



Law Office of the
PUBLIC DEFENDER
Seventeenth Judicial Circuit

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July 10, 2013

Michael J. Satz
State Attorney
Office of the State Attorney
Broward County Courthouse
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Dear Mr. Satz,

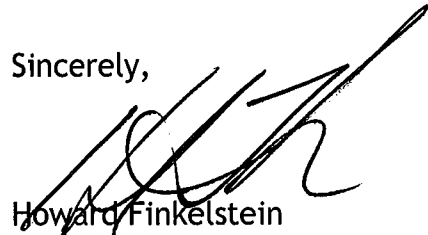
The ACLU released a report in June, 2013 entitled "The War on Marijuana- In Black and White." Unfortunately, Broward County is one of the few counties in the country singled out for racial disparity in marijuana arrests. In graph after graph, constructed using the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program and the U.S. Census' annual county population estimates, Broward County is a glaring example of institutionalized racism. The ratio of the black population and marijuana arrests simply do not match up.

In 2010, Broward County was ranked 18th in the nation for racial disparity in marijuana possession arrests. (Figure 16 at page 60) In 2010, Broward was ranked 12th in the nation for the highest number of marijuana possession arrests of black residents. (Table 9 at page 56) Most disturbingly, black residents of Broward County are 3.7 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white citizens- even though the percentage of black residents and white residents who use marijuana is almost equal. (Finding #4 at page 21)

These numbers unequivocally show that black residents are targeted by law enforcement. These numbers fall on your shoulders as the chief law enforcement officer in Broward County. If you did not know that law enforcement was targeting black communities, you were not doing your job. Your decision to be a passive State Attorney has given police free rein in the black community. Your failure to lead for the last 38 years has

allowed racism to become institutionalized in Broward County. Now that this report has exposed the unchecked racism of law enforcement and embarrassed our county on a national level, it is your job to fix it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Finkelstein', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Howard Finkelstein
Public Defender

cc:

Ms. Marsha Ellison, President, Fort Lauderdale Branch, NAACP

Mr. Willie Lawson, President, North Broward Branch, NAACP

Dr. Germaine Smith-Baugh, President and CEO, Urban League of Broward