

ACLU of South Carolina Seeks Details on Government Mobile Phone Tracking in Nationwide Information Request

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CHARLESTON, SC –The ACLU of South Carolina today joined 33 other American Civil Liberties Union affiliates across the nation in seeking information from law enforcement agencies about when, why and how they are using cellphone location data to track local residents. Requests were submitted today by the ACLU of South Carolina to the Greenville County Sheriff's Office, the Myrtle Beach Police Department, and SLED in order to identify policies and practices at the local, county and state level.

Selected law enforcement agencies nationwide are being asked for information including:

- whether law enforcement agents demonstrate probable cause and obtain a warrant to access cellphone location data;
- statistics on how frequently law enforcement agencies obtain cellphone location data;
- how much money law enforcement agencies spend tracking cellphones and
- other policies and procedures used for acquiring location data.

Law enforcement's use of cellphone location data has been widespread for years, although it has become increasingly controversial recently. According to ACLU of South Carolina Legal Director Susan Dunn, "Cell phone technology has given law enforcement agents the unprecedented ability to track individuals' movements. The Constitution protects against unreasonable searches, and if government agencies are obtaining cell phone records, the conditions under which this is done are of great public interest."

Congress is considering the Geolocation Privacy and Surveillance Act, a bill supported by the ACLU that would require police to get a warrant to obtain personal location information. The bill would protect both historical and real-time location data, and would also require customers' consent for telecommunications companies to collect location data.

Today's requests are part of the ACLU's Demand Your dotRights Campaign, the organization's campaign to make sure that as technology advances, privacy rights are not left behind.

Requests were filed by the ACLU affiliates in Alabama, Arizona, Northern California, Southern California, San Diego and Imperial Counties, Connecticut, Washington D.C., Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Eastern Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

More information, including an interactive map, is available at: www.aclu.org/locationtracking