**Michael Bloomberg: ‘Stop and frisk’ keeps New York safe**

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By Michael R. Bloomberg August 18, 2013

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New York is the [safest big city in the nation](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/pr/pr_2010_nyc_safest_big_city.shtml), and our crime reductions have been steeper than any other big city’s. For instance, if New York City had the murder rate of Washington, D.C., 761 more New Yorkers would have been killed last year. If our murder rate had mirrored the District’s over the course of my time as mayor, 21,651 more people would have been killed. That’s more than Georgetown University’s student body, faculty and administrative staff.

Based on crime data, we know that [more than 90 percent](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/analysis_and_planning/murder_in_nyc_2012.pdf) of those 21,651 individuals would have been black and Hispanic. Some of them would have been children.

But even one murder is too many, and last year New York City had 419. The Post never published an editorial lamenting the loss of those innocent lives. Nor has The Post published an editorial at any point during my 11½ years as mayor about the crime in our city’s minority neighborhoods and its toll on innocent people. When our police officers were gunned down in the line of duty, there were no Post editorials about the lives and liberties they died protecting — nor about their sacrifice.

And yet this month, in two separate editorials, The Post lectured our police department about protecting the civil liberties of New Yorkers. The Post swallowed — hook, line and sinker — the attack leveled on the New York Police Department’s (NYPD) practice of stopping, questioning and frisking by an ideologically driven federal judge who has a history of ruling against the police.

This judge ruled that our police officers on patrol — a majority of whom are black, Hispanic and other minorities — engaged in “indirect racial profiling.” Never once in the judge’s 197-page opinion did she mention the lives that have been saved because of the stops those officers made. Instead, throughout the recent trial, she showed disdain for our police officers and the dangerous work they do.

The men and women who protect our city from criminals and terrorists deserve better than to have their integrity impugned, in a courtroom or a newspaper, especially when the facts are so clearly on their side.

Here are the facts: In 2004, I signed a law banning racial profiling. Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and I have zero tolerance for it. We have worked hard to strengthen police-community relations, which are better today than at any point since the 1960s. Part of that work has involved giving black and Latino community leaders what they demand and deserve: a stronger police presence.

Unlike many cities, where wealthy areas get special treatment, the NYPD targets its manpower to the areas that suffer the highest crime levels. Ninety percent of all people killed in our city — and 90 percent of all those who commit the murders and other violent crimes — are black and Hispanic. It is shameful that so many elected officials and editorial writers have been largely silent on these facts.

Instead, they have argued that police stops are discriminatory because they do not reflect the city’s overall census numbers. By that flawed logic, our police officers would stop women as often as men and senior citizens as often as young people. To do so would be a colossal misdirection of resources and would take the core elements of police work — targeting high-crime neighborhoods and identifying suspects based on evidence — out of crime-fighting. The absurd result of such a strategy would be far more crimes committed against black and Latino New Yorkers. When it comes to policing, political correctness is deadly.

That the proportion of stops generally reflects our crime numbers does not mean, as the judge wrongly concluded, that the police are engaged in racial profiling; it means they are stopping people in those communities who fit descriptions of suspects or are engaged in suspicious activity.

As a black Brooklyn detective with nearly 20 years on the job recently told the Daily News, “Stop-and-frisk is never about race. It’s about behavior.” If an officer sees someone acting in a manner that suggests a crime is afoot, he or she has an obligation to stop and question that person. That’s Policing 101, and it’s practiced all over the country. The difference is that in New York — unlike in many other cities — police officers are required to fill out a form every time they make a stop, identifying why the stop was made and the race of the person.

Of the 24 million interactions that New York police officers have with the public each year, about 500,000 — or 2 percent — involve a stop. The average officer on patrol makes about one stop every two weeks, hardly an excessive number.

Amazingly, out of several million stops that have happened over the past decade, the advocates who brought the case could identify only 19 stops that they believe were unjustified — and the judge disagreed with them on a majority of even those handpicked cases, finding that 10 of the 19 stops were in fact justified, even though they did not lead to an arrest. By doing so, the judge acknowledged that stops that do not end in arrest are often legitimate; those scoping out a robbery, or lying in wait of a potential victim, can be stopped and deterred even if they cannot be arrested.

Nevertheless, the judge used a questionable analysis of police officers’ paperwork, which found that only 6 percent of stops were unjustified, as a basis for imposing a court-appointed monitor to oversee the NYPD’s practice of stop-question-frisk, as well as to mandate specific programmatic changes to policing, even though she has no experience in policing.

Her decision was hardly a surprise. Even before the case began, as media have reported, the judge offered strategic advice to the plaintiffs about how to file the lawsuit in a way that would ensure she heard it, rather than another judge. Blind justice gave way to brazen activism.

Every American has a right to walk down the street without being targeted by the police because of his or her race or ethnicity. At the same time, every American has a right to walk down the street without getting mugged or killed. Both are civil liberties — and we in New York are fully committed to protecting both equally, even when others are not.