

March 26, 2012

Join Us for a Forum on Racial Profiling, Federal Hate Crimes Enforcement and  
“Stand Your Ground” Laws:

***Protecting a “Suspect” Community***

3 PM – 5 PM

Tuesday, March 27

Rayburn House Office Building Room 2237

Dear Colleague:

The facts which have begun to emerge around the February 26, 2012 shooting death of 17-year old **Trayvon Martin** in Sanford, Florida have shocked the nation and raised a call for intervention by federal law enforcement agencies. We applaud the Department of Justice’s (“Department”) decision to conduct an independent investigation of the circumstances surrounding the shooting and are pleased that the Department’s Community Relations Service will be on the ground to assist the local community address the various tensions that exist. However, many questions still exist about the range of federal authority that can be utilized to ensure that the ends of justice are served for the family and Sanford community and other related legal issues.

**Please join us for a forum on the Federal hate crimes enforcement authority and racial profiling and “Stand Your Ground” laws on Tuesday, March 27, in Rayburn House Office Building Room 2237, from 3 PM – 5 PM.**

The publicly available information about the Trayvon Martin case in Florida appears to establish federal jurisdiction to investigate the case. Federal hate crimes law, 18 U.S.C. § 249, makes it a crime to willfully cause bodily injury through the use of fire, firearms, explosive and incendiary devices, or other dangerous weapons because of the “actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin of any person.” Congress passed updated federal hate crimes authority to guard against the failure of local officials to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute misconduct motivated by race or other protected characteristics and to ensure justice for victims and their families. We will be joined by civil rights experts to discuss factors considered prior to federal intervention; when the federal government can intervene; the interplay between states and the federal government when hate crimes occur; the application of federal hate crime laws; and prior cases where federal and local law enforcement entities vigorously investigated and prosecuted under the federal civil rights laws. We also expect to obtain important information concerning the need for legal protection against racial profiling and the effect of “Stand Your Ground” laws.

*We have confirmed participation from: Department of Justice Community Relations Service; American Civil Liberties Union; NAACP; the Human Rights Campaign and the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.*

We look forward to seeing you at this timely educational forum on civil rights laws. For more information, please contact Michelle Millben at [Michelle.Millben@mail.house.gov](mailto:Michelle.Millben@mail.house.gov) or Ifeoma Ike at [Ifeoma.Ike@mail.house.gov](mailto:Ifeoma.Ike@mail.house.gov), or by phone at (202) 225-6906.

Sincerely,

Rep. John Conyers, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
House Judiciary

Rep. Corrine Brown  
Member of Congress

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Rep. Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress

Rep. Alcee Hastings  
Member of Congress

Rep. Hank Johnson  
Member of Congress

Rep. Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Rep. Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Rep. Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress

Rep. Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

Rep. Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

Rep. Al Green  
Member of Congress

Rep. Emmanuel Cleaver  
Chairman  
Congressional Black Caucus