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December 2016

Dear Friend and Supporter,

The rise of the Black Lives Matter movement may best be associated with outrage over particular incidents regarding police interactions with the public, but they are fueled by a deep frustration with all of the criminal justice system's practices that have disparate impacts. The police shooting of Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, for instance, provided sorely needed attention to implicit biases underlying why his record included so many stops and minor charges. Native and immigrant communities share similar experiences and frustrations.

The LRC has represented some Black Lives Matter protestors, but our primary support of the movement's goals has best been expressed by our representation of clients whose cases receive far less publicity. In the last year, our attorneys won a misdemeanor assault trial based on self-defense in which the jury deliberated for as long as it took to present the case. The defendant had been in the process of complaining about something in a social security office when a security guard over-aggressively accosted her, placing his hands on her neck. A minor altercation ensued, all recorded and presented as prosecution evidence, but our attorneys convinced the jury that our client's actions were reasonable self-defense against highly excessive aggression and misuse of authority. Another case we represented that had similar dynamics at HCMC resulted in the prosecution's dismissal on the day of trial. The LRC supports the dignity of all members of our population to be free of being manhandled and criminalized.

Many aspects of the Legal Rights Center are unchanged over the course of our long history. We continue to operate by and for the interests of our founding coalition: the American Indian, African-American, and immigrant communities. One significant addition, however, is that as of July 2016 we have taken over the Council on Crime and Justice's program pertaining to over-criminalization and the long-term impacts of criminal records. (The Council on Crime and Justice dissolved as an organization during the year.) In addition to continuing the program's advocacy and education efforts, the LRC can now provide clients with full or brief representation for expungements, or to challenge licensing disqualifications or other overbroad impacts of criminal history.

With the acquisition of CCJ's program, the LRC now makes an impact throughout the continuum of juvenile and criminal justice: prior to juvenile court involvement but at a point of high risk (**before**), using restorative practices to stabilize school engagement and plug the pipeline to prison; at the point of court involvement (**during**), using holistic attorney

representation informed by community navigation to culturally-specific, or other, programming; and when a conviction has previously taken place (**after**), using attorney advice or representation to alleviate problems deriving from criminal records or corrections supervision.

When it comes to opposing mass criminalization, the Legal Rights Center is not just on the front lines, we are on all of the front lines.

Your needed financial support sustains us a community organization. Thank you for your consideration of a Donation.

Yours Truly,

Michael Friedman
Executive Director

The Legal Rights Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization; donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.