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Communities United Coalition Gathers to Thank Governor Brown for Signing AB 953

After leading the around the clock #Journey4Justice vigil at the State Capitol, Coalition excited to thank the Governor for making history by signing precedent setting civil rights law

What: The Communities United Coalition will gather at the State Capitol on Monday, October 5 to thank Governor Jerry Brown for having the moral courage to sign AB953 (Weber: The Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015). The Communities United Coalition is comprised of the six AB 953 cosponsor organizations: PICO California, ACLU of California, Youth Justice Coalition, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Reform California, and Dignity and Power Now. The coalition partnered with other organizations like the Courage Campaign and Incite Insight that also supported the bill.

Members of the Communities United Coalition, who had been leading the #Journey4Justice a seven-day around the clock vigil at the State Capitol, had committed to staying onsite until AB 953 was signed. Governor Brown has made history and the coalition is excited to publicly thank the Governor for signing AB 953 –precedent setting legislation- into law.

When: 10:30 am on Monday, October 5, 2015 - Governor Jerry Brown's office at the California State Capitol

Who: Speakers include Rev. Ben McBride, Director of Regional Clergy Development with PICO California, Kim McGill, Organizer with Youth Justice Coalition, Chauncey Smith, Racial Justice Advocate with the ACLU of California Center for Advocacy and Policy, Salimah Hankins, Director of Legislative Advocacy for Dignity and Power Now, Betty Hung, Policy Director for Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles, and Marcus McKinney, Principal Consultant with the Office of Assembly Member Shirley Weber. Families and individuals impacted by racial profiling, clergy, faith leaders, community members, and youth will also be in attendance. Invitations have been extended Governor Brown's office.

Visuals: Clergy in full vestment, participants in branded t-shirts holding signs, and spiritual customs observed

Why: On Saturday, October 3, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown signed [Assembly Bill 953: The Racial and Identity Profiling Act of 2015](#) into California law. Written by Assembly Member Shirley Weber's (D-San Diego), AB 953 now requires law enforcement agencies to collect basic information on police stops in response to growing concerns about racial profiling and police misconduct.

"I am grateful to the Governor - who along with his father has been on the forefront of civil rights issues for the last half century - for his careful consideration and for his support for this bill," Weber said. "AB 953 will be the state's first step toward not only understanding the problem of racial profiling, but also

toward formulating policies to reduce the practice and its devastating consequences. California is going in a new direction on this issue; hopefully, this will set an example for other states."

According to an independent analysis, unarmed Black men are [seven times](#) more likely than unarmed white men to die by police gunfire nationwide. California holds the ominous record for the highest number of deaths in the country, with 151 people killed by law enforcement in the state this year. However, the state still does not collect, analyze, or make available basic information about who the police, stop, search or even shoot.

"As people of faith, we were compelled to pray for Governor Brown's moral courage to sign AB 953 and take a step to end the suffering of Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities that are traumatized by racial profiling and overly aggressive policing practices. This precedent setting legislation is historic – it is both a moral and legal victory for our state and our nation. The people have spoken and no longer will we be held hostage by rogue officers and departments who see us as criminals unworthy of human dignity simply by virtue of the color of our skin," said Rev. Ben McBride, Director of Regional Clergy Development with PICO California.

"As the rest of the country grapples with issues of police misconduct and racial profiling, Governor Brown delivered a strong message with the stroke of his pen. Now California has the strongest laws against police violence and racial profiling, thus paving the way for the rest of the nation," said Salimah Hankins, Director of Legislative Advocacy for Dignity and Power Now.

AB 953 will:

- Update California's definition of racial and identity profiling to be in line with federal recommendations by including other demographic characteristics, such as gender and sexual orientation.
- Require that California law enforcement agencies uniformly collect and report data on stops, frisks, and other interactions with the communities they serve.
- Establish an advisory board to analyze stop data and develop recommendations to address problems with disparate policing where they exist.

Visuals: Participants in branded t-shirts holding banners, clergy, spiritual customs observed

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PICO California is the state's largest community organizing network. We organize in 73 cities, 15 school districts, and in more than one-half of the state's Senate and Assembly districts. PICO California was established in 1994, bringing together local federations from throughout California to affect meaningful budget and policy change at the state level. Over the past 20 years, our organizing and policy advocacy has resulted in increased investments in education and healthcare, and in programs and services that are critical for working families. Together, we represent 480 congregations and 450,000 families of diverse economic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds committed to advancing racial and economic justice in California through organizing, advocacy, and voter engagement. Visit www.PICOCalifornia.org to learn more.

PICO California and its federations are non-partisan and do not endorse or support candidates for office.