



Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

July 14, 2015

Board of Directors
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) – Southern California
1313 W. Eighth Street,
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear ACLU-SC Board Members:

We the undersigned organizations write to you to request a meeting with representatives of the ACLU-SC Board of Directors at your earliest convenience, in response to our deep concerns about the role of ACLU-SC with LAPD's Counter-Terrorism efforts and, specifically, about potential efforts by ACLU-SC to create a Model Surveillance Community Safety Ordinance.

As you may know, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition is a grassroots coalition comprised of individuals and community-based organizations actively engaged to end state oppression and raise awareness in our communities to mobilize and organize against law enforcement policies of surveillance, spying and infiltration. Among our goals is to create safe spaces for public dialogue, and collective examination and scrutiny, about the police state, which we are fighting to dismantle. This includes difficult conversations about how different approaches to challenging the police state may conflict and especially how inside strategies have harmed our communities in the past.

In May 2015, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition received documents from the LAPD Discovery Section in response to a Public Records Act request that revealed several flurries of email exchanges between Peter Bibring of the ACLU-SC and Mike Downing, Deputy Chief and Head of LAPD's Counter-Terrorism Division. We were particularly alarmed to discover that Peter Bibring asked for Mike Downing's concerns, input, and sought suggestions on a Model Surveillance Community Safety Ordinance. Various emails are exchanged up to the release of the ACLU report in November 2014, *Making Smart Decisions About Surveillance*, which included the "Model Ordinance." These actions demonstrate a clear conflict of interest and undermine ACLU's integrity when it engages in a process to publish reports and propose policies, including its model surveillance ordinance, which will impact the lives of millions of people. Although the practice of reaching out to lawmakers is nothing new, in this case LAPD Deputy Chief Mike Downing is not a lawmaker and heads the department that is supposed to be monitored by this proposed ordinance. We ask the ACLU-SC to stop colluding with LAPD and to not move forward on any city ordinance that expands the surveillance, spying and infiltration apparatus in Los Angeles and beyond.

While we acknowledge Peter Bibring and Jessica Farris for attending the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition meeting on May 19, 2015 to discuss these issues and hear the concerns of about 50 of our members, we do not feel their response resolved our concerns and we have no firm indication of what ACLU-SC plans to do next on the issues we jointly work on. Challenging one of the largest

police states in the country is inherently going to result in conflict, and we hope the ACLU-SC recognizes that tackling these conflicts together even when it is uncomfortable will make us more effective in the long term. As we are all aware of, in the last year we have seen large-scale murders by police, massive surveillance of communities, a heavy militarized presence, usage of counter-insurgency tactics, a violent silencing of dissent, and lastly the beating and jailing of protesters and journalists. The matter for examining our efforts and ensure all of them are fully accountable to the communities we serve could not be more urgent.

Again, we are requesting a meeting with representatives of our Coalition and your Board as soon as possible. We are happy to provide any documentation of our concerns or other information in advance, at your request. We would appreciate it if you could get back to us by July 28th. You may contact us by email at stoplapdspeying@gmail.com or by phone please call Esteban Gil at (626) 298-9350 to schedule the meeting.

Best regards,

California Immigrant Youth Coalition
Immigrant Youth Coalition – Los Angeles (IYC – LA)
Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN)
National Lawyers Guild - Los Angeles (NLG – LA)
Socialist Party – Los Angeles
Stop LAPD Spying Coalition
Youth Justice Coalition (YJC)