

Docs: Justice Department facilitated anti-Zimmerman protests

Posted By [Patrick Howley](#) On 12:59 PM 07/10/2013 In US | [No Comments](#)

A division of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) was deployed to Sanford, Florida in 2012 to provide assistance for anti-George Zimmerman protests, including a rally headlined by activist Al Sharpton, according to newly released documents.

The Community Relations Service (CRS), a unit of DOJ, reported expenses related to its deployment in Sanford to help manage protests between March and April 2012, [according to documents](#) obtained by the watchdog group Judicial Watch.

CRS spent \$674.14 between March 25-27 related to having been "deployed to Sanford, FL, to work marches, demonstrations, and rallies related to the shooting and death of an African-American teen by a neighborhood watch captain." CRS spent another \$1,142.84 for the same purpose between March 25-28.

CRS spent \$892.55 "to provide support for protest deployment in Florida" between March 30-April 1, and \$751.60 "to provide technical assistance to the City of Sanford, event organizers, and law enforcement agencies for the march and [rally on March 31.](#)"

Sharpton, who promoted the Tawana Brawley hoax in the 1980s and in 1995 led a protest against the "white interloper" owner of a Harlem clothing store that ended in a deadly shooting rampage at the store, was a featured speaker [at the March 31 rally](#), called "The March for Trayvon Martin," where he advocated for Zimmerman's prosecution.

CRS expenditures related to the anti-Zimmerman protests continued through mid-April. Between April 11 and April 12, CRS spent \$552.35 "to provide technical assistance for the preparation of possible marches and rallies related to the fatal shooting of a 17 year old African American male."

Local government officials noticed the Department of Justice's efforts in building "bridges of understanding" in Sanford.

"Congratulations to our partners, Thomas Battles, Regional Director, and Mildred De Robles, Miami-Dade Coordinator and their co-workers at the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service for their outstanding and ongoing efforts to reduce tensions and build bridges of understanding and respect in Sanford, Florida," wrote Amy Carswell, Miami-Dade County Community Relations Board Program Officer, in an April 16 email.

"Thank you Partner. You did lots of stuff behind the scene to make Miami a success. We will continue to work together," DOJ official Thomas Battles wrote in reply to Carswell.

"That's why we make the big bucks," Carswell replied.

CRS was established by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. According to the CRS web page, "The Community Relations Service is the Department's 'peacemaker' for community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, and national origin. Created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, CRS is the only Federal agency dedicated to assist State and local units of government, private and public organizations, and community groups with preventing and resolving racial and ethnic tensions, incidents, and civil disorders, and in restoring racial stability and harmony."

A Department of Justice spokesperson said that she did not know off the top of her head what CRS' role was in the anti-Zimmerman protests but is currently trying to figure out that answer. The Daily Caller will update this story upon receiving a statement from DOJ.

UPDATE:

DOJ spokesperson Dena Iverson emailed a statement to The Daily Caller, saying, "The Community Relations Service was in Florida as part of their mandated mission," along with a link to the [CRS's website](#).

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