

# Daily Journal

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## Gibson Dunn files racial profiling lawsuit against City of El Segundo

*According to the lawsuit, data collected under California's Racial and Identity Profiling Act shows that while less than 5% of El Segundo's population is Black, more than 20% of all law enforcement stops involve Black individuals*

By Douglas Saunders

A Microsoft Corp. employee who is Black accused the police in the City of El Segundo of racial profiling, citing data collected under California's Racial and Identity Profiling Act.

Keith Puckett, who works as a senior program manager, claims he was unlawfully detained by police twice in 2021. In one incident, six officers questioned him late at night after seeing a Black guest at his home. In another, an officer pulled him over for a license plate light that was out but let him go after finding no violations.

"We have brought this action to protect Mr. Puckett's constitutional rights, to hold the City accountable for its unlawful conduct and to compel it to stop racially profiling the residents of the El Segundo community," said Lauren M. Blas, a partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP who filed a civil rights lawsuit on behalf of Puckett.

According to the lawsuit, data collected under the act, known as RIPA,

shows that while less than 5% of El Segundo's population is Black, more than 20% of all law enforcement stops involve Black individuals. The complaint cites this as evidence of widespread racial profiling by the department.

The City of El Segundo said in a statement "Our policies prohibit biased-based policing and are in accordance with the law. Officers are also required to complete anti-bias training."

"Mr. Puckett's complaint relies on the alleged disparity between the number of African Americans who reside in El Segundo versus the number of African Americans who are involved in traffic stops in the city. The City believes that it would be more accurate to compare the number of traffic stops to the number of people who work in the city, visit the city to shop, eat, engage in recreation, do business in the city, travel through the city to go to the beach in El Segundo or nearby beach cities; and travel through the city on the way to LAX, one of the world's largest airports," the statement continued.

The complaint, filed in Los Angeles

County Superior Court, seeks compensatory damages and an injunction to bar the city from engaging in unconstitutional conduct and requires the adoption of appropriate policies and training for police officers. *Pucket v. City of El Segundo*, 24TRCV02121, (L.A. Super. Ct., filed June 25, 2024)

"Racism by law enforcement is unlawful, unconstitutional and harmful to everyone who experiences it, even when it doesn't involve violence," Blas said. "Even if it doesn't make national news, it's the kind of harassing, demeaning, insidious conduct that Black people and people of color have to contend with every day."

RIPA requires law enforcement agencies to collect and report detailed data on all stops and searches, aiming to eliminate racial and identity profiling. As of 2021, data from more than 12 million stops have been collected under RIPA, with annual reports analyzing the data and highlighting disparities in policing practices.

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