

# 2017 Annual Report

*Missouri Vehicle Stops - Executive Summary*



**Missouri Attorney General  
JOSH HAWLEY**



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# Message from Attorney General Josh Hawley



Nearly two decades ago, the Missouri General Assembly created the Annual Vehicle Stop Report in an effort to provide important data regarding law enforcement in our State. The information in the report can help inform our debates on some of the most pressing public-policy issues facing our State, ones that implicate both the safety of our communities and the equality of all persons before the law. I am hopeful that this year's report will continue to foster constructive conversations about what we must do together to achieve—and protect—the rule of law in Missouri.

In addition to reviewing trends in the data, my Office has placed a particular emphasis on finding ways to improve the quality of data presented in the report. Last year, I issued a regulation requiring the collection of the residency of stopped drivers. The regulation—which went into effect on January 1, 2018—may provide additional insights on each jurisdiction's traffic-stop data. This year, my Office is conducting a thorough review of all regulations relating to the Vehicle Stop Report. Both law enforcement and community groups have raised concerns that some regulations are vague or unclear. These issues may lead to inconsistent or inaccurate data reporting in some cases, which may affect the value of certain information contained in the Report. I look forward to working with all stakeholders over the coming months to consider any revisions or updates that can strengthen the Vehicle Stop Report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua D. Hawley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Joshua D. Hawley**  
Attorney General

# Background

Concerns raised by the citizens of Missouri and the General Assembly regarding allegations of racial profiling by law enforcement prompted the passage in 2000 of § 590.650, RSMo. That statute requires that all peace officers report specific information—including a driver’s race—for each vehicle stop made in the State. Law-enforcement agencies must provide the data to the Attorney General by March 1, and the Attorney General is required to compile the data and report to the Governor no later than June 1 of each year. The Governor may withhold state funds from any agency that does not comply with these requirements.

The statewide vehicle-stop data contained in this Report have been analyzed by Scott H. Decker, professor and director of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University; Richard Rosenfeld, professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri-St. Louis; and Jeffrey Rojek, assistant professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina.



# 2017 Statewide Summary of Results

Key indicators	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Am. Indian	Other
Population	4,730,501	3,914,998	515,828	139,109	80,677	19,168	60,721
Stops	1,541,755	1,189,744	288,851	34,068	14,438	2,096	12,558
Searches	99,441	69,995	25,616	2,904	370	98	458
Arrests	73,193	51,184	18,895	2,368	304	80	362
State population %	100.00%	82.76	10.90	2.94	1.71	0.41	1.28
Disparity Index	---	.93	1.72	.75	.55	.36	.63
Search rate	6.45	5.88	8.87	8.52	2.56	4.68	3.65
Contraband hit rate	34.53	35.47	32.88	27.89	33.24	29.59	27.73
Arrest rate	4.75	4.30	6.54	6.95	2.11	3.82	2.88

**Notes:** Population figures are 2010 Census data based on persons 16 and older who designated a single race. Hispanics may be of any race. "Other" includes persons of mixed race or unknown race.

Disparity index = (proportion of stops / proportion of population). A value of 1 represents no disparity; values greater than 1 indicate over-representation; values less than 1 indicate under-representation.

Search rate = (searches / stops) x 100.

Contraband hit rate = (searches with contraband found / total searches) x 100.

Arrest rate = (arrest / stops) x 100.

# Statewide Findings

This report summarizes the data from 606 law enforcement agencies in Missouri for calendar year 2017. An additional 55 agencies indicated that they made no traffic stops during the year. This represents 97.6% of the 677 law enforcement agencies in the state. The agencies filing reports recorded a total of 1,541,755 vehicle stops, resulting in 99,441 searches and 73,193 arrests. Table 1 breaks out the stops, searches and arrests by race and ethnic group.

Table 1 includes four summary indicators that may be useful in initiating further assessments of racial profiling in traffic stops.

## 1. Disparity Index

The “disparity index” compares the percentage of traffic stops involving members of a certain group to the percentage of driving-age individuals who are members of that group, as measured by the 2010 Census. A disparity-index value of 1 indicates that a group’s proportion of traffic stops equals its population proportion. For example, if a group accounts for 80% of the driving-age population, and 80% of traffic stops involve members of that group, then the disparity index for that group would be 1. A disparity-index value of 1 indicates that members of a group are stopped at precisely the rate one would expect if all members of the driving-age public were equally likely to be involved in a traffic stop.

A disparity-index value above 1 indicates that a group accounts for a higher proportion of traffic stops than its percentage of the population alone would predict. And a disparity-index value below 1 indicates that a group accounts for a

lower proportion of traffic stops than its percentage of the population alone would predict. For example, the 1,189,744 Whites drivers who were stopped accounted for 77.2% of all traffic stops in 2017. Whites comprise an estimated 82.8% of Missouri’s driving age population. The disparity-index value for Whites is, therefore, .93 (i.e.,  $.772/.828$ ). Whites drivers were stopped, in other words, at slightly below the rate expected based on their fraction of the driving-age population from the 2010 Census.

The same is not the case for several of the other groups. African-Americans represent 10.9% of the driving-age population but 18.7% of all traffic stops, for a disparity-index value of 1.72. African-Americans were stopped at a rate 72% greater than expected based solely on their proportion of the driving-age population. Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, and persons of mixed or unknown race were stopped at rates well below their proportion of the driving-age population. The values on the disparity index for the different groups can be compared directly to one another. For example, the rate at which African-American motorists were stopped is 1.85 times that of the rate at which White motorists were stopped (i.e.,  $1.72/.93$ ). In other words, accounting for their respective proportions of Missouri’s driving-age population, African-Americans were stopped at a rate 85% higher than Whites.

Importantly, the disparity index relies on a group’s proportion of the State’s driving-age population, as determined by the 2010 Census, not the proportion of the actual drivers who are on the State’s

roads. A group's share of the residential population age 16 and over may or may not equal its proportion of drivers. In many instances, particularly at the statewide level, the two proportions should be close. But that is not always the case. The extremely low disparity-index value for American Indians, for example, could indicate that they are under-represented among the State's motorists. In addition, some jurisdictions contain attractions—such as malls, universities, and airports—that may draw visitors from outside that jurisdiction. The demographics of these out-of-jurisdiction visitors may differ from the Census demographics of the jurisdiction. The disparity index does not account for these and other deficiencies in the data. Where these deficiencies are especially pronounced, especially at the level of individual jurisdictions, the disparity index may not accurately portray the relevant rates at which drivers of different races are stopped.

## 2. Search Rate

The “search rate” reflects the percentage of stopped drivers whose person or vehicles were searched as part of the stop. Searches include searches of drivers or property in the vehicle. The reasons for conducting a search and the outcome of the search (i.e., discovery of contraband) should be considered when making comparisons across groups. Some searches are conducted with the consent of the driver, while others occur because the officer observed suspected contraband in plain view or had reasonable suspicion that an individual may possess a weapon. These searches

may or may not result in an arrest. Other searches are conducted incident to arrest—that is, there is no other reason given for the search other than arrest. Searches are almost always performed when there is an outstanding arrest warrant, whether or not contraband may be present.

The search rate for all motorists who were stopped in 2017 was 6.45%. Asians drivers were searched at a rate well below the statewide average; African-American and Hispanic drivers were searched at rates above the average for all drivers who were stopped. The search rate for the different groups also can be compared directly with one another. African-American drivers were 1.51 times more likely to be searched than White drivers (8.87/5.88). Hispanic drivers were 1.45 times more likely than White drivers to be searched (8.52/5.88).

## 3. Contraband Hit Rate

The “contraband hit rate” reflects the percentage of searches in which contraband is found. Contraband was found in 34.5% of all searches that were conducted in 2017. There is some variation, however, in the contraband hit rate across races. The contraband hit rate for whites was 35.5%, compared with 32.9% for Blacks and 27.9% for Hispanics. This means that, on average, searches of African-Americans and Hispanics are less likely than searches of Whites to result in the discovery of contraband. This difference may result in part from the higher arrest rates for African-Americans and Hispanics, circumstances that compel a search.

#### 4. Arrest Rate

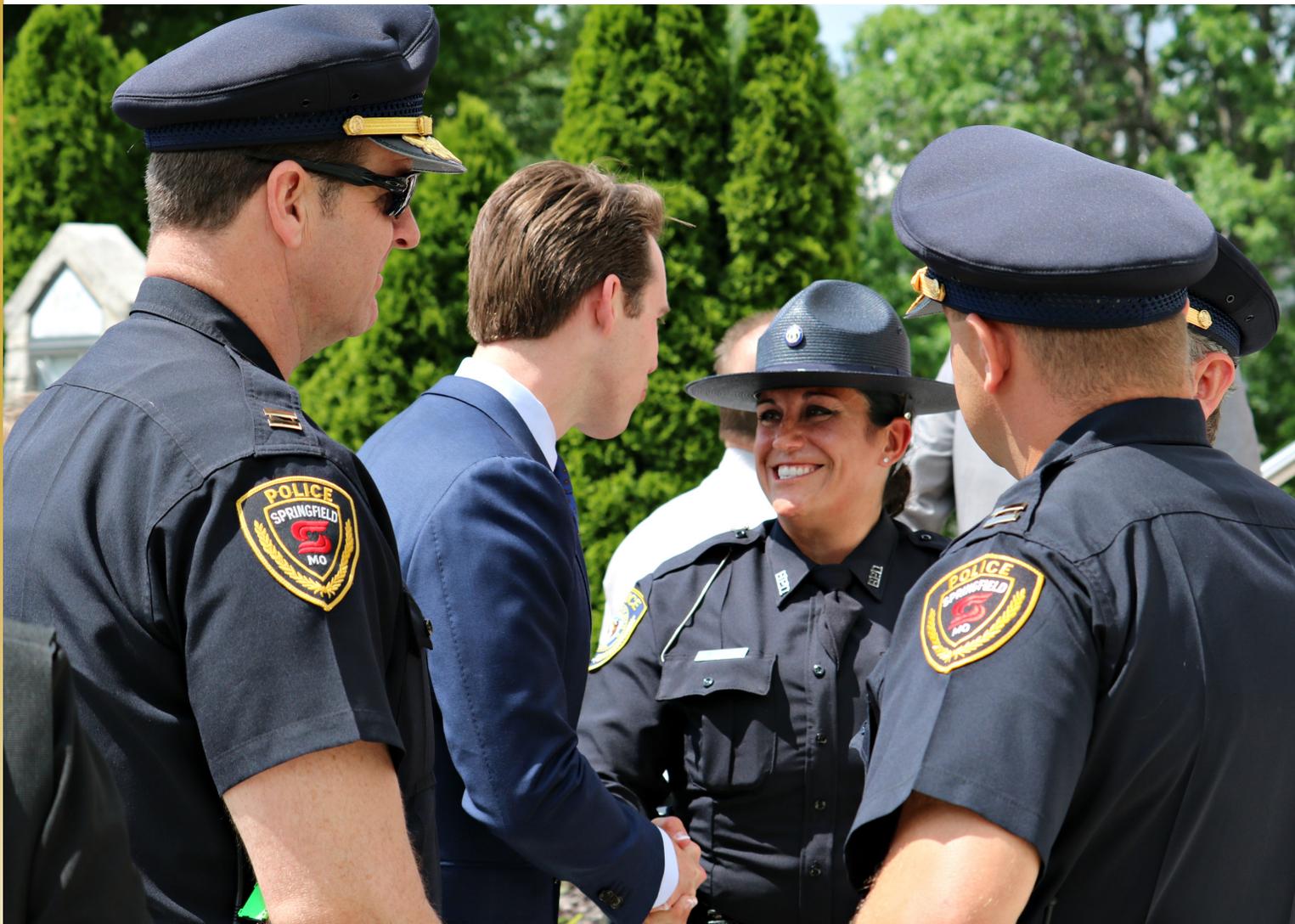
The “arrest rate” reflects the percentage of stopped drivers who are arrested during the stop. Just under 5% of all traffic stops resulted in an arrest. The arrest rate varies across the race and ethnic groups. Approximately 6.5% of the stops of African-Americans and 6.9% of the stops of Hispanics resulted in arrest, compared with 4.3% of the stops of Whites.

A reasoned determination of the existence of racial profiling in a community requires a comprehensive evaluation of the full range of information compiled in the agency reports. This brief summary of selected indicators for the State as a whole is intended to stimulate those local evaluations and dialogue.



**Table 2. Agencies that did not submit reports by March 1, 2018 as required by state law**

Camden Point Police Department	Cooter Police Department	Emma Police Department	Hillsboro Police Department
King City Police Department	Kinloch Police Department	Lilbourn Police Department	Lowry City Police Department
Marthasville Police Department	Miller Police Department	Morley Police Department	Northwoods Police Department
Parma Police Department	Senath Police Department	Vanduser Police Department	Wardell Police Department



**Table 3. Agencies that reported no stops (many contract out vehicle stops to other agencies)**

Altenburg Police Department	Armstrong Police Department	Bell City Police Department	Berger Police Department
Beverly Hills Police Department	Bevier Police Department	Bucklin Police Department	Bunceton Police Department
Callao Police Department	Charlack Police Department	Clarksburg Police Department	Clarkson Valley Police Department
Cool Valley Police Department	Creighton Police Department	Dellwood Police Department	Dudley Police Department
Essex Police Department	Fairfax Police Department	Fisk Police Department	Foley Police Department
Forest City Police Department	Freeman Police Department	Golden City Police Department	Gordonville Police Department
Grandin Police Department	Hale Police Department	Hayti Heights Police Department	Holt Police Department
Jackson County Drug Task Force	Jennings Police Department	La Monte Police Department	Lockwood Police Department
Marquand Police Department	Miramiguo Police Department	Missouri Department of Revenue	Naylor Police Department
Norborne Police Department	Norwood Police Department	Odessa Police Department	Pasadena Park Police Department
Pine Lawn Police Department	Randolph Police Department	Rutledge Police Department	Sheldon Police Department
St. Louis Community College Police Department	St. Louis City Park Rangers	St. Peters Ranger Enforcement Division	Stewartsville Police Department
Tallapoosa Police Department	Taos Police Department	Walker Police Department	Wellston Police Department
Westwood Police Department	Wildwood Police Department	Windsor Police Department	



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