



# Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL  
THOMAS E. PEREZ AT THE EAST HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT INDICTMENT  
ANNOUNCEMENT**

BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

Thank you U.S. Attorney Fein. Civil rights enforcement is a joint venture between the Civil Rights Division and United States Attorneys offices nationwide. United States Attorney Fein has been a great leader and partner in enforcing our nation's civil rights laws, and I want to commend U.S. Attorney Fein, his excellent team of Assistant United States Attorneys and the dedicated agents of the New York office of the FBI, all of whom led the criminal investigation.

U.S. Attorney Fein has outlined the serious criminal charges contained in the indictment. I want to underscore again his statement that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. Each defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

At its core, this is an abuse of power case. Police officers are supposed to protect and serve, and the indictment alleges that the officers abused their power, and then added insult to injury by intimidating witnesses and creating a climate of fear.

Criminal prosecutions are critical because they address the most egregious incidents of police misconduct. I know from personal experience as a civil rights prosecutor that these cases can serve as a wake up call and begin the process of rebuilding a police department.

Criminal prosecutions are not the only tool we have to combat police misconduct. Recently, the Civil Rights Division completed a civil investigation of the East Haven Police Department using our authority under federal civil rights laws to investigate patterns or practices of police misconduct.

Following an investigation that began in September 2009, and was wholly separate and apart from the criminal investigation that resulted in today's indictment, we issued a lengthy report in which we found reasonable cause that EHPD engages in a pattern or practice of systematically discriminating against Latinos by targeting Latinos for discriminatory traffic enforcement, treating Latino drivers more harshly than non-Latino drivers after a traffic stop and intentionally failing to design and implement internal systems of control that would identify, track and prevent such misconduct. We found that the pattern or practice of unlawful conduct was deeply rooted in the Department's culture. We are hopeful that the city of East Haven will

work cooperatively with the Justice Department to develop and implement a court enforced, comprehensive blueprint for sustainable reform.

Criminal indictments focus on the conduct of specific individuals. Civil pattern or practice investigations focus on systematic problems within the Department. Both investigations are about accountability and ensuring that EHPD is able to carry out its critical mission of protecting and serving the community.

We will use every tool in our law enforcement arsenal to ensure that individual East Haven police officers, and the department as a whole, is carrying out its mission in a lawful manner. Effective policing and constitutional policing go hand in hand. We owe it to the community, and to all law abiding police officers who put their lives on the line every day, to address the serious challenges confronting the East Haven Police Department.

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