

Good day General Assembly's Judiciary Committee Members:

My name is Shawn Soljour, I reside in the Town of New Canaan. On March 12, 2012, I shared my testimony supporting The Bill S.B. 364 -Penn Act Racial Profiling Prohibition Act. I was racially profiled and forced to pay for a traffic infraction that was written wrongfully. I was driving into our town after a celebration for our Pastor in NYC around midnight with our sixteen old daughter and toddler twin daughters in their car seats. I was stopped by a patrolman after driving cautiously through the blinking yellow traffic light. The patrolman asked me did I realize the light was red and I asked him to look back at the light to observe that it is Blinking Yellow. He refuted what I said and became aggressive in his tone. His callous tone and abrasive behavior made my sixteen old daughter, who sat in the front seat very uncomfortable and fearful. I requested the patrolman to call for his superior. He did and when his superior came I asked him do you see the light blinking yellow. He stated that the officer wrote the ticket and I will have to plead not guilty and go to court and I was handed the ticket. I drove immediately to the New Canaan Police Station only to be greeted by the shift supervisor who stated, "If the officer said the light is red than it is red," ending the conversation and stating for me to go to court.

This racial bias mindset must be stopped. The patrolman, shift supervisor and desk sergeant were all trained to have gendered and racial bias. A number of assumptions were made about my educational and economic background based upon the car that I was driving and the location in which I was stopped. This mindset views anyone of African descent unworthy of receiving an explanation of police officer actions and to be held accountable for their actions of wrongdoing. As an African American woman, wife, mother and United States citizen this treatment is reprehensible! I was verbal accosted in front of my children then forced to go through a court system as a criminal. I had no prior traffic infractions. I appeared before a Magistrate at Norwalk Superior Court and the ticket was dismissed based on the New Canaan police officer entering red light but writing the code number for a stop sign. The State prosecutor transferred the traffic ticket to Superior Court and I appeared before Judge Bruce Hudock.

I searched for a CT traffic court attorney to represent me and as soon as the attorney's learned I was going before a criminal Judge Bruce Hudock they were unable to assist me with a traffic infraction. I proceeded the trial prose. I also contacted FOIA the State of CT Traffic Engineering Signal department to receive a copy of the State's map indicating the Traffic light is maintained by the State and the traffic light automatically changes to blinking yellow at 10:00pm on South Avenue where I was stopped.

The documents were not permissible because I failed to follow the Rules of procedure to enter documents as evidence.

I was found guilty. I explained to the Judge that I was *not* guilty, and it is *unfair* that I am being forced to pay for an infraction that I did not commit. He too stated pay the fine. I did not pay the fine. A bench warrant arrest was executed on me. I had to report to the New Canaan Police department to post bond. I was then escorted to the basement be fingerprinted, and have mugshot *photos* taken a process most associated with criminal activity or a felony.

I appeared again before Judge Hudock and he had the bailer escort me to the pay the fine.

This is the treatment I received in the twenty first century! The local police, State prosecutor and State Judge all aided and enforced penalties for an infraction that did not take place.

The police take an oath to protect and serve. The Superior Court has the power to hear and decide any civil or criminal matter judicially. Unfortunately, that was not my experience! These two systems extorted money out of me, humiliated me, and presented me as a criminal.

One action that can be written into law and enforce is "An Act Concerning Police Accountability" the first time a police man/woman is reported and documented for violating this Ac:

1. Impose swift sanctions without pay.
2. Penalties.
3. Public community service in the neighborhood of their violation.

It is my resolve to continue to rehearse my experience of Racial Profiling and Abuse of Authority by local police officers. Connecticut must enforce and uphold racially equity and respect for their citizens.

Thank you,
Shawn Soljour
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www.cga.ct.gov/juddata

S.B.364 emerged as a result of an initial bill, the Penn Act, introduced to address the ... and reporting required under the Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Prohibition Act. is Shawn Soljour and I am here to testify in support of S.B. 364.