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ACLU-PA Releases New App to Hold Law Enforcement Accountable

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PHILADELPHIA - The ACLU of Pennsylvania today launched Mobile Justice PA, a free smart phone app that allows Pennsylvanians to automatically record and upload cell phone videos of public interactions with law enforcement to the ACLU-PA. The same app is simultaneously being launched in 9 other states, including: Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Virginia and Washington DC. The Mobile Justice App is already in use in California, Colorado, Missouri, New York, and Oregon.

Mobile Justice PA is available for use on Android and iOS phones and can be downloaded for free through Apple's App Store or Google Play. It enables users to record, witness, and report interactions with law enforcement in public. The app also includes information about individuals' rights.

Videos captured on the Mobile Justice PA app will be automatically transmitted to the ACLU-PA and preserved, even if the user's phone is seized or destroyed or the video is deleted from the phone. A copy of the video will also be saved locally on the user's phone.

"We've seen countless examples of the importance of video recordings during police interactions," said Reggie Shuford, executive director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania. "This app empowers ordinary people to monitor police officers and hold them accountable."

The functions of the app include:

- » Record, which allows individuals to capture exchanges with police officers and other law enforcement officials in public places in audio and video files that are automatically sent to the ACLU-PA;
- » Witness, which sends out an alert to anyone with the app, giving them the option to go to the location and document the encounter when police stop someone;
- » Report, which allows the app user to complete an incident report and send it directly to the ACLU for review; and
- » Know Your Rights, which provides an overview of individuals' rights when stopped by the police.

While Mobile Justice PA is intended for use by bystanders, the ACLU-PA recognizes that some users may want to use it while they are involved in a police encounter. Anyone interacting with law enforcement should announce that they are reaching for a phone and that they are attempting to access the app to record the exchange, and the app should only be used to record law enforcement interactions in public settings.

The ACLU-PA has filed multiple lawsuits on behalf of individuals who were arrested or retaliated against for observing or recording police in the course of their public duties. In one of those cases, a police officer seized the phone used and erased the video. A list of these cases can be found at: www.aclupa.org/copwatch (<http://www.aclupa.org/copwatch>)

Learn more about Mobile Justice PA and download the app from the ACLU-PA's website at www.aclupa.org/mobile (<http://www.aclupa.org/mobile>)

Issue: Police Practices (<http://www.aclupa.org/news/category/police-practices>)

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