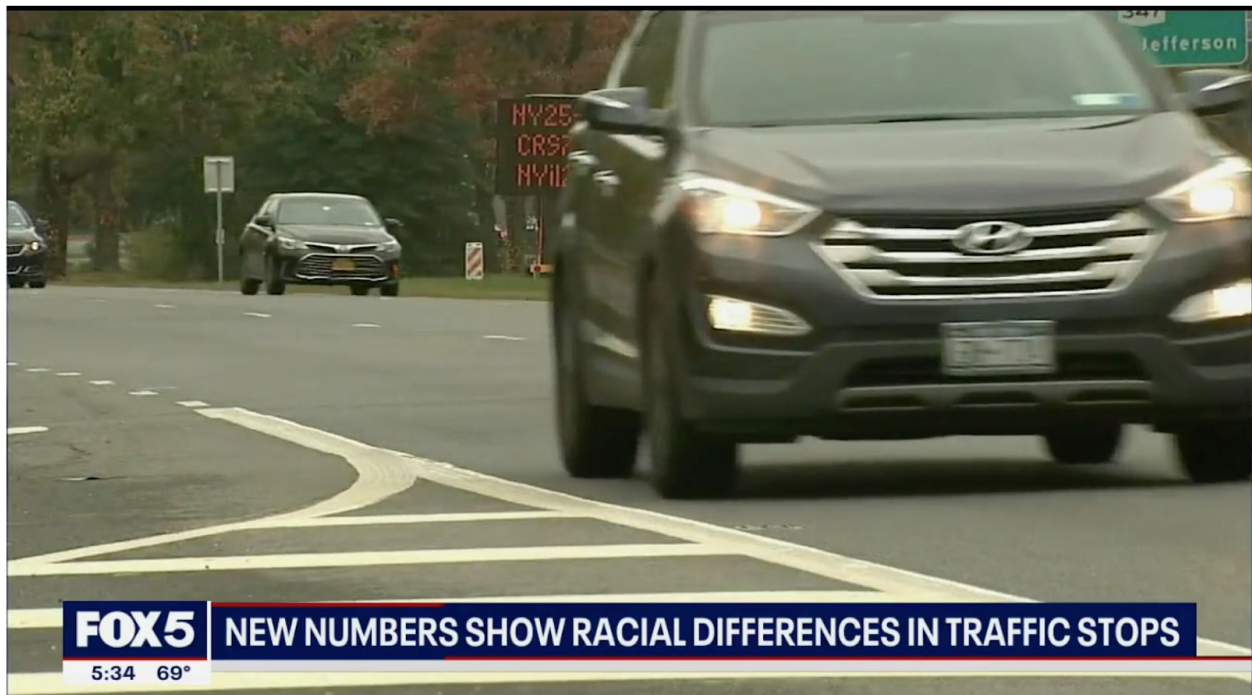


# Vehicle stops in Suffolk County had racial disparities, report says

**FOX5****NEW NUMBERS SHOW RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN TRAFFIC STOPS**

5:34 69°

**HAUPPAUGE, N.Y.** - Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone shared what some call shocking statistics on traffic stops collected over a one-year period. Among the findings: the police department stopped and searched Black and Hispanic drivers at higher rates than white drivers.

The 81-page report was completed by an outside agency that collected data from more than 130,000 traffic stops. The cost was more than \$24,000.

Suffolk County agreed to share the information as part of a 2008 hate crime settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

"These disparities are unacceptable," Bellone said.

"Black drivers were found to be more than twice as likely to be subjected to a vehicle search, more than twice as likely to be subjected to a search themselves, 84% more likely to be restrained, more than three times as likely to be subject to physical force and 59% more likely to be arrested," he added.

The report also found that Hispanic drivers were 16% more likely to both be subjected to a search and arrested as well as 32% more likely to be ticketed. Both Black and Hispanic drivers were also ticketed for a larger number of violations and detained for a longer period of time. However, data show that Suffolk police are less likely to yield no contraband in Black and Hispanic people's cars.

"We don't want anybody to think they're not being treated fairly," Suffolk County Police Commissioner Geraldine Hart said.

Civil rights attorney Frederick Brewington isn't surprised by the findings.

"It tells us a story that's been long explained by members of different communities of color in Suffolk County that they weren't being treated equitably by police departments," Brewington said.

There are more than 2,400 sworn police officers in Suffolk County; 335 are Black, Hispanic or Asian.

Officials have scheduled public forums to work with the community and plan on implementing mandatory bias training for every person in county government.

Some minority advocates are calling on Nassau County officials to provide statistics. However, a spokesperson for the county told FOX 5 NY that the state doesn't require the data to be submitted.

However, Nassau's county executive and police commissioner are working on collecting information and becoming more transparent in the future.