



## Charges Against Police Officers Is Only One Step Milwaukee Police Department Must Be Investigated As Well

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** October 9, 2012

**CONTACT:** Chris Ahmuty, Executive Director, (414) 272-4032 z 213, [cahmuty@aclu-wi.org](mailto:cahmuty@aclu-wi.org)

MILWAUKEE, WI – Today, the Milwaukee County district attorney’s office charged four Milwaukee police officers with crimes for conducting illegal body cavity and strip searches. Allegations against officers in police District 5 caused the Milwaukee Police Department to reassign at least seven officers and a supervisor in March 2012. The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin filed a public records request with the department on March 28, 2012 in an attempt to assess whether the department is following its own strip search and body cavity search procedures. The department has been largely unresponsive to the ACLU of Wisconsin’s repeated requests.

Christopher Ahmuty, Executive Director of the ACLU of Wisconsin, released the following statement regarding the charges:

The ACLU of Wisconsin has been waiting for months for charges to be issued in this disturbing matter. We welcome the charges issued today by the district attorney’s office. Hopefully, the community will learn more about the incidents that gave rise to the charges as the prosecution of these four officers moves forward.

We now want the following:

- justice for the victims of these crimes,
- due process and other rights that all suspects are entitled to under our Constitution for the police officers, and
- an opportunity for the community to better understand how sworn police officers could engage repeatedly in such criminal activity.

What’s more, the investigation into this matter should include a separate evaluation of the Milwaukee Police Department as an organization and its policies and practices which may have fostered police misconduct. If there are problems in the department that go beyond these four officers, even if it does not involve criminal conduct, the citizens of Milwaukee need to know. In all likelihood, there are changes to supervision, training and behaviors that must be made by the department and the Fire and Police Commission.

No Milwaukee resident, regardless of the crime rate in their neighborhood, should be subject to sexual assault on our city’s streets by police officers. These charges are an important step in identifying obstacles to professional police service for all Milwaukee neighborhoods and residents. The ACLU of Wisconsin will continue to press the department and commission for answers and action.

The ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation is a non-profit civil liberties and civil rights organization working to protect the rights of Wisconsinites. For more on the work of the American Civil Liberties Union and Foundation of Wisconsin, visit our [webpage](#), like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on Twitter [@ACLUofWisconsin](#) and [@ACLUMadison](#).

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