

# New york city stop and frisk policy essay sample

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



In the city where crime was at all time high during the nineties, the top politicians in New York City decided that something should be done to help stop crime. The NYPD implemented the " Stop and Frisk" policy to bring the crime rate down in the city. However it did more than exceed its expectations and it has been more of a negative than a positive. This policy created tension between the NYPD and the law abiding citizens of New York City because thousands stopped were people of the Black and Latino communities. According to the US Census Bureau NYC has a population of 8,336,697 people. Blacks and Latinos make up 53% of the city population. 85% of New Yorkers stopped are Black and Latino men and 6% of that number actually led to an arrest (NYCLU). At this shocking percentage, it's apparent that this policy is discriminatory against Blacks and Latinos. Not only is this policy discriminatory, it has violated citizens constitutional rights and been deemed racial profiling. In defense of the " Stop and Frisk " policy and proclaiming that it works is evident.

People often know New York City for its skyscrapers, broadways shows, and being the birthplace of hip hop. However many people did not know that New York was one of the most dangerous cities in the United States in the 80's and 90's decades. The city that never sleeps houses approximately 8,336,697 people. Over 50 percent of the people living in the city are either Black or Hispanic. In attempts to keep the crime rates down Commissioner Raymond Kelly is continuing to practice the Policy of " Stop and Frisk." It is very difficult for a police officer to pinpoint whether someone is a bad guy or not. The " Stop and Frisk " policy was not established to target black and Hispanics but to target high crime areas in the city. The Commissioner also

stated that the program has been effective because there was a 29 percent drop in violent crimes from 2001 -2010 (www. nyclu. org). The “ Stop and Frisk” policy is the practice of police officers to randomly stop people on the street that look suspicious of criminal activity.

In some instances officers will conduct a search or frisk of an individual who “ fits the description” holding “ suspicious objects” or lives in a “ high crime” area. This policy was implemented to reduce the crime in NYC and make residents feel safer in their own neighborhoods. But with nearly 90% of stops being black and Latino people this raise concern about the effectiveness and purpose of this policy. 9 out of 10 people stopped are innocent (NYCLU). These law abiding citizens are either stopped going to or coming from work, in front of their homes or just walking down the street. Under the law, an officer is not allowed to stop a person without probable suspicion that the individual is engaging in criminal activity or about to engage in criminal activity. The officer will ask the individual for ID to make sure they are from the area and maybe run their information through the system to make sure they don't have any prior charges with the law or warrants for their arrest. They will also ask questions like “ where are you going?” or “ where are you coming from?” If the officer feels the need to frisk a person it's because the person looks suspicious enough to be carrying weapons or drugs. A report also has to be made by the officer for each stop in which they will have to record when the stop was made.

The “ Stop and Frisk” policy is one of the many defenses that the city of New York has to stopping crime. When a suspect is stopped and searched it

usually has a probable cause behind it. Police officers receive proper training to the way that they are to search and frisk people. Individuals who are usually stopped usually make the situation more complicated than what it really is by not complying with the officer performing the procedure. When a police officer makes a stop they probably have received a call stating that there has been a crime committed in that area. Statistics show that Blacks commit 66 percent of all robberies and about 80 percent of all shootings in the city, and if you add the percentage of shootings and robberies done by Hispanics, that will account for 98 percent of all shootings in the city (Zimring). In the book “ The City that became Safe: New York’s Lessons for Urban Crime” the author stated that the policies that were in place have helped to make the city safer.

According to statistics taken by the New York Civil Liberties Union show starting from 2002 until 2012 the number of blacks and Latinos stopped jumped from 122, 285 to 449, 369. Based on the NYPD quarterly data, from January 2012 to March of that same year 203, 500 new Yorkers were stopped and frisked which is average of 2, 200 people per day. 87% of that number was black and Hispanic. (www. nyclu. org). It is evident that communities of black and Hispanic people are being targeted more than any other race and are more likely to be stopped than whites. These officers are racial profiling and that is an illegal act. It violates the rights of the citizens under the US constitution that is supposed to protect unreasonable searches and prohibits racial profiling. New York City black and Latino men are afraid to walk in their own neighborhoods because the police stops are so frequent. Police officers go as far as humiliating residents in the street throwing people

down on the ground or up against a wall being extra aggressive searching the individual assuming they have drugs and weapons.

In some instances these frisk include the search of the male genital area in the street violating their privacy. With the NYPD doing so many frequent stops and being aggressive, black and latino people don't feel protected by these officers or safe in their own neighborhood. In a video titled " The Hunted and Hated; Inside the look at the NYPD's Stop and Frisk Policy" 17 year old Alvin Melathe secretly recorded one of his interactions with 2 NYPD police officers in Harlem New York. He too been affected by the stop and frisk policy like thousands of others but he wanted to expose the NYPD and how they really deal with the citizens of New York City. On June 3, 2001, Alvin walking down a Harlem block was stopped by and NYPD officer & sergeant were patrolling in a patrol car. As soon as the sirens went off and the officers approached him, Alvin began complaining of already being stopped 2 blocks prior to them stopping him. The officers told him he looked suspicious when he was only coming from his girlfriend's house.

They cursed at him telling him to " shut the fuck up", threatening to break his arm and punch him in the face while in the process of searching his clothing and book bag. Alvin kept asking why they was stopping him and the sergeant and officer kept telling him to " shut his fucking mouth" referred to him as a " Mutt" because of his Hispanic race. Moments after the altercation, Alvin then proceeded to call 911 to file a complaint about the officer and sergeant. He knew the complaint wouldn't be enough but since he recorded the interaction between the officers and himself he knew that was not going

to be ignored. Alvin was the only 1 to ever record a stop and frisk in action and with this video it brought forth veteran NYPD officers that are actually against this policy because it is racial profiling, to actually admit that the situation with Alvin happens on a daily basis. These officers know what they doing is wrong but they are specifically told to “ violate rights” of certain classes of people by their own captains. They have to fulfill quotas to make a certain amount of stops and arrest monthly even though the New York State prohibits the use of quotas for arrest and summons.

So the police department covers that detail and act like these quotas simply don't exist. If they don't complete the quota, these officers are faced with a series of consequences that in include denial of vacation time, time apart from families, unwanted assignments or worse. So instead of standing up for what is right to protect and serve the citizens of New York like they signed up for, they instead look at the situation as its either “ us or them”. They are told to hunt the citizens and not care that these people are mostly innocent. Some cops fill their monthly quotas just to do so but in the situation with Alvin it's clear these officers do not have any respect and was racial profiling. In summary, even when 87% of the NYC population is being hunted and stopped by police, complaints of feeling unsafe and racial profiling is not enough to stop this Stop and frisk policy.

Mayor Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Ray Kelly are both in positions of power to protect the citizens of New York but defend the use of this policy. None of which is a Black or Hispanic Male, they could never relate to the prejudice faced against black and Latino men by the police officers. The

numbers indicated that every 9 persons out of 10 stopped is innocent and because they think the more they stop people the safer the city will be against crime but the real crime is targeting the black and Latino people; Violating their constitutional rights racial profiling and nothing being done about it. More people like Alvin need to be brave and come forth with evidence against these officers hunting innocent people and more officers need to stand up to the fact that racial profiling is unlawful and not discriminate against blacks and latinos when making stops.