EMPIRE JUSTICE CENTER LAUNCHES
LISTENING TOUR FOCUSED ON PRETEXT STOPS

Empire Justice Center is launching a listening tour to hear from people in New York State who have been subject to pretext stops.

A pretext stop is when a person is stopped by a police officer while walking, biking or driving for one reason, usually a low-level traffic infraction, when in actuality the real reason is something else. Sometimes the real reason is that the officer wants to investigate that person but does not have a sufficient legal basis. Sometimes the officer believes the person may appear “suspicious.” And sometimes the stop may be for a completely unlawful reason – that the person may be a Person of Color in a neighborhood where the residents are predominantly white. These stops are often conducted in communities of color and are often directed against young Black men. Multiple studies demonstrate the racial disparities in who is subjected to pretext stops.

Former Monroe County First Assistant Public Defender Jill Paperno and other members of Empire Justice Center’s Civil Rights Practice Group will be interviewing those who have been subjected to pretext stops and meetings with community groups. The information we gather will be included in a comprehensive report about the scope and impact of pretext stops, expected this winter.

- If you have been subjected to a pretext stop, and would like to share your story to inform our research, please let us know.
- You can also sign up to receive updates information about our work on this topic.
- If you have other questions, please contact Jill Paperno atjpaperno@empirejustice.org, or 585.295.5739