



## **From one to 4,800,000: ACLU-NJ Petition to the U.S. Department of Justice, by the Numbers**

On September 9, 2010, the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey (ACLU-NJ) petitioned the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to investigate the lawless Newark Police Department (NPD). An amended petition was filed on October 22, 2010 with updated information and statistics. The petition covers incidents and settlements from January 1, 2008 until July 1, 2010.

- **1** – The number of serious Internal Affairs complaints upheld by Newark out of 261 filed in calendar years 2008 and 2009. The one sustained complaint alleged an improper search.
- **2.5** – The number of years covered by the ACLU-NJ's petition
- **7.7** – The factor by which Newark's 2009 murder rate is higher than New Jersey's rate
- **26** – The number of police departments the DOJ has formally investigated, entered into settlement agreements or filed lawsuits since it was granted power to do so in 1994
- **42** – The number of settled lawsuits against the NPD documented in the ACLU-NJ's petition
- **43** – The number of years that spanned between the ACLU-NJ's first appeal for federal intervention of the troubled NPD in 1967 and its current appeal.
- **44** – The number of lawsuits in the ACLU-NJ's petition that were filed by citizens against the NPD alleging beatings, false arrests, death, theft, retaliation and other forms of intentional misconduct or negligence by police
- **64** – The total number of lawsuits filed against the NPD documented in the ACLU-NJ's petition
- **186** - The number of Internal Affairs cases that the NPD dropped from its Internal Affairs statistics between 2008 and 2009, providing the public with no information about the complaint outcomes, if any.
- **418** – The number of serious police abuse complaints documented in the ACLU-NJ's petition
- **\$4,800,000** – The minimum amount of dollars Newark paid out to settle lawsuits, including 13 claims of false arrests, 11 excessive force complaints and seven internal affairs improprieties.
- **Priceless** – There is no way to quantify the price we all pay when the bond of trust unravels between a police department and the community it has sworn to protect and serve.

### **But the numbers only tell part of the story: Behind the numbers you find people...**

- In April 2006, Mary Cheeseboro and her family were at a barbeque when she saw police officers stop a car and assault its juvenile occupants. When she asked police to stop the assault, they handcuffed her, threw her daughters on the ground, maced them and charged one with obstruction of justice. The officers said they would release her if she did not file an Internal Affairs complaint. Cheeseboro filed suit and settled with the city in 2010.
- In October 2006, Warren Lee was confronted by two officers, who suspected the presence of illegal drugs. The stop escalated and the officers became violent, viciously beating and punching Lee. Although Lee showed signs of medical distress, the officers did not assist him or call an ambulance. Lee died. His father sued the city and the wrongful death claim was settled in 2009.
- On July 17, 2007, two officers approached a juvenile and ordered him to admit involvement in a crime. When he refused, they threatened to throw him over a bridge. His lawsuit is pending.

The full petition and supplement are available at: <http://www.aclu-nj.org/theissues/policepractices/apetitionforjusticeinthene/>