DATE: February 23, 2017
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

"THE END RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROFILING ACT"
TO PROTECT AMERICANS FROM BIASED TREATMENT BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS AND IMPROVE POLICING
IS INTRODUCED IN THE U.S. SENATE

THE ISSUE:
The End Racial and Religious Profiling Act was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senator Ben Cardin (MD) (S. 411) and 27 of his Senate colleagues on February 16, 2017. Companion legislation, the End Racial Profiling Act, will be introduced in the U.S. House in early March, 2017, by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (MI).

The End Racial and Religious Profiling Act in the Senate and the End Racial Profiling Act in the House comprehensively address the insidious practice of biased treatment by law enforcement on our nation’s streets, highways, walkways, and in our airports because of who you are, which God you worship, or who you are perceived to be. Specifically, the legislation addresses bias policing on five levels: first, it clearly defines the discriminatory practice of racial and religious profiling by law enforcement at all levels; second, it creates a federal prohibition against profiling; thirdly, it mandates data collection so we can fully assess the extent of the problem; fourth, it provides funding for the training and retraining of law enforcement officials on how to discontinue and prevent the use of profiling; and fifth, it holds law enforcement agencies that continue to use profiling accountable.

We need the End Racial and Religious Profiling Act to stop this insidious practice and to help begin to restore the confidence of communities throughout the United States in federal, state and local law enforcement and thus restore the trust and integrity necessary to be effective. The NAACP has long advocated for enactment of the End Racial Profiling Act, highlighting the need for this legislation during the 2015 America’s Journey for Justice and calling for it at the grassroots level every time another person is stopped, hurt, or even killed because of his or her race, ethnicity, or other defining feature.

Profiling based on race and other factors is a serious, often painful, problem in the United States, and can lead to deadly consequences. It is difficult for our faith in the American criminal justice system not to be challenged when we cannot walk down the street, drive down an interstate, or go through an airport without being stopped merely because of the color of our skin, who we are perceived to be, which God (if any) we chose to worship, or what we chose to wear. Training law enforcement officers how to more effectively carry out essential policing without using this counter-productive procedure will not only help our nation’s criminal justice system become less discriminatory and more effective at all levels, but it will also trickle down to other unofficial security groups as well, such as neighborhood watch organizations and citizens’ community groups, which often model themselves after their local police.

We have always known that the majority of law enforcement officers are hard working men and women, whose concern for the safety of those they are charged with protecting and serving is paramount, even when their own safety is on the line. However, if and when even one of their colleagues engages in discriminatory profiling tactics, whether it be conscious or subconscious, the trust of the entire community can be, and will be, lost. Law enforcement agents should not endorse or act upon stereotypes, attitudes, or beliefs that a person’s race, ethnicity, appearance, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or national origin increases that person’s general propensity to act unlawfully.

Numerous studies have demonstrated over the past few years that racial and religious profiling is all too prevalent throughout law enforcement today. Furthermore, research shows that racial and religious profiling diverts law enforcement officers’ attention from using actual, objective signs of suspicious behavior to effectively assess situations. As far back as February, 2009, a study of traffic stops and searches in West Virginia found a distinct and disturbing pattern of racial profiling. The data revealed that African-American motorists were almost twice as likely to be stopped than White drivers. Hispanics were 1.48 times more likely to be stopped. After the traffic stop, non-Whites were more likely to be arrested, yet police in West Virginia obtained a significantly higher contraband hit rate for White drivers than racial or ethnic minorities.
THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:
Contact your U.S. Senators and ask them to co-sponsor THE “END RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROFILING ACT”, S. 411, and your Representative and ask that they serve as original co-sponsors of the END RACIAL PROFILING ACT. To contact your Senators and Representative you should:

✓ Make a Phone Call:
Call your Senators and your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators’/Congressman’s offices. The switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121 (see message section, below).

✓ Write a Letter
If you choose to write letters to your Senators, send them to:
The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.  20510
If you choose to write a letter to your Representative, send it to:
The Honorable (name of Representative)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.  20515

✓ Send a Fax
If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators’ or Representative’s office (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ Send an E-Mail
To send an e-mail to your Senators, simply go to www.senate.gov, click on Senators, then click on Contacting Senators (by name or by state). This selection will also help you to identify who your two senators are.
To send an e-mail to your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and click on “write your representative.” This will help you identify who your Representative is and how to contact him/her.
PLease Remember to contact both of your Senators!

THE MESSAGE:
♦ We need this important legislation which takes concrete steps to put an end to the insidious practice of profiling by law enforcement at all levels.

♦ As painfully and more publically discussed in recent months, profiling is a serious problem in the United States, and can lead to deadly consequences.

♦ It is difficult for our faith in the American judicial system not to be challenged when we cannot walk down the street, drive down an interstate, or go through an airport, without being stopped merely because of who we are, which God we chose to worship (if any), or who we are perceived to be.

♦ The “End Racial and Religious Profiling Act” and the “End Racial Profiling Act” not only clearly defines this insidious practice, but it also prohibits profiling and collects data to fully assess the extent of the problem. It also provides training and other incentives for states and local governments to actively pursue policies to eliminate it and the legislation punishes those in law enforcement who continue to use it.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

Membership is power! Join the NAACP today.
For more information, call your local NAACP branch or visit www.naacp.org
TO BOTH YOUR SENATORS

(date)

The Honorable ___________________________
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.  20510

RE:  SUPPORT FOR LEGISLATION TO PUT AN END TO PROFILING BY LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Dear Senator ________________________________;

As your constituent, I am writing to urge you to support and be a co-sponsor of the “End Racial and Religious Profiling Act”, S. 411, introduced by Sen. Ben Cardin, (MD). This important legislation takes concrete steps to put an end to the insidious and discriminatory practice of profiling at the federal, state and local levels based on race, ethnicity, or religion, whether real or perceived.

As painfully and more publicly discussed in recent months, profiling is a serious problem in the United States, and can lead to deadly consequences. It is difficult for our faith in the American judicial system not to be challenged when we cannot walk down the street, drive down an interstate, or travel through an airport without being stopped merely because of whom we are or who we are perceived to be. Training law enforcement officers how to more efficiently carry out the essential policing without avoid using this counter-productive procedure will not only help our nation’s criminal justice system at all levels, but it will trickle down to other groups as well, such as neighborhood watch organizations and citizens’ community groups, which often model themselves after their local police and which have taken on additional responsibilities in light of the budget cuts being faced by almost every locality and jurisdiction.

The majority of law enforcement officers are hard working men and women, whose concern for the safety of those they are charged with protecting is often paramount, even when their own safety is on the line. However, if and when even one of their colleagues engages in the practice of profiling, whether it be conscious or subconscious, the trust of the entire community can be, and will be, lost. Law enforcement agents should not endorse or act upon stereotypes, attitudes, or beliefs that a person’s race, ethnicity, appearance, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or national origin increases that person’s general propensity to act unlawfully.

As I said earlier, I hope that you will be a co-sponsor of and support this legislation and that you will help address the very serious problem of discriminatory profiling by federal, state, and local law enforcement officers. Please let me know what you intend to do, and what I can do to help you in this fight. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)
The Honorable ___________________________
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.  20515

RE:  SUPPORT FOR LEGISLATION TO PUT AN END TO PROFILING BY LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Dear Representative____________________________________;

As your constituent, I am writing to urge you to support and be an original co-sponsor of the “End Racial Profiling Act”, to be introduced in early March, 2017 by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (MI). This important legislation takes concrete steps to put an end to the insidious and discriminatory practice of profiling at the federal, state and local levels based on race, ethnicity, or religion, whether real or perceived.

As painfully and more publically discussed in recent months, profiling is a serious problem in the United States, and can lead to deadly consequences. It is difficult for our faith in the American judicial system not to be challenged when we cannot walk down the street, drive down an interstate, or travel through an airport without being stopped merely because of whom we are or who we are perceived to be. Training law enforcement officers how to more efficiently carry out the essential policing without avoid using this counter-productive procedure will not only help our nation’s criminal justice system at all levels, but it will trickle down to other groups as well, such as neighborhood watch organizations and citizens’ community groups, which often model themselves after their local police and which have taken on additional responsibilities in light of the budget cuts being faced by almost every locality and jurisdiction.

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