

California Highway Patrol Disproportionately Targeted Latinos for Vehicle Impoundment

During 2012, the California Highway Patrol of the greater Fresno area issued approximately 4,500 citations for traffic stops resulting in vehicle impoundment or for driving without a license.

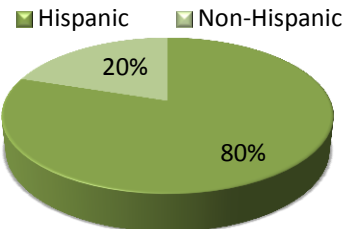
Latinos were disproportionately issued citations for driving without a license that were not accompanied by an infraction that would have been observable prior to the stop. And although Latinos account for about 50% of the Fresno County population, **Latinos residents were issued 80% of all citations that resulted in car impoundments.**

Records also showed that **89% of the citations issued for driving without a license that resulted in car impoundments were issued to Latino drivers.**

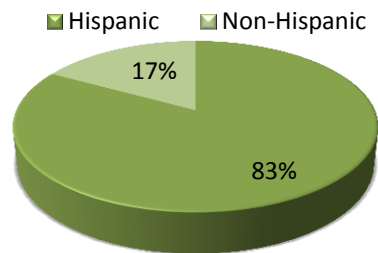
It is a violation of equal protection under the Constitution of the United States and the California State Constitution to use race or ethnicity to target suspected unlicensed drivers. Yet the ACLU's initial findings show there is an alarming discrepancy between the reasons given by CHP officers for traffic stops in Fresno and the citations eventually handed out to large numbers of Latino drivers.

Several drivers were stopped because of tinted windows, crooked license plates, or obstructed views but were only given citations for driving without a license rather than citations for a moving violation or other infraction that would have been observable by an officer prior to the traffic stop.

Total Citations that Resulted in Impoundment

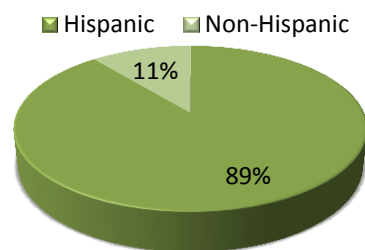


Total §12500a Citations



*Includes only interactions that resulted in citations for driving without a license but no other traffic violation citations.

§12500a Citations that Resulted in Impoundment



The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California ("ACLU-NC") and the American Friend Service Committee ("AFSC") submitted a Public Records Act request to the California Highway Patrol in 2012 after community groups expressed concern that CHP officers in Fresno County were targeting Latino drivers. The ACLU studied public records on all traffic citations resulting in vehicle impoundments, as well as all citations that included Vehicle Code §12500 ("Unlawfully driving without a license") as a listed offense, whether or not they resulted in impoundment. The records comprised §12500 citations issued to Latino drivers in Fresno County by CHP that resulted in vehicle impoundment between January and December 2012. This is a preliminary report based on the analysis of those records. For more information, contact the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California at (415) 621-2493.