



NAACP

NEW ENGLAND AREA CONFERENCE

P.O. BOX 320128

WEST ROXBURY, MA 02132

(617) 323-8885

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: James McKim

(603) 215-7044

Statement in Support of the ACLU Appeal in ACLU v. NH Dept. of Safety

The New England Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) believes transparency in policing is universally beneficial, to the public and police alike. It allows for accountability; it serves to restore the dwindling trust in police; and it serves as a check on the over-policing that has plagued the relationship between police and people of color for so many years. Thus, we are in support of the American Civil Liberties Union in the matter of *American Civil Liberties Union v. New Hampshire Department of Safety, Division of State Police*, Docket No. 2000-0321 requesting the release of records in the case of Haden Wilber's treatment of Robyn White.

This is not a case of a minor policing mistake. We believe Police Officer Haden Wilber's misconduct was egregious and an intentional infringement on constitutionally protected rights. We also find it very disturbing that the public has no ability to determine whether it was the latest in a pattern and practice of police misconduct, whether it was a product of systemic issues, or whether Wilber's cavalier attitude towards citizens' constitutional rights and his constitutional duties is reflected in his treatment of people of color. This opinion is shared by others, including the Manchester Union Leader and the New England First Amendment Coalition who are planning to file Amicus Briefs in support of the Appeal.

We believe RSA 91-A, the Right to Know law, and the mistrust caused by withholding the information in this case, outweighs the individual officer's minimal privacy interests. Police Officers, by the definition of their role, are public servants. Thus, they are accountable to the public for any acts while performing their duties. If the public does not know the facts of a case, then there is no public accountability. We urge the court to find for the American Civil Liberties Union, ordering the information in this case to be released to the public. We also ask the citizens of New Hampshire to make the same request.