



COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Discretion Versus Discrimination

Discretion in policing allows for many positive results in interactions with citizens. Officers are able to make decisions within the context of each particular incident. Imagine that you are pulled over for speeding. In some circumstances, the police officer can use his or her discretion and issue a warning rather than a ticket. The decision may be based on a variety of factors including,

for example, your conduct during the interaction. Unfortunately, discretion can result in discrimination. If a decision on whether to write a ticket were based on ethnicity/race, gender, or religion, the officer would be engaging in discrimination. As with many issues in policing, a thin line exists between appropriate and inappropriate conduct.