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**STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
RELEASE REPORT ON RACE, DIVERSITY, AND PROSECUTION**

As part of its mission to further public safety, fairness, and trust in the role of the prosecutor, the State Attorney's Office, in partnership with Florida International University and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, is proud to release the second part of its Advancing Prosecutorial Effectiveness and Fairness Report Series.

The report, titled "Race, Ethnicity, and Prosecution in Clay, Duval and Nassau Counties, Florida," focuses on the extent of racial and ethnic disparities relating to outcomes of prosecutorial decision-making at five distinct stages of a criminal case. Those decision points are case filing; charge changes from arrest to filing; disposition type; charge changes from filing to disposition; and sentencing.

"We received unprecedented access to the administrative data and prosecutors at all levels of the office to objectively measure racial and ethnic disparities," said Professor Besiki Kutateladze, FIU lead researcher. "We are grateful for this partnership and commitment to transparency and racial justice."

After a review of nearly 89,000 cases from 2017 and 2018, researchers found that, overall, the influence of race or ethnicity was minimal and that race was not an influential factor in filing decisions or reducing charges.

However, there were several additional takeaways and areas to further review for possible improvements. For example, data shows that black defendants were more likely to have their cases,

particularly felony cases, dismissed compared to white and Hispanic defendants. Data also shows that black defendants also were least likely to receive pre-filing and post-filing diversion, particularly for drug offenses. Diversion programs are highly regimented alternatives to the traditional court process that hold defendants accountable for their actions while preventing a conviction.

The report, said State Attorney Melisa Nelson, is a “conversation starter” about when, where and how race plays a role in the decisions prosecutors make. Coinciding with the report’s release, the office held a panel discussion in the community about the report and the topic.

“We cannot achieve the important goal of improving public safety without an unwavering commitment to fairness and impartiality,” said Nelson. “If we are truly committed to treating people equally, we must work hard to uncover or remove unconscious biases from our decision-making process, too.”

Along with offices in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Tampa, the Fourth Circuit Office began a partnership with FIU and Loyola University on this two-year, data-driven project funded by the MacArthur Foundation. The final report focusing on prosecutorial performance indicators will be released sometime in early 2020.

See the report in its entirety at <https://bit.ly/2kePedw>.