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**Statement to the Community Regarding Racial Profiling, Bias in Policing,  
& Race Data Collection – August 11, 2009**

As the Vermont Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issues its report entitled “Racial Profiling in Vermont” today, we take a moment to reflect on some of the progress made in Vermont, the challenges that remain, and re-committing ourselves to continuing to work on this important issue.

We recognize that real and perceived bias in law enforcement on a variety of levels continues to permeate our society in the United States and here in Vermont. We are committed to the goal of policing professionally and without bias, and to leading our community on the ongoing effort in eliminating prejudice or profiling based on race, ethnicity, or any other perceived difference among individuals. Our responsibility is not only to police without bias but to act as a model by confronting and challenging bias when appropriate.

We are constantly working to mitigate any type of bias in policing through hiring practices, policy research and development, regular training for all of our employees in bias free policing, cultural competency, and diversity, as well as partnerships with our increasingly diverse community of color. Examples of these partnerships include, but are not limited to, the Uncommon Alliance (highlighted today as a grass roots community organization that brings law enforcement and community leaders together with representatives of our growing diverse community each month), The Greater Burlington Multicultural Center, The Association of Africans Living in Vermont, Vermont Refugee Resettlement, and many other community organizations. One highlight of these partnerships is the multi-agency, community-driven Race Data Collection Initiative we have undertaken, in collaboration with the South Burlington, Winooski, and University of Vermont police departments.

While the race data collection initiative that is in progress now is not the answer, nor will it be a magic bullet, it will give us an important administrative tool to measure police contact in a way not previously possible and will add a level of transparency to our operations that is critical in contemporary policing.

As we move forward, together with our community, we are committed to policing without bias as we believe decisions made based on race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other factor unrelated to individual behavior or reasonable suspicion is an example of ineffective law enforcement and is not reflective of our mission and core values.