



New York City Comptroller
John C. Liu

NEWS RELEASE

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**NYC COMPTROLLER JOHN C. LIU PRAISES
SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR ED LEE FOR
DROPPING PLAN TO ADOPT “STOP AND FRISK”**

August 3rd Letter from Liu to Lee Described Damage Caused by “Stop and Frisk” in NYC

NEW YORK, NY – City Comptroller John C. Liu today praised San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee for listening to the concerns raised by many opponents of “stop and frisk” policies and halting his plan to implement the discredited law enforcement strategy in the Bay Area.

Comptroller Liu wrote to Mayor Lee on August 3 urging him to reconsider enacting a “stop and frisk” policy and cautioned him that “in New York City, ‘stop and frisk’ has devolved into nothing more than governmental racial profiling” and has proven itself ineffective as a police tactic.

“Mayor Lee understands the hard lessons we’ve learned in New York. Plain and simple, ‘stop and frisk’ is racial profiling and violates the rights of men, women, and children in communities of color,” said Comptroller Liu. “We commend Mayor Lee for demonstrating that a strong leader listens to the diversity of voices and opinions and not just to those who agree with them. We encourage Mayor Bloomberg to take a page from Mayor Lee’s book.”

Of the nearly 700,000 residents that New York City police stopped and frisked last year, 87 percent were black or Latino. The New York Civil Liberties Union has reported that nine out of 10 people stopped were innocent of any crime and that — despite City Hall’s assertion that the policy is effective at taking guns off the street — no gun was recovered in 99.9 percent of stops.

“‘Stop and frisk’ deepens divisions between communities of color and the police, and harms the relationships that need to be strengthened for a safe and secure City,” said Comptroller Liu.

Comptroller Liu has called for “stop and frisk” to be abolished. The Comptroller’s schedule today includes visits to National Night Out Against Crime events in five police precincts across New York City to promote the partnerships between communities and police that increase public safety.

FULL TEXT OF COMPTROLLER LIU’S LETTER TO MAYOR LEE:

August 3, 2012

The Honorable Ed Lee
Mayor
City Hall, Room 200
One Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mayor Lee,

It's always wonderful to see you on the occasions you come to New York City.

I understand that you're soliciting input from officials in other cities on the usefulness of the "stop and frisk" police tactic, with an eye toward instituting "stop and frisk" in San Francisco. I'd like to share my perspective from New York City, which, as you know, has employed the tactic extensively for some time.

The simple fact is, in New York City, "stop and frisk" has devolved into nothing more than governmental racial profiling – which, I think you'd agree, has no place in American society.

Under "stop and frisk," police stopped New Yorkers nearly 700,000 times last year; 87 percent of those stopped were either black or Latino. The tactic has poisoned the relationship between police and communities of color, making efforts to battle crime worse, in my view. Young black men, especially, report being stopped repeatedly – thrown against a wall, spread-eagled, frisked, and told to empty their pockets, all in front of bystanders.

"Stop and frisk" is much more than just a minor inconvenience; it is deeply humiliating and offensive.

What is the purpose of this humiliating racial profiling? According to the New York Civil Liberties Union, nine out of 10 people stopped were innocent of any crime, and 99.9 percent of the time, no gun was retrieved. When only one out of 1,000 stops uncovers a gun, it isn't an effective police tactic; it's a civil-rights violation.

This discriminatory tactic has also become a financial risk for New York City. Two public-interest law groups have filed "stop and frisk" related lawsuits, and a federal judge has granted class-action status to the plaintiffs in one of those cases. Given the large number of people affected by "stop and frisk," New York City faces potentially significant exposure if more individuals file suits seeking monetary damages.

For all these reasons, I've called for New York City to abolish "stop and frisk." San Francisco would do well to avoid this divisive and costly tactic.

If you'd like, I'd be happy to discuss this matter with you further.

Sincerely,

John C. Liu

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