereotypes, attitudes, or beliefs that a person’s race, ethnicity, appearance, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or national origin increases that person’s general propensity to act unlawfully.

We hope that you will be a co-sponsor of and support this legislation and that you will help address the very serious problem of racial profiling. Please let us know what you intend to do, and what we can do to help you in this fight. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

(name #1)

(address #1)

(name #2)

(address #2)

(name #3)

(address #3)

(name #4)

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(name #5)

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Support the *Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act* (H.R. 2875)

- Police misconduct, the lack of law enforcement accountability to the communities they serve, and the fact that there are no national, uniform, use-of-force standards for law enforcement officers or agencies, are problems that affect every sector of our country and imperils the continued security of our nation.
- The *Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act* provides incentives for local police organizations to adopt performance-based standards to ensure that incidents of misconduct will be minimized through appropriate management, training and oversight protocols and that if such incidents do occur, that they will be properly investigated.
- We are currently faced with a hodge-podge of policies in the use-of-force when apprehending a suspect, and the result can be lead to an uneven reputation of law enforcement, not to mention the needless injury or death of a suspect.
- In order for the criminal justice system in America to work, we must act now to build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

We are deeply concerned about the lack of standardized, uniform, use-of-force standards for law enforcement. Police misconduct, the lack of law enforcement accountability to the communities they serve, and the fact that there are no national, uniform, use-of-force standards for law enforcement officers or agencies, are problems that affect every sector of our country and imperils the continued security of our nation. The fact that actions which may not be accepted or practiced in one community are regularly used in another can lead to a mistrust of law enforcement by the people they are hired to protect and serve.

The *Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act*, H.R. 2875, provides incentives for local police organizations to adopt performance-based standards to ensure that incidents of misconduct will be minimized through appropriate management, training and oversight protocols and that if such incidents do occur, that they will be properly investigated. Good training can enable the officer to react properly to the threat or possible threat and respond with the appropriate tactics to address the situation, possibly including some level of force, if necessary, given the circumstances.

This vital legislation is important for us to restore the faith and trust that is so essential to effective law enforcement. We are currently faced with a hodge-podge of policies in the use-of-force when apprehending a suspect, and the result can be lead to an uneven reputation of law enforcement, not to mention the needless injury or death of a suspect. In order for the criminal justice system in America to work, we must act now to build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Thank you in advance for your attention to his crucial issue. We look forward to hearing of your work on this issue and to your letting us know what more I can do to advance this issue.

Sincerely,

(name #1)

(address #1)

(name #2)

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Support the expansion of video surveillance of law enforcement activities which includes protection of civil rights and civil liberties (H.R. 1124)

- Mobile cameras operated by law enforcement may play a valuable role in the present and future of policing, but if put into place without appropriate civil rights and civil liberties safeguards they can also be used to intensify disproportionate surveillance and enforcement in heavily policed racial and ethnic minority communities.
 - Without carefully crafted policy safeguards in place, there is a real risk that these new devices could become instruments of injustice, rather than tools for accountability.
- Police-operated cameras are no substitute for broader reforms of policing practices.
- Funding for video surveillance of law enforcement activities, whether it be for body cams, gun cams, taser cams, or dashboard cams, should come with a requirement policies are enacted to protect civil liberties.

We strongly urge you to support the inclusion of civil rights and civil liberties' protections by local jurisdictions who are seeking funding for the purchase of video surveillance equipment, such as body cam, gun cams, taser cams, or dash cams. Mobile cameras operated by law enforcement may play a valuable role in the present and future of policing, but if put into place without appropriate safeguards they can also be used to intensify disproportionate surveillance and enforcement in heavily policed racial and ethnic minority communities. Without carefully crafted policy safeguards in place, there is a potential for no civil rights and civil liberties accountability.

Specific protections include:

- **The development of camera policies in public** with the input of civil rights and civil liberties advocates and the local community. Current policies must always be publicly available, and any policy changes must also be made in consultation with the community;
- **A commitment to a set of narrow and well-defined purposes** for which cameras and their footage may be used. In particular, facial recognition and other biometric technologies must be carefully limited;
- **The agency must specify clear operational policies for recording, retention, and access**, and enforce strict disciplinary protocols for policy violations;
- **Law enforcement agencies must make footage available to promote accountability** with appropriate privacy safeguards in place; and
- **Agencies must preserve the independent evidentiary value of officer reports** by prohibiting officers from viewing footage before filing their reports.

Police-operated cameras are no substitute for broader reforms of policing practices. They can, however, when used properly provide us with a valuable tool to increase accountability. We therefore again, urge you in the strongest terms possible, to support extra funding for law enforcement agencies to acquire and implement video surveillance equipment once they have the appropriate safeguards in place for its use.

Thank you in advance for your attention to my concerns; we look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible to learn what you are doing to promote law enforcement accountability. We also look forward to any suggestions you may have as to what we can do to help you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

(name #1)

(address #1)

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Reauthorize and strengthen the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (S. 1169)

- While African American youths are but 16% of the population, they are 28% of juvenile arrests, 37% of the youth in juvenile incarceration facilities and 58% of the youth sent to adult prisons.
- For more than 40 years, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) has helped states build systems that protected kids, promoted public safety, and promoted a decrease in Disproportionate Minority Contact.
- The JJDP A also sets forth federal standards to ensure a minimum level of safety and equitable treatment for youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.
- A strong reauthorization of the JJDP A will help at-risk children receive the interventions that they need to ensure that they are able to spend their childhood in the classroom instead of the courtroom.
- S, 1169, a bill to reauthorize and strengthen the JJDP A, passed the Senate Judiciary Committee on 7/23/2015 with unanimous bi-partisan support.

We strongly support S. 1169, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act reauthorization. It is not an exaggeration to say that lives depend on this reauthorization, and I am gratified to see that it has strong bipartisan support. We were pleased to see it pass the Senate Judiciary Committee, by unanimous, bipartisan support, on 7/23/15.

Over a decade of research and stories have confirmed what we already know - the treatment of juvenile offenders is a national issue that requires strong safeguards and protections. For more than 40 years, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) has helped states build systems that protected kids and promoted public safety. Yet tragically, this key tool in the fight for the future of our children has not been reauthorized since 2002. The continuing success of effective juvenile crime prevention and deterrence depends on Congress strengthening the provisions of the JJDP and providing the resources needed for states and localities to implement the law and related programs.

S. 1169 offers a balanced approach by maintaining existing protections and programs; authorizing funding for the law for five years; taking affirmative steps to improve the treatment of youth under by bolstering its core protections; improving conditions for detained juveniles; incorporating new science on adolescent development; and increasing accountability and oversight in administering the law. Furthermore, the NAACP applauds provisions contained in S. 1169 to ensure the continuity of young people's education while incarcerated; it will help at-risk children receive the interventions that they need to ensure that they are able to spend their childhood in the classroom instead of the courtroom. Furthermore, given that African American youth are but 16% of the population, they are 28% of juvenile arrests, 37% of the youth in juvenile incarceration facilities and 58% of the youth sent to adult prisons, we also strongly support the provisions giving clear direction to states and localities on how to reduce racial and ethnic disparities among incarcerated youth.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter: we look forward to hearing from you in the near future to know what you are doing to help our most vulnerable youth and what we can do to help.

Sincerely,

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