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mrcannon@uh.edu**UH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY STUDY TARGETS TASER USE****City of Houston Commissions the Examination of HPD Policy, Training and Use of Tasers**

HOUSTON, April 16, 2007—The University of Houston Center for Public Policy (CPP) will study how the use of Taser electric stun guns has affected the Houston community and its police officers. The study was commissioned by the city of Houston and will be overseen by the city controller's office.

"Among other things we'll look at whether Houston Police Department (HPD) officers are discharging the Tasers on any populations disproportionately and whether the cause is combative and dangerous behavior or profiling," Jim Granato, CPP director, said. "We'll also look at whether or not Tasers have reduced serious injuries to suspects and officers by giving officers an alternate way to approach combative suspects."

Researchers will look at data from the nearly 1,000 times a Taser has been discharged since the policy was implemented in December 2004. They'll look at the actions leading up to the discharge of the Taser, the neighborhoods where Tasers were discharged, and the demographic characteristics of the officers and the people who were shocked.

In addition to using data already collected by HPD, researchers will gather independent information through focus groups with HPD officers who have used Tasers and those who have not.

The CPP is working collaboratively with researchers from Sam Houston State University who will examine HPD's policies and procedures on the use of Tasers and officer training.

The study will be completed by the end of the summer.

Since 1981, CPP has provided the Houston community with impartial research in public policy, politics and economics. The center also is home to the Survey Research Institute led by professor of political science Richard Murray, and the Institute Regional Forecasting headed by professor of economics Barton Smith. Additionally, the CPP oversees UH's government internship programs in Washington, D.C., Austin and Houston as well as numerous conferences and seminars open to the public.

For more information about the UH Center for Public Policy, please visit www.uh.edu/cpp/.

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