

Media Advisory

February 23, 2005

For more information contact:

Drew Dupuy
512-441-8123 ext. 110 (w), 512-619-1418 (m)
ddupuy@criminaljusticecoalition.org

New Report is Largest-Ever Study of Racial Profiling

Released at Press Conference Thursday, February 24

(Austin, TX) A new study that will be **released at a press conference on Thursday, February 24th, 2005**, compiles data from more than 1,000 local racial profiling reports submitted by Texas law enforcement agencies. **Don't Mind if I Take a Look, Do Ya? An Examination of Consent Searches and Hit Rates at Texas Traffic Stops** is the largest-ever study conducted anywhere on such discriminatory police practices, based on data representing an overwhelming majority of traffic stops and searches in Texas.

The report examines which racial groups are most likely to be targeted by police for searches, and analyzes contraband discoveries during those searches. Specifically, the report focuses on "consent searches," which are conducted when an officer has no legal authority to search (he lacks probable cause, he's not arresting someone, etc.), but asks for permission to search based on his own discretion. This report also examines the fruitfulness of searches by analyzing "hit rates" (a measure of how many searches resulted in contraband being discovered for each particular race).

The report was produced by Dwight Steward of the Steward Research Group and Molly Totman for the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas (ACLU), the League of United Latin American Citizens of Texas (LULAC), and the Texas State Conference of NAACP Branches.

A press conference accompanying the report's release will be held at 11:00 am on Thursday, February 24th, in the Lieutenant Governor's Press Room, just outside of Senate Chambers. Speakers will include State Senator Royce West (D-Dallas), Rep. Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston), Will Harrell, Executive Director of the ACLU of Texas, Gary Bledsoe, State President of the NAACP, and the authors of the report.

A press release detailing the report's findings will be distributed just prior to the conference. The full report and additional material will be available on Thursday at the press conference and online on at www.criminaljusticecoalition.org.

What: Release of "Don't Mind if I Take a Look, Do Ya?" *An Examination of Consent Searches and Hit Rates at Texas Traffic Stops* Press Conference

When: 11:00 am, Thursday, February 24, 2005

Where: Lieutenant Governor's Press Room (outside Senate Chambers), State Capitol, Austin