

Groups Seek Information on CBP's "Translation" Activities in Northern Border States

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Washington, D.C. - Last week an alliance of immigration advocacy groups represented by the Legal Action Center filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The FOIA requests seek information regarding CBP policies on providing translation assistance to other law enforcement agencies and on participating in 911 dispatch activities. The filing coincided with a federal agency [decision](#) [1] finding the U.S. Forest Service's policy of using Border Patrol agents as interpreters to be discriminatory. The alliance is seeking documents explaining the relevant legal authority, applicable procedural guidance, training materials, statistical data, and complaints filed with the government as a result of CBP's practices.

Over the past year, advocates in states along the northern border of the United States have reported that Border Patrol agents frequently "assist" other law enforcement agencies by serving as Spanish-English interpreters and participating in 911 dispatch activities. Capitalizing on their access to noncitizens, Border Patrol agents often use these opportunities to question individuals about their immigration status and, in many cases, initiate removal proceedings.

There is little public information about the scope and purpose of CBP's collaboration with other law enforcement agencies. The alliance hopes to promote greater transparency regarding these practices and includes the American Immigration Council, the Michigan Organizing Project/Alliance for Immigrants & Reform Michigan, Migrant Justice, the New York Immigration Coalition, the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and OneAmerica.

To view the FOIA requests in their entirety see:

- [FOIA request regarding CBP's translation assistance](#) [2] (May 31, 2012)
- [FOIA request regarding CBP's participation in 911 dispatch activities](#) [3] (May 31, 2012)

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Links:

[1] <http://nwirp.org/Documents/PressReleases/DecisionOfOASCRUSDareCivilRightsComplaintREDACTEDforRelease.pdf>

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[2] http://www.legalactioncenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/lac/FOIA_Request_5-31-12_CBP_Translation_Activities.pdf

[3] http://www.legalactioncenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/lac/FOIA_Request_5-31-12_CBP_911_Dispatch_Activities.pdf

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