

Nicole Anderson Cobb's Initial Questions Regarding The Statistics Committee Memo  
Prepared for the IDOT Traffic Data Task Force Meeting on September 17, 2014

September 17, 2014

Dear Fellow IDOT Traffic Stop Data Task Force Members and City of Urbana  
Community !

Greetings from Nicole Anderson Cobb, PhD. I hope this message reaches you well.

At the outset, I want to SINCERELY THANK the Statistics Subcommittee for their  
extensive efforts in getting so much information submitted to us in such a timely  
fashion.

To this end, I wanted to submit follow-up questions to you in writing so that you  
would have a sense of the questions I have upon reviewing the document.

I do apologize for the delay in submitting these questions, but hope that they can  
undergird tonight's meeting and future discussions moving forward.

I will submit the questions referencing each page of the report and hope that this  
committee or any of the other subcommittees can assist in answering them.

Thanks in advance for your consideration of these questions!

---Nicole Anderson Cobb, PhD, IDOT Traffic Stop Data Task Force Member, City of  
Urbana, 2014-2015

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Page 4:

---Can you please define the terms "moving violation", "equipment violation" and  
"license and registration violation" and include examples of each area relevant to  
our work?

---Can you please break down "equipment violations" specifically regarding what  
they would consist of?

Page 5:

---Can you define how you are using the terms "proportion" "rate" and "plurality"  
specifically in this context?

Page 6:

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---In your comments, you state that equipment, license and registration violations are more common among African American and Hispanic drivers. What accounts for this? Particularly, regarding license or registration stops, **procedurally**, what precipitates such a stop?

Page 8:

---Based on the data you have accessed, can you determine the financial disparities regarding stops i.e. can you account for the amount of money that each community has been fined along racial lines?

Page 9:

---Hispanics are more likely to be cited based on license and registration violations? Again, how are the stops determined and what precipitates such stops?

Page 10

---Here you argue that the numbers of searches are declining overall. However, graph #4 entitled "License/Registration above indicates that there is an increase in the number of searches based on license and registration and you reported earlier that the African Americans are the community stopped most often for such offenses?

---Here, you also report that the format for reporting searches changed frequently from 2004-2012. How exactly has the format changed over time and why?

Page 11

---According to your findings, African Americans are the majority of the drivers searched. How do we explain this? Based on what number of total searches over time? If we know this, why do we need to deploy the "veil of darkness" analysis in our assessment?

Page 12

---If African American and Hispanic drivers are more likely to be searched during a stop, why is this the case? And, if we know this, again, why do we need to use the veil of darkness analysis in our assessment?

Page 13

---If 1/3 of searches yield contraband, how does this break down along racial lines? Also, can you also give us some assessment of the stops that yield each kind of contraband? And can you break this down along racial lines?

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Page 15

If a small proportion of stops result in contraband, why then are African Americans searches at such disproportionate rates (i.e. finding on page 11)

Page 16

What is the total number of driver stopped over the nine-year period you have examined? And can this total number be broken out by race?

Pages 18-19

---I need more explanation of these graphs.

Page 22

---How are we to make sense of the racial disparities in the duration of stops?

Page 23

---Regarding the veil of darkness model to assess racial profiling, how does this model account for drivers with windows rolled down; or drivers without tinted windows--- since we know that there are racial distinctions regarding age of vehicle?

---Are we also taking into consideration season of year and stops?

---Given all the information you have provided for us statistically in the document, I am unclear as to how the veil of darkness model is useful in our work?

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Again, thank you in advance for your consideration of these initial questions. I am sure to have more to submit as we proceed, but wanted to at least document and circulate my initial queries for group consideration!

Respectfully,

Nicole Anderson Cobb, PhD, IDOT Task Force Member