The Stanford Open Policing project -- a project to collect and standardize nation-wide data on vehicle and pedestrian stops from law enforcement -- generously makes its data open for researchers to freely use. There is a missed opportunity for the state of Massachusetts to use this data to lead conversations about police officers and racial profiling. Charlie Baker recently signed into legislation a number of police reform laws which require law enforcement certification to be completed by an independent panel. Additionally, it allows public access to police misconduct investigation records and places limits on police use of face recognition technology.

While this is an encouraging step forward to reform, the legislation does nothing to place state agencies accountable for unfair profiling practices *or* encourage systematized review of stops, searches, arrests, etc. to view for unfair treatment of target populations. As can happen in fairly left-leaning states and cities, people -- led by their own biases and heuristic thinking -- may assume problems of racial profiling are limited to explicit cases of racism.

In light of this, I want to highlight that race continues to play a decisive factor in predicting the likelihood of stops by state police. In addition to highlighting the problem and its continued trends, I'd like to explore what a "fairer" rate of stops would look like. This would provide law enforcement agencies benchmarks for improvement and establish a precursory level of accountability.

This, ideally, could push legislators and law enforcement agencies in Massachusetts to consider how useful police data is and specifically assess the need for it to be reported by an independent agency for more than just state police.

For this project I'm using the Massachusetts state police dataset provided by the Stanford Open Policing Project, which makes this data freely available. For Massachusetts, the data are limited only to state police and car stops. Despite that limitation, data are available from 2006 to 2015 -- at nearly 3.5 million stops, there are plenty of points to show trends. I plan to create a model to predict the likelihood of given races prompting a stop being completed, in addition to the likelihood of car searches, warnings, citations, arrests among other incidents. I also will examine and model these trends across counties and municipalities in Massachusetts.

My project will deliver my source code for data analysis, a paper discussing my methodology and findings, and a slide deck to present my findings to stakeholders. Eventually, as time allows, I would like to turn this into an interactive website whereby Massachusetts residents can view these trends for their own counties or municipalities.