

January 13, 2026

The Honorable C. Don Clay
 President, Police Commission Office
 San Francisco Police Headquarters
 1245 3rd Street
 San Francisco, CA 94158



Submitted via electronic mail

Re: Publicly Available Data on SFPD Traffic Stops Demonstrates DGO 9.07's Success

Dear President Clay and Commissioners,

The Coalition Against Biased Stops is a diverse group of community organizations, many of whom represent communities directly impacted by the violence of policing and the criminal legal system. We advocated to end racially biased, low-level traffic stops by police in San Francisco and participated at every step of the process for enacting DGO 9.07. The next Commission meeting will feature an update on DPA's Stop Data Audit, and it is reassuring to see progress on error rates in stop data collection. The discussion of SFPD stop data is timely given the published reports of dramatic reduction in crime and SFPD-reported data showing historic drops in racial disparities in traffic stops following DGO 9.07's passage. Given this, the Coalition writes to explain the history of the policy and highlight how it is working.

A Brief History of DGO 9.07

DGO 9.07 was first introduced at the Commission in February 2022, discussed by all Commissioners, and sent to a robust public working group process for nearly a year before passing at the Commission unanimously on April 5, 2023. The Commission heard from police officers in multiple closed-door meetings, from policing and policy experts, impacted community members, and the public in open forums. The Commission even created a new website to house all correspondence related to this DGO because of the significant public and media attention.¹ Former SFPD Chief William Scott supported its final passage after the Commission directly addressed his concerns. The policy went into effect July 17, 2024.² Fears of increased lawlessness have proven to be unfounded³ as crime has decreased by nearly 30% in the past year.⁴

DGO 9.07 restricts the use of stops that disproportionately affected people of color – particularly Black people – by limiting the types of stops officers can make for non-moving traffic infractions, limiting

¹ <https://www.sf.gov/resource--2022--department-general-orders-under-submission>.

² https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/SFPDDN_24_098_20240711.pdf.

³ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/crime/article/sf-crime-decline-comparison-data-20257604.php>.

⁴ <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/10/15/crime-is-down-in-san-francisco-key-law-enforcement-partnerships-yield-successful-results/>

questioning of those stopped to the reason for the stop, and limiting the circumstances under which officers can conduct searches. The policy is an evidence-based solution to a problem that has plagued the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) for as long as it has collected data: unacceptably high racial disparities in traffic stops, searches, and uses of force.

Pretext Stops Are an Ineffective, Harmful Tactic

Pretext stops occur when police conduct a traffic stop for a non-safety violation to detain the driver or occupants of the car for another unrelated reason. They are a long-standing police tactic that wreaks untold economic, physical, psychological, and intergenerational harm, especially against Black people.⁵ Even when controlling for location, time of day, and other factors, Black drivers are still stopped and searched at higher rates than white drivers in the same area because officers use “visible cues to determine the likelihood of criminality. . .that cause an overly great focus on young men of color.”⁶ These stops commonly lead to further inquiries unrelated to any traffic matter and disproportionately impact communities of color,⁷ often lead to violence,⁸ and so have been limited in several other jurisdictions.⁹

San Francisco has a similar or worse overpolicing problem as other jurisdictions,¹⁰ and SFPD data has remained consistent for years despite reform efforts. From 2018 through the end of 2024, SFPD’s Quarterly Activity and Data Reports show consistent racial disparities in stops. While the number of stops decreased from 2018 to 2021, the racial disparities remained.¹¹ From 2023 through 2024 Black people were stopped 5.5 to 6.9 times more often than white drivers and pedestrians.¹² The disparity is nearly identical to the data from 2018 through 2021, indicating that the problem persisted for the six years before DGO 9.07 went into effect.

⁵ Kirkpatrick, David D., Steve Eder, Kim Barker, and Julie Tate. “Why Many Police Traffic Stops Turn Deadly,” New York Times (Oct.21, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/31/us/police-traffic-stops-killings.html>.

⁶ Sides, *What data on 20 million traffic stops can tell us about ‘driving while black,’* The Washington Post, (July 17, 2018), available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/07/17/what-data-on-20-million-traffic-stops-can-tell-us-about-driving-while-black/>.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, Revoked: How Probation and Parole Feed Mass Incarceration in the United States (Jul. 31, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/07/31/revoked/how-probation-and-parole-feed-mass-incarceration-united-states>; Chanin et al., Traffic Enforcement Through the Lens of Race: A Sequential Analysis of Post-Stop Outcomes in San Diego, California (2018) 29 Crim. J. Policy Rev. 564-565; see generally, Fridell, Producing Bias-Fee Policing: A Science-Based Approach (2017) at 16-22.

⁸ Kirkpatrick, David D., Steve Eder, Kim Barker, and Julie Tate. “Why Many Police Traffic Stops Turn Deadly,” New York Times (Oct.21, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/31/us/police-traffic-stops-killings.html>.

⁹ <https://nyujlpp.org/quorum/harris-the-road-to-driving-equality/>.

¹⁰ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/police-violence-Black-residents-17272732.php>.

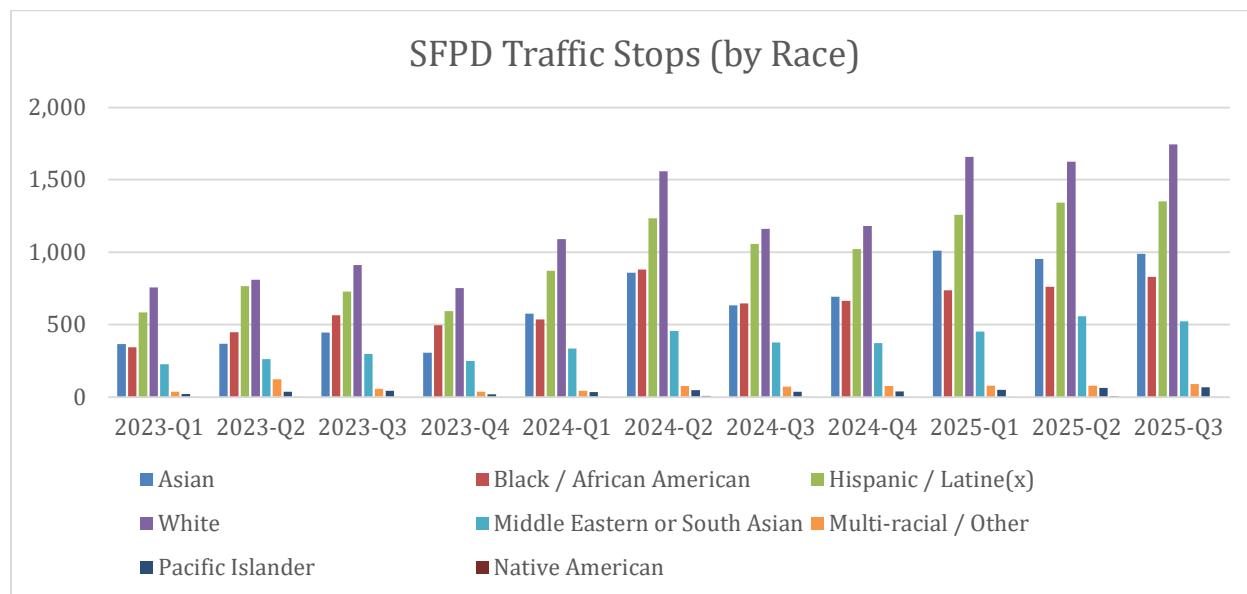
¹¹ <https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/SFPDQADR4thQuarterReport20220307.pdf>.

¹² https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/SFPD_QADR_2025_4thQuarter_20250612.pdf.

In addition to the ongoing, real harm that overpolicing causes communities of color, extensive research shows pretext stops are ineffective at reducing crime, akin to a “needle in a haystack” strategy, and a colossal waste of scarce public resources.¹³

The Early Data Shows DGO 9.07 Has Worked: Racial Disparities in Traffic Stops Have Decreased

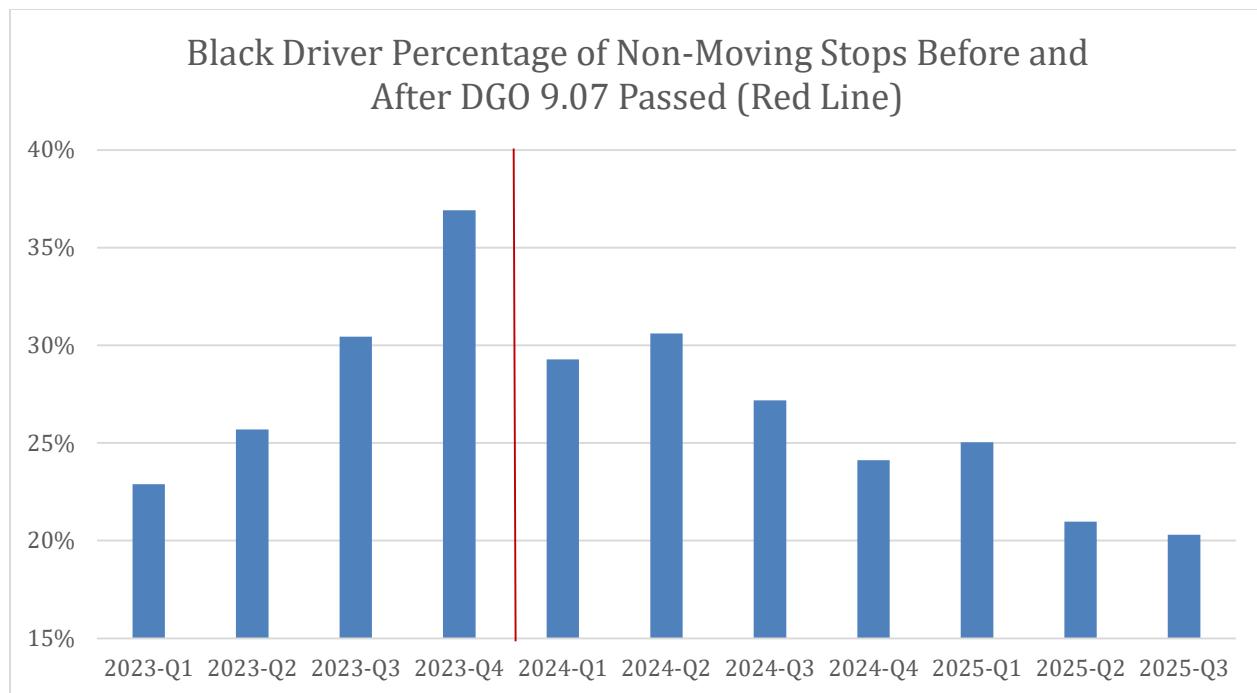
Analysis of SFPD’s first year of data under DGO 9.07 appears to show it has had its intended effect.



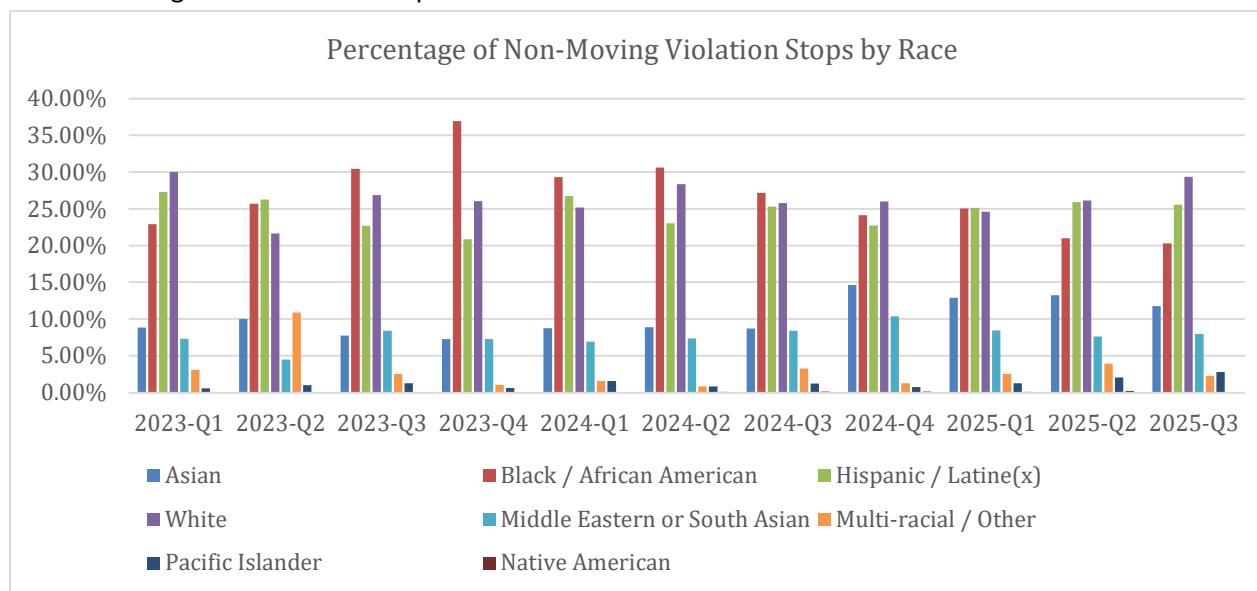
The data shows the total number of stops has increased by 25% since DGO 9.07 implementation in July 2024 and doubled since January 2023, when DGO 9.07 was first passed but not yet implemented.

While the total number of stops of Black drivers has decreased slightly since 2024, the percentage of stops of Black drivers for non-moving violations – generally the types of stops the DGO was meant to limit – has fallen sharply since DGO 9.07 went into effect according to SFPD’s reports.

¹³ <https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/Supplemental%20Briefing%20from%20Coalition%20to%20End%20Biased%20Stops.pdf>.



Black drivers represent 2% less of all traffic stops since DGO 9.07 went into effect and 10% less for non-moving violations, no longer representing the most commonly stopped group (below). The percentage of non-moving violation traffic stops of white drivers remained constant.



Next Steps for DGO 9.07

As you discuss the technical and intricate steps the Department is taking to accurately note and record traffic stops, it is crucial to remember the people and communities that are impacted by failure to properly track and report this information. The increased accuracy of the last 18 months allows us to see over that timespan the exact improvements DGO 9.07 was enacted to produce.

While the data is preliminary and does not account for demographic representation, the Commission should be encouraged that there has been some movement in what seemed a perennial problem. The reporting requirement of DGO 9.07 is an important means of not only monitoring compliance and effectiveness, but of fine tuning a policy that was drafted with narrow precision. The data, which the reforms signaled in the DPA Audit seek to improve, should provide Commissioners and community members the information necessary to see if SFPD is complying with the spirit of DGO 9.07 or whether they are trying to circumvent it by using different, non-deprioritized offenses to maintain the same stop patterns they always have. The published data demonstrates that we can reduce racial disparities by reducing the scope of enforcement without compromising public safety.

DGO 9.07 is demonstrating its value. This data is required to be posted on SFOpenData every quarter, but it warrants public discussion and critical analysis. The Commission should ask SFPD what they make of the data, how implementation has been handled, how compliance is being monitored, and hold SFPD accountable for shortcomings or non-compliance, and strengthen the policy if the data reveals new or continued disparities.

Sincerely,

ACLU of Northern California
Chinese for Affirmative Action
Coalition on Homelessness, San Francisco
Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth
Community Resource Initiative
Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Francisco Bay Area Office
East Bay Community Law Center
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
GLIDE
HealthRIGHT 360
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area
League of Women Voters of San Francisco
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
San Francisco Public Defender
Secure Justice
Walk San Francisco
Young Women's Freedom Center

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