

# Legislation to Improve Data Collection About Police Encounters

Because we can't manage what we don't measure.

It's time for a comprehensive approach to help law enforcement better understand and fix racial disparities in police-civilian encounters. Collecting and analyzing data – as a routine, consistent, accepted professional practice – can provide the necessary foundation for other best practices, fair treatment, and effective policing.

## Lawmakers have filed 3 important bills to:

- Prohibit racial and other profiling. Profiling is unfair, ineffective, and violates our most basic principles of equality for every individual. Massachusetts law should clearly state that profiling is illegal.
- Make data collection about police-civilian encounters routine and uniform statewide.
- Ensure that collected data is independently analyzed on a regular basis.
- Give police departments the information they need to identify and fix problems to guarantee fair treatment of all residents.
- Simplify data collection and analysis with the use of technology.
- Direct police to give receipts to individuals who are stopped, so they have a record of the encounter.
- Improve police-community relations by improving transparency.



## **Relative to Traffic Stop Data**

Rep. Byron Rushing (H.1575) & Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry (S.829)

Drivers should be stopped for traffic violations and dangerous behavior on the road, not because of their race or gender. In 2000, the legislature affirmed this principle by passing a special law, Chapter 228 of the Acts of 2000, which required state and local police to collect data on traffic stops in the Commonwealth for a 27-month period to begin to identify and eliminate race and gender bias. The result? The data showed that racial disparities were very common, with more than 2/3 of the state's law enforcement agencies issuing citations to – or searching – non-white motorists at disproportionate rates. Unfortunately, the law no longer requires such data collection, so it is impossible for departments to adequately understand and address these issues today. It's time to make the collection of traffic stop data routine and uniform, so police departments can identify and address disparities.

## **Relative to Pedestrian Stop Data**

Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry (S.1263)

Safe and healthy communities depend on strong relationships between police officers and local residents. Residents must know they can turn to police for help and must have confidence that officers will treat them fairly and equally. That's why it's critical to make sure that police encounters with people on the street are evenhanded. Unfortunately, in many communities, people of color perceive that they receive undue negative attention from law enforcement, making them wary. Indeed, recent studies have confirmed that black residents are disproportionately stopped by the police, even when other factors, such as neighborhood crime rates, prior arrest records, and gang affiliations were accounted for. Thankfully, some cities collect the data that allow such disparities to come to light and be addressed, but little is known about police-civilian street encounters in other jurisdictions. It's time to collect and analyze pedestrian stop data statewide to inform best practices and build community trust.

## **Relative to Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Data**

Sen. Sonia Chang-Díaz (S.736)

This legislation proposes comprehensive data collection about both traffic stops and pedestrian stops. The more we understand all police-civilian encounters, the more comprehensively we can ensure effective public safety and healthy neighborhoods in all our communities across the Commonwealth.