

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITIZEN COMPLAINT REVIEW BOARD

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*To Mayor Anthony A. Williams, the Council of the District of Columbia
and the Metropolitan Police Department*

RACIAL PROFILING IN WASHINGTON, DC

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INTRODUCTION

The Citizen Complaint Review Board (CCRB) was established by the District Council and the Mayor in 1999 to identify misconduct in the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and make recommendations to end those practices. Since opening its doors to the public one year ago, the Board and the agency overseen by it, the Office of Citizen Complaint Review (OCCR), have heard numerous complaints of discrimination by MPD officers in stopping, searching and ticketing motorists. Whether real or imagined, such practices of racial profiling need to be addressed. After extensive research, interviews with stakeholders throughout the District and the country and a review of complaints that have reached the OCCR, the CCRB has adopted the following recommendations to address racial profiling in Washington, DC. A separate report accompanies these recommendations.

1. Collect data on traffic stops.

To determine if and to what extent racial profiling exists in the District, the MPD should collect information on traffic stops. As addressed in the accompanying report, the department should keep records of the time, date and location of the stop, the race, gender, age and residency of the motorist, the Patrol Service Area (PSA) of the officer, the reason for the stop, whether a search was conducted and what was found. Statistics on police practices will ease community concerns and help pinpoint practices that need to be corrected.

2. Implement a simple and inexpensive paper-based system of data collection.

The low cost and efficiency of a paper-based system will put a minimal strain on already limited resources. Moreover, a paper-based system allows for safeguards to be put in place to ensure that the data gathered are as accurate and complete as possible. The data collection cards should be numbered and the information stored electronically by data collection card number. Control numbers will allow data analysts to determine whether all data collection cards issued to officers have been returned. Though we are hopeful that the vast majority of MPD officers will complete the cards when making traffic stops, no jurisdiction in the country claims to have achieved 100 percent compliance. If dispatchers total the number of traffic stops called in by officers, the number of total stops can be compared to the number of cards returned. In addition, numbering the data collection cards and storing the information will enable MPD officials to make random quality checks and assess whether the information is being accurately entered.

The data collection cards should have an attached carbon copy, which can be provided to the driver during the stop. The carbon of each card should have a notation on it informing the citizen that the information contained on the card is being collected in connection with a study of vehicle stops in the District of Columbia. The citizen should be encouraged to review the information contained on the carbon copy, and a telephone number should be provided to permit the individual to call in the correct information.

This feature will assist the MPD in measuring the accuracy of the information recorded on the data collection cards.

A possible model for a paper-based card, entitled "Model Data Card," is attached to these recommendations.

3. Ensure the statistical reliability of the data by including experts on data collection and analysis, chosen by community groups, civil liberties organizations, the OCCR and the MPD.

The analysts or academic partner selected must be able to interpret statistics in social contexts and must understand how the District of Columbia's unique characteristics may affect data. But simply hiring an outside partner is not enough. All interested stakeholders must be included in the selection process in order to dispel possible notions that the expert is influenced only by the MPD. The expert will help refine the external and internal comparative benchmarks necessary to interpret the data, as discussed in the accompanying report.

4. Implement officer education and training on laws against racially biased policing.

Collecting traffic stop data may deter racial profiling. But this alone will not eliminate the practice. Officers need to be trained on what constitutes bias in policing and how to apply the ban on racial profiling to real life situations. With the proper education and training, the MPD can enforce the laws by protecting the civil rights and liberties that the practice of racial profiling disregards.

5. Adopt a racial profiling policy and data collection system by June 1, 2002.

The MPD should have the latitude to adopt a data collection process that complies substantially with the guidelines set forth above. The department has indicated that data collection will not begin until September 2002. While hiring a contractor to assist with its racial profiling project is a good first step, the MPD's proposal is too vague and its plan to begin collecting data is too far away. Real steps to address racial profiling should start to be implemented as soon as possible.

MODEL DATA CARD

CARD NO: _____

1. **DATE:** _____

2. **TIME:** _____

3. **PATROL SERVICE AREA (PSA):** _____

4. **RACE:** AFRICAN AMERICAN WHITE LATINO
 ASIAN MIDDLE EASTERN OTHER

5. **GENDER:** MALE FEMALE

6. **LICENSE PLATE:** DC MD VA OTHER

7. **DRIVER'S LICENSE:** DC MD VA OTHER

8. **YEAR OF BIRTH:** _____

9. **PRIMARY REASON FOR STOP:**

MOVING/ TRAFFIC VIOLATION
EQUIPMENT VIOLATION
SUSPECT WANTED/ BE ON THE LOOKOUT
INVESTIGATIVE STOP/SUSPICION
OTHER _____

10. **SEARCH CONDUCTED:** YES NO

11. **CONSENT TO SEARCH REQUESTED:** YES NO

12. **AREA SEARCHED: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

DRIVER
VEHICLE
PASSENGER(S)
PERSONAL EFFECTS

13. **CONTRABAND FOUND:** YES NO

14. **DISPOSITION: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

VERBAL WARNING
WRITTEN WARNING
NOTICE OF INFRACTION
ARREST BY WARRANT
ARREST
NO ACTION