



Legislation Text

File #: 21-2656, **Version:** 1

To: Harris County Commissioners Court

Through: Jim Bethke, Director, Justice Administration Department

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Subject: An Evaluation of Harris County Traffic Stop Data in Compliance with the Sandra Bland Act

Project ID (If applicable):

Purpose and Request:

Transmittal of a Report on Existing Law Enforcement Traffic Stop Data in Harris County to satisfy the Commissioners Court mandate in connection with the June 9, 2020 Supplemental Agenda Item 18.

Background and Discussion:

JAD collected data from Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) on traffic stops in 2020. JAD analyzed the data to include each Constable Precinct and the HCSO. Additionally, JAD compared Harris County to Bexar County, Dallas County, Tarrant County, and Travis County. JAD created percentage rates for each variable based on the proportion that an event occurred to certain racial and demographic groups by the total number of events from all racial and ethnic groups. For more specific variables, such as search rates, JAD calculated a proportion of each racial and ethnic group that experienced an event divided by the total number of stops or events of that racial and ethnic group. JAD further used an equality of proportions test to determine if any disparities were statistically significant to a 99% confidence level. In this report, JAD examined:

- Gender Demographics;*
- Racial Demographics;*
- Racial and Gender Demographics;*
- Consent Search by Racial Demographics;*
- Contraband Discovery by Racial Demographics;*
- Traffic Stops to Arrests by Racial Demographics;*
- Type of Citation or Warning by Racial Demographics; and,*
- Use-of-Force by Racial Demographics.*

While most departments were not stopping specific demographics at disparate rates, some significant findings include the disparate rate of arrests, citations, and force against racial and ethnic minorities. While JAD cannot say this occurs due to racial profiling, the disparities are statistically significant. JAD suggests improving the data the Departments collect to better understand findings, improve the process of submitting complaints and comments for the public to share pertaining to their interactions with law enforcement, and submit the required documentation to the Commissioners Court and TCOLE in compliance with the Sandra Bland Act. JAD will launch a public dashboard on all Texas traffic stop information from all jurisdictions that submitted data to TCOLE to include the information discussed in this report. Access to real-time data would improve the use of the dashboard and assist law enforcement and the public of trends and patterns.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact for this request.

Fiscal Summary

Expenditures	FY 20-21	FY 21-22 Projected	Future Years Projected [3 additional years]
Service Impacted: <i>[Please identify the division where expenditures are incurred]</i>			
Existing Budget			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
Existing Department Budget			
Please Identify Funding Sources (Special Revenue, Grant, etc.)			
[INSERT FUNDING SOURCES]			
Total Sources			

Alternatives:

Alignment with Strategic Objective:

County Goals: (1) Justice and Safety

JAD Goals: (1) Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities, (2) Increase Transparency, Accountability, Public Trust, and Confidence, (3) Improve the Effectiveness of Policies, Services, and Operations County-Wide, and (4) Minimize Criminal Justice System Exposure and Reduce Reliance on Incarceration.

Attachments:

5.25.21 - An Evaluation of Harris County Traffic Stop Data in Compliance with the Sandra Bland Act.pdf

5.25.21 - TCOLE Comparative Analysis Form.xlsx

5.25.21 - Racial Profiling Report - Full Report.pdf