

Racial profiling, killings of arrestees by local police increase: study

April 17 2012

Deadly police shootings, racial profiling and discriminatory law enforcement are once again in the forefront of national debate. Police killings of unarmed civilians in New Orleans and Seattle have generated local protests and national controversies. Accusations of racial profiling have been lodged against police departments in those and other cities as well as the Maricopa County sheriff's office in Arizona. In addition, the recent shooting of teenager Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watch coordinator has forced a close examination of authorities' initial investigation of the killing. But what are the real facts about these issues and what is the federal government doing to curb local police misconduct? These important questions are discussed in the April 6, 2012, issue of *CQ Researcher*, published by CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE.

According to author Kenneth Jost, the federal government's [police](#) accountability unit has been reinvigorated after a period of dormancy under President George W. Bush. From 2003 to 2009, killings of arrestees by police rose from 376 in 2003 to 497 in 2009. Over the past year, the U.S. Department of Justice has been aggressively using its power to monitor local [police departments](#) and pressuring them to limit the use of excessive force in civilian encounters, eliminate racial profiling and strengthen disciplinary and accountability procedures.

"The Justice Department's oversight of local law enforcement lagged under President Bush," writes Jost. "Obama's selection of civil rights-minded officials for key posts at the Justice Department signaled a likely

change in priorities."

The April 6 issue of *CQ Researcher* discusses the Justice department's new policies in an attempt to answer some important questions:

- Should police do more to control excessive force?
- Should police do more to prevent racial and ethnic profiling?
- Should police adopt stronger disciplinary measures for misconduct?

With careful attention to detail and interviews with a range of experts, the issue also provides a timeline and discussion of the history of police misconduct, a bibliography of major sources on the topic, and the outlook for possible reforms in police department practices and policies.

More information: To read more about the April 6 issue of *CQ Researcher*, titled "Police Misconduct: Will Excessive Force, Racial Profiling be Curbed?" visit library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/

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