



Testimony of

***Anna (Cuqui) Rivera, Secretary
The National Latino Peace Officers Association,
New Jersey Chapter
Before The Advisory Committee on Police Standards
April 26th 2007***

My name is Ana (Cuqui) Rivera; I am the Secretary of the National Latino Peace Officers Association New Jersey Chapter (NLPOA) and Outreach Manager of the Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey. Both of our organizations are on the Board of Delegates of the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey. On behalf of NLPOA New Jersey Chapter, and the Hispanic Directors Association of NJ (HDANJ), we would like to thank Governor Corzine, as we wish him a speedy and complete recovery and the Advisory Committee on Police Standards for the opportunity to provide testimony on filing a motion to terminate the consent decree concerning the practice of racial profiling by the New Jersey State Police.

First let me provide you with a brief history of our organizations.

The National Latino Peace Officers Association is comprised of over 42,000 members nationwide and was founded in 1974. Our mission is of advocacy and empowerment of the Latino Law Enforcement Community and the community at large.

The mission of the Hispanic Directors Association of NJ is to further the progress of NJ's Hispanic community through cooperation among its members and collaboration with other organizations. This mission of HDANJ is to study research, analyze and advocate for the welfare of the Hispanic community and to foster the professional development of the staff and volunteers of its member agencies.

On November 21, 2006, the testimony presented by NLPOA to this committee was of the opinion that the State of New Jersey should join the United States Department of Justice in a motion to the US District Court seeking the termination of the consent decree entered in 1999 to eliminate the practice of racial profiling by the New Jersey State Police. Subsequent to our November testimony we learned in testimony provided by New Jersey State Police Detective Sergeant Scott Turner that alleges that "high ranking state police commanders manipulated and misrepresented internal affairs data in an effort to attain consent decree compliance from the federal monitors."

The NLPOA has voted to withdraw its support of the lifting of the federal consent decree imposed upon the NJ State Police. Today, we join Latino Leadership Alliance of NJ and HDANJ in strongly opposing the termination of the consent decree. NLPOA's decision was in part based upon the previous testimony provided by New Jersey State Police Detective Sergeant Scott Turner to this Committee. At the time that we provided testimony on November 21, 2006, we did so with the understanding that the data brought forth was in fact accurate and legitimate.

During Sergeant Turner's testimony he asserted that he was instructed on how to deceive the federal monitors conducting the oversight of the NJSP. Additionally, we are equally as concerned regarding published accounts that racial profiling is still taking place in the southern portion of the New Jersey Turnpike. The National Latino Peace Officers, the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey and the Hispanic Directors Association of NJ stand before you today collectively of the strong BELIEF that an independent body must comprehensively and thoroughly investigate these allegations.

Until such time these allegations are vetted NLPOA will steadfastly oppose the lifting of the consent decree.

During the testimony of 11-21-06, NLPOA underscored the following precautionary measures to be undertaken in order to prevent backsliding on the gains achieved thus far. We collectively continue to support these measures and believe they are worthy of reiteration today.

a. Monitoring: Monitoring must continue to ensure compliance. Standards of compliance should be codified and consistent with the standards previously set forth by the federal monitors.

b. Monitoring Oversight: A body independent of the NJ State Police should conduct monitoring oversight. The scope of the oversight should include the Office of the Attorney General. The group charged with oversight responsibility should be diverse in nature and MUST INCLUDE members of the Latino community

c. Sustainability: The office charged with oversight responsibility should be fully staffed and fully funded. Failure to do so, staffing or revenue shortfalls will send the wrong message and compromise the mission regarding the commitment of the Executive & Legislative branches regarding the thwarting of racial profiling.

d. Empowerment: The monitoring body should be created by statute and with the authority to issue penalties and fines when it learns of clear and convincing evidence of the use of racial profiling by an agency or individual.

e. Review: The final recommendations should be accompanied with bi-annual reviews. The goals established in this initial legislation should be measurable and quantifiable. These reviews should make allowances for community input and should provide a vehicle to adjust, eliminate or augment the initial set forth policies.

Furthermore, the treatment, promotions, and work environment for the Latino men and women of the New Jersey State Police are deplorable and not reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity of New Jersey. Latino Troopers are the victims of a personnel promotion system that is based on cronyism and favoritism, and not based on objective qualifications and criteria for effective law enforcement. The NLPOA and LLANJ asked the leadership of the New Jersey State Police in November 2006, for information concerning State Police promotions policy and criteria, and the number, name and rank of Latino Troopers, and as of today we have not received a response.

In conclusion we find it irresponsible to support the lifting of the consent decree. NLPOA also supports the establishment of an Independent Community Police Commission under the auspices of the Office of the Public Advocate. Together with the Latino Leadership Alliance we are releasing a report on a Roundtable of Latino Leaders on Immigration issues that will have specific recommendations on how to protect the rights of immigrants. For the purposes of this committee we particularly support Martin Perez's comments on local policing which is included in this report.

Thank you for this opportunity to address this committee on this important matter.

The National Latino Peace Officers Association, New Jersey Chapter

The Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey