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In anticipation of the upcoming 85th Texas Legislative Session, ECI has been actively monitoring interim charges as well as Senate and House hearings on issues that impact communities of color. Issues monitored include but are not limited to:

- Criminal Justice: bail, fines and fee reform, use of force by law enforcement; mental health diversion; videotaping confessions, initiatives for reducing the impact of criminal records; decriminalizing small amounts of marijuana; implicit bias training
- Juvenile Justice: raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 17 to 18
- Education: Reforms for reducing the school to prison pipeling
- Real Property: homeowners rights and property owner association restrictions; foreclosure reforms; making probate affordable for low income individuals
- Child Welfare: increasing kinship placements
- Voting Rights/Voting Restoration

ECI has begun coordinated legislator visits wherein we are presenting research supportive of our formal position on these issues.



Third Ward Community Development Housing Initiative

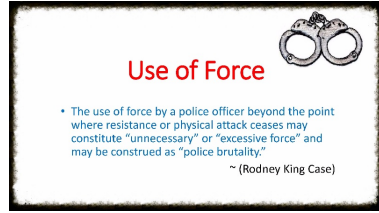
Under the leadership of ECI board president, and TMSL Interim Dean Dr. James M. Douglas, ECI convened its initial Third Ward Community Development Housing Initiative meeting. During the meeting held on August 19th in the Earl Carl Institute courtroom, community leaders and members engaged in discussions regarding the development of sustainable housing for faculty, staff and students in the third ward community. The primary purpose of the meeting was to launch ongoing discussions with community stakeholders to ensure community involvement in the planning and development of the third ward. The next steps include a survey of community development organizations to determine what services are being provided by each entity as well as a survey of faculty and staff about ideas that would strengthen interest in new housing opportunities.



ECI IN THE NEWS!

ECI has many exciting initiatives and programs that are marketed to the community and often receive coverage by local media outlets. Recently, Mani Nezami, ECI's Juvenile Justice Staff Attorney, was interviewed and quoted in a story aired by ABC News 13. The story covered the disproportionate impact African American students experience as far as being more likely to be suspected of crimes by school police than students of any other race. The story looked at police data from the HISD and Cy-Fair ISD. The story, entitled: *African-American Students Have Far More Run-Ins With School Cops* can be viewed at <http://abc13.com/news/data-black-students-have-far-more-run-ins-with-school-cops/1480334/>.

This story lends credence to a recent study by Yale Child Study Center found that **Implicit Bias may help explain high preschool expulsion rates for black children**. The study, which is truly disheartening, can be viewed at <http://news.yale.edu/2016/09/27/implicit-bias-may-help-explain-high-preschool-expulsion-rates-black-children>.



ECI Community Education

The Institute hosted a community forum entitled: *Bond and Bail, Fines and Fees: A Community Forum on Decriminalizing Poverty*. The purpose of the forum was to bring awareness to the issue of criminalizing the poor through the use of excessive fines and fees and bail. The goal of the forum was to discuss bail reform in Harris County and potential solutions to the problem as well as to bring awareness to the community of the right to an indigency hearing in municipal court before being jailed for failure to pay fines and fees. The event was covered in the Houston Chronicle in an article entitled *Harris County Decried for Hefty Bail, Jailing Poor Nonviolent Offenders*. The story can be viewed at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Harris-County-decried-for-hefty-bail-jailing-9175295.php>.



ECI Series on Excessive Force: A Roundtable Discussion

In light of ongoing tensions between law enforcement officers and people of color, the Earl Carl Institute hosted a roundtable discussion to facilitate open dialogue between law enforcement, youth, community activists, academics and elected officials. The discussion was both thought provoking and informative as African American thought leaders discussed topics such as:

- *The Demilitarization of our Police Forces;*
- *Implicit Bias/Racial Profiling; and*
- *Accountability*

This three-part roundtable series is sponsored by the Earl Carl Institute and Thurgood Marshall School of Law. It was facilitated by Dr. Howard Henderson of TSU's Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs.

This first discussion resulted in a number of proposed solutions for additional research, possible legislative proposals and community education.

Board Member Spotlight

This month ECI highlights Interim Dean and Distinguished Professor James M. Douglas. Dean Douglas currently serves as the President of the ECI Board of Directors and has championed the ECI as a board member for over 21 years. Dr. Douglas has previously served as Thurgood Marshall School of Law Dean and Texas Southern University President. Dean Douglas also currently serves as the President for the Houston NAACP. He is a strong voice and presence in the communities that we serve and we are honored to operate under his leadership.

With Dr. Douglas at the helm of ECI we anxiously anticipate the strides we will make in the near future. Please join us as we celebrate his unwavering commitment and dedication to upholding ECI's, TMSL's and TSU's mission and goals.



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