

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4/22/2015

East Haven and Announces Settlement With Woman Who Claimed Police Abuse

The American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut and the Town of East Haven announced today that they have settled a lawsuit stemming from a January 2013 traffic stop and detention of New Haven woman, Dominique Cash.

David McGuire, the ACLU of Connecticut's Legislative and Policy Director, explained, "We're pleased that the parties were able to come to a fair and equitable resolution of this matter."

McGuire continued, "Although Ms. Cash was not involved in the underlying incident which brought about her interaction with East Haven officers that day back in 2013, she was nevertheless stopped, removed from her car at gunpoint, and detained. At the time of the stop, Ms. Cash was eight months pregnant. Following the incident, the East Haven Police Department initiated internal investigations leading to the disciplining of several officers."

In January, the ACLU of Connecticut, on behalf of Ms. Cash, filed suit in federal court, alleging that Ms. Cash's constitutional rights were violated as a result of the January 2013 stop, a move which prompted both the Town and the ACLU to enter settlement talks.

East Haven Town Attorney Joseph Zullo explained, "Upon receiving the ACLU's lawsuit, we immediately assembled a litigation team to aggressively defend the case. At the Mayor's urging, we also reached out to the ACLU of Connecticut to ascertain whether the parties could reach a compromise."

Zullo continued, "Persistent settlement talks culminated in the present agreement, which immediately ends the litigation. While the settlement certainly contains a monetary component, that pales in comparison to the costs the taxpayers would have footed had the Town opted to engage in expensive, protracted litigation."

According to the release and settlement agreement filed today in the United States District Court, the Town of East Haven, while admitting no wrongdoing, has agreed to a monetary payment in full and final settlement of Ms. Cash's legal claims. A judge approved the settlement on Tuesday afternoon.

Dominique Cash added, "This was a traumatic incident for me. But this resolution helps me turn the page and move forward."

Mayor Joseph Maturo, Jr. explained, "The resolution of this case marks the end of a difficult chapter for the Town and our Police Department. Since the incidents which gave rise to this lawsuit, our Police Department has transformed into one of the best on the East Coast. We are immensely proud of our officers and our police leaders, who are now some of the best educated and best trained in the country."

McGuire explained, "As this case demonstrates, when police departments are committed to accountability and transparency, internal investigations yield meaningful results and subsequent corrective measures can be taken. The Town's fair and transparent handling of discipline in this case, along with its willingness to compromise rather than engage in protracted litigation, certainly signal a new era in relations between the East Haven Police Department and the community."

Maturo concluded, "Having obtained closure in this case, the Town and the Police Department can continue to move forward. We are optimistic that the training, policies, and procedures we have implemented have changed the culture of our department, helping to prevent incidents like this from occurring in the future."