

Stop-and-Frisk MYTH BUSTERS



Myth #1: Stop-and-Frisk reduces crime and keeps people safer.

"[Stop-and-Frisk] is a program that is effective... you used to not be able to walk down the streets of this city safely and today you can walk every neighborhood during the day and most neighborhoods at night. ." – Ray Kelly

FACT: No research has ever proven the effectiveness of New York City's stop-and-frisk regime, and the small number of arrests, summonses, and guns recovered demonstrates that the practice is ineffective. Crime data also do not support the claim that New York City is safer because of the practice. While violent crimes fell 29 percent in New York City from 2001 to 2010, other large cities experienced larger violent crime declines without relying on stop and frisk abuses: 59 percent in Los Angeles, 56 percent in New Orleans, 49 percent in Dallas, and 37 percent in Baltimore.¹

Stop-and-Frisk abuses corrode trust between the police and communities, which makes everyone *less safe*. Don't believe us? Then listen to NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly in 2000: "[A] large reservoir of good will was under construction when I left the Police Department in 1994. It was called community policing. But it was quickly abandoned for tough-sounding rhetoric and dubious stop-and-frisk tactics that sowed new seeds of community mistrust."

Myth #2: Mayor Bloomberg's stop-and-frisk policies cut the number of murders in half.

"Over the past 10 years, there were 5,430 murders in New York City, compared with 11,058 in the decade before Mayor Bloomberg took office. That's a remarkable achievement — 5,628 lives saved — attributable to proactive policing strategies that included stops." – NYPD Spokesperson Paul Browne

FACT: The murder drop happened *before* Bloomberg took office and *before* the explosion in stop-and-frisk. The year before the mayor took office there were 649 murders in New York City. In 2011, there were 526 murders. This 19 percent drop is important, but to suggest that murders were cut in half because of stop-and-frisk is simply wrong.

Further, stop-and-frisk has not reduced the number of people who fall victim to shootings. In 2002, there were 1,892 victims of gunfire and 97,296 stops. In 2011, there were still 1,821 victims of gunfire but a record 685,724 stops.²

Myth #3: Stop-and-Frisk gets guns off the street and, therefore, prevents murders.

"There's no denying that stops take guns off the street and save lives." – Ray Kelly

FACT: Guns are found in less than 0.2 percent of stops. That is an unbelievably poor yield rate for such an intrusive, wasteful and humiliating police action. Yet, stop-and-frisk has increased more than 600 percent under Bloomberg and Kelly. And the rate of finding guns is worsening as the NYPD stops more innocent people each year.

Myth #4: Stop-and-Frisk is not discriminatory.

"[B]lacks made up 53 percent of the stop subjects and were 66 percent of the violent crime suspects in 2011... For Hispanics, 34 percent were stop subjects and 26 percent were violent crime suspects." – NYPD Spokesperson Paul Browne

FACT: Comparing police stops to violent crime suspects is bad math. Only 11 percent of stops in 2011 were based on a description of a violent crime suspect. On the other hand, from 2002 to 2011, black and Latino residents made up close to 90 percent of people stopped, and about 88 percent of stops – more than 3.8 million – were of innocent New Yorkers. Even in neighborhoods that are predominantly white, black and Latino New Yorkers face the disproportionate brunt. For example, in 2011, Black and Latino New Yorkers made up 24 percent of the population in Park Slope, but 79 percent of stops. This, on its face, is discriminatory.

¹ All crime data are from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports.

² Data on shooting victims obtained by Murray Weiss of DNAinfo and reported on June 5, 2010.