

ACLU Wisconsin: Semi-annual report finds that Milwaukee Police Department continues to stop and frisk without reasonable suspicion

Posted on Thursday, Oct 28, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MILWAUKEE — The ACLU of Wisconsin called on the Milwaukee Police Department to provide specific plans on how they plan to address a semi-annual report issued today that found that nearly half of all documented frisks — and more than 20% of pedestrian stops — failed to show constitutionally-required reasonable suspicion.

This comes after the release of last month's annual report showing that MPD continues to subject Black residents and, in some cases, Latinx residents at significantly higher rates of traffic stops, pedestrian stops, and frisks than white residents.

“While the MPD touts improvement in providing evidence of reasonable suspicion for frisks, it is clear that more than three years into the agreement, about half of all frisks still do not establish reasonable suspicion. The MPD still fails to demonstrate sufficient reasonable suspicion for all types of police encounters, except traffic stops,” said Shaadie Ali, interim executive director of the ACLU of Wisconsin. “While that may be better than it was in the past, MPD should be explaining in great detail how it intends to reach full compliance - not touting a lesser failure. MPD also needs to explain how it is going to address the profound racial disparities in stop and frisk rates found in the report issued last month.”

“MPD is eager to pat itself on the back after the release of the report, but it is clear that full compliance with the requirements of the settlement remains far out of reach,” said Karyn Rotker, senior staff attorney of the ACLU of Wisconsin. “There are still glaring deficiencies in documentation and a lack of reasonable suspicion in a substantial number of the stops and frisks made by MPD. We still must see much more progress and consistency needed from the department.”

The report also showed the following:

- Contraband was only found in 26% of frisks.
- In District 2, on the near southside, and District 6, on the southwest side, only 36% and 27% of frisks, respectively, showed reasonable suspicion.
- Over half of the subjects of police encounters are Black (62.5%)
- 77% of community members subjected to frisks are Black

“Review of body-worn camera video for both this report and the annual report showed that MPD officers often failed to document frisks altogether,” said Emma Shakeshaft, staff attorney and researcher with the ACLU of Wisconsin.