



## What Research Shows: Racial Profiling Still a Concern in New Jersey and Nation

Our country promises a government that treats all people equally. In the criminal justice system, that fairness can mean the difference between life and death. However, racial profiling -- a practice where police officers treat people as suspects because of their race, nationality or religion -- continues in New Jersey and across the United States.

### **Racial Profiling Nationwide**

Every U.S. Department of Justice report on police-public interactions since 1999 has shown clear disparities in the rates that police search, arrest and use force against different racial and ethnic groups. In 2007, a Justice Department report found that African Americans were 300 percent more likely than whites to be searched when stopped; Latinos were 244 percent more likely. Whites, on the other hand, were 50 percent more likely to receive a warning rather than a ticket.

The U.S. Department of Transportation received so many complaints of airport profiling after September 11 that it set up a system to specifically handle complaints about airport security checks. Government agencies -- including the Department of Justice and the United States Commission on Civil Rights -- have denounced racial profiling as ineffective and discriminatory.

Racial profiling undermines confidence in police and alienates communities, keeping them from seeking help. It makes us all less safe by diverting limited police resources to target the innocent.

### **Racial Profiling in New Jersey**

New Jersey has some of the highest scrutiny of racial profiling policies. In 1999, after two white troopers shot three unarmed African American men, New Jersey entered into a consent decree to let federal monitors oversee reforms to end racial profiling. Despite years of federal oversight, disparities still exist along racial lines in police stops on the southern end of the New Jersey Turnpike. Hundreds of local police departments are not always held accountable, partly because, unlike 43 other states, police officers in the state are not required to be licensed.

### **How New Jersey Needs to Combat Profiling**

The federal government has recommended ending the 1999 consent decree monitoring the New Jersey State Police. If federal monitoring ends, New Jersey still needs strong systems of external police oversight through an external auditor or independent state oversight office.

Citizens also need to have their say. Any monitoring system must be independent from other state agencies, have sufficient authority to actually do its job and have enough resources to make an impact. Any state oversight systems put in place should also include local departments, which are also susceptible to using discriminatory practices.

### **For more information about Racial Profiling or the Racial Justice Project, please contact:**

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