

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is H. Lawrence Wilson Jr. I am President of The New Jersey Council, Chartered Members of the National Black Police Association, Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to appear at these committee hearings.

The New Jersey Council is a non-profit corporation that promotes the common interest of its chapter members. The Council was formed in 1982. Board members must be, or have been, a sworn law enforcement officer; they are elected from a pool of delegates that represents the chapter membership. The Council does not interfere with the missions of the member chapters, but we work for and influence matters that are common to chapter members.

The members of the Council and of the sixteen chapters within the Council are of African-American heritage. We represent approximately 300 individual members and are affiliated with several national minority organizations. As Black police officers we are in a unique position to help avoid situations that may be unjust to people of color. Most of us have personally experienced racial event or injustice at one time or another. The policies of the Council are similar to The National Black Police Association, which was formed many years ago. We work to influence change in local policing, to create understanding between the police and the community, and to enhance our effectiveness as police through the introduction of modern techniques, tools and policies educating them about effective tools and policies.

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is H. Lawrence Wilson Jr. I am President of The New Jersey Council, Chartered Members of the National Black Police Association, Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to appear at this committee hearing.

The New Jersey Council is a non-profit corporation that promotes the common interest of its chapter members. The Council was formed in 1982. Board members must be, or have been, a sworn law enforcement officer; they are elected from a pool of delegates that represents the chapter membership. The Council does not interfere with the missions of the member chapters, but we work for and influence matters that are common to chapter members.

The members of the Council and of the sixteen chapters within the Council are of African-American heritage. We represent approximately 300 individual members and are affiliated with several national minority organizations. As Black police officers we are in a unique position to help avoid situations that may be unjust to people of color. Most of us have personally experienced racial event or injustice at one time or another up and to and including a report from last evening. The policies of the Council are similar to The National Black Police Association, which was formed many years ago. We work to influence change in local policing, to create understanding between the police and the community, and to enhance our effectiveness as police through the introduction of modern techniques, tools and policies educating them about effective tools and policies.

I am a member of a chapter known as The Men and Women for Justice. It was formed in 1974 and incorporated in the State of Connecticut in 1979. The first successful law suit addressing the recruitment, retention and promotion of minority officers in a state police organization was initiated by the Connecticut Chapter of the Men and Women for Justice. We work to promote changes that will benefit all the people of this state. We are members of The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NOBLEO), and I am an associate member of the National Coalition of Black State Troopers. I am a Member of the National Black Police Associations Century Club.

During my law enforcement career, I served in a Bias Crimes/community relations investigation unit among other professional duties. We received numerous complaints about how local police and their departments interacted with members of the community.

I prepared this introduction to demonstrate that my input into the Police Standards is based on substantial professional and life experiences. I was a victim of what I believe to be a race-based motor vehicle stop on the New Jersey Turnpike by a New Jersey State Trooper. It was one of the most humiliating and degrading experiences of my life. It ended without greater consequence because I had a badge. I can't imagine what the outcome would have been if I had not been connected to the law enforcement system.

What I learned from that experience is that there is no one to report such incidents to. I could go on and on about some of the racial confrontations involving every level of law enforcement, but I don't think that's necessary.

I'm pleased that the executive order explicitly invited input from minority communities. The order reads as follows:

“ WHEREAS, in evaluating whether to terminate the consent decree, it is appropriate to solicit input from New Jersey citizens, and especially representatives from the minority communities most directly affected by the practice of racial profiling, to ensure public confidence that racial profiling will not be practiced or tolerated in the future;”

If we discontinue the federal monitoring process, we will not be able to ensure the confidence of the minority community concerning racial profiling. I don't think I can state it more directly than that.

The idea that the monitors should broaden their scope to include all law enforcement agencies at local and county levels should be given considerable thought. Profiling is not just a State Police problem. Speaking from experience as a bias investigator, many complaints of bias or rudeness were received from citizens who cited direct or indirect contact with the police.

It is also important to understand that the practice of racial profiling occurred while policies and standards, some of which were mandated by the office of the Attorney General, were in place. The Attorney General's office

overseas, the Division of Civil Rights and a Bias Crimes Unit that plays a critical role in advising and training county and municipal bias crimes organizations. They were not aware of this practice.

The New Jersey State Police had internal investigations and a bias crimes unit under its control. The State Police determined which incidents occurring in our local and county jurisdictions were reported, what incidents constituted bias crimes and how to accurately produce the uniform crime report distributed at the end of each year. These highly trained and educated individuals took an oath to distribute justice equally and without bias. Racial Profiling was still being conducted There is one major problem with police officers; they are recruited from the human race. And in America, prejudice and bias is as American as apple pie.

I have located at least three consent decrees associated with the New Jersey State Police. All three concern a bias, gender based, race based or both. In addition there was a law suit filed by thirteen (13) Black New Jersey State Troopers that everyone is trying their best to ignore. But I hope you will also take these matters into consideration because they are connected.

I didn't copy these documents for all of you but I do have one for the record. I am not the type of person that would perpetuate the myth that once you fill out forms and answer questions demanded by the United States Department of Justice the bias baggage would disappear forever. If that were the case, all citizens should have to be law enforcement officers and we could eliminate

all the laws and agencies that handle civil rights. But we all know it doesn't work that way.

I may be a bit rusty as I retired from the County Prosecutor's office some eleven years ago. However it has been my experience that when evidence of recent community complaints is non-existent, that usually means the evidence has not been recorded or reported. The theory is if it isn't reported, then it doesn't exist. Members of county and city human relations committees and related groups may have records of those types of complaints—if such committees still exist. You would be surprised to find a number of civil law suits like the one filed by the thirteen black troopers. There may not be a requirement to report these suits to any governmental agency or department.

There is a legal doctrine that suggests "three strikes and you are out". Having located evidence of three pre-existing consent decrees and one major discrimination law suit, I think it is time to recognize that repetition is a part of this agency's history and all positive procedures now in place were the result of mandates required by the consent decrees.

To be honest I do not believe the problem has been eradicated. Testimony offered to this advisory committee by Mr. Richard Jerome indicates "*that departments hold their breath until the agreement is over and then goes back to the old ways*". I think the same will happen if the monitors are removed. Events have revealed that while bias/community relations units were being reduced and cultural diversity and sensitivity training programs all but eliminated, this state was perfecting racial profiling under the name of drug enforcement. We not only ignored the complaints, but publicly denied

the existence of this horrific problem. Racial profiling has existed for a long time. I do not think this practice has been eliminated. I think it has been polished.

The members of New Jersey Council, including those who are sworn law enforcement officers do not oppose monitoring of their respective departments by an *Office of Police Standards* or a similar agency. If done properly, it could serve as a means to handle racial profiling. Monitoring could be helping avoid internal and community strife—easier said than done.

The Department of Personnel assumes responsibility for many internal problems that plague local and county agencies. I am not sure exactly who handles New Jersey State Police however there is an Office of State Police Affairs in place. We believe this bureau should be removed from the Attorney Generals Office and answer solely to the Governor. We have no confidence in the practice of police investigating police, especially when the investigators are from the same department.

I find it necessary to state that these hearings have been conducted in locations where those who may have been offended may find it difficult to appear. This only serves to strengthen the suspicion and skepticism that may surround this advisory committee.

Nevertheless, this advisory committee has a unique opportunity to recommend a policy that will insure accountability of those who might violate that trust. You should be bold in your decisions. This is not about the morale of the police. It is about the security and protection of the

community. Professional law enforcement personnel will not be demoralized by the enforcement of high standards of conduct. The minority community believes they are necessary because “If you can not respect us, you can not protect us.”

In closing let me leave you with the words of Frances E. W. Harper who once said” a government that can protect and defend its citizens from wrong and outrage and does not, is vicious”. You may have the ability to make a difference and rebuild that trust and confidence that is part of your charge. I certainly hope so.

On behalf of the New Jersey Council and the citizens of the communities we serve, I thank you for your time and consideration.

H. Lawrence Wilson Jr.-President NJ council Chartered Members of the National Black Police Association, Inc.