

“Racial Profiling” in 2018

*Psychological Causes
& Data Challenges*

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What do we mean by “racial profiling”?

- **1990's conception:** Formal, drug courier profiles including race and ethnicity
 - But, of course, many causes of disparities
- **Today:** Formal profiles that include racial or ethnic identity are taboo, banned, disavowed, etc.
 - But, data, where available, clearly indicates disparities that are almost certainly caused by group-based biases

Multiple Causes of Disparities

- Differential *offending*
- Differential *enforcement*
 - LE prioritizing different offenses
 - LE prioritizing different locations
- *Formal* profiling
- *Informal* profiling
 - Influence of stereotypes (implicit or otherwise)

**INDIVIDUAL
(OFFICER)
LEVEL**

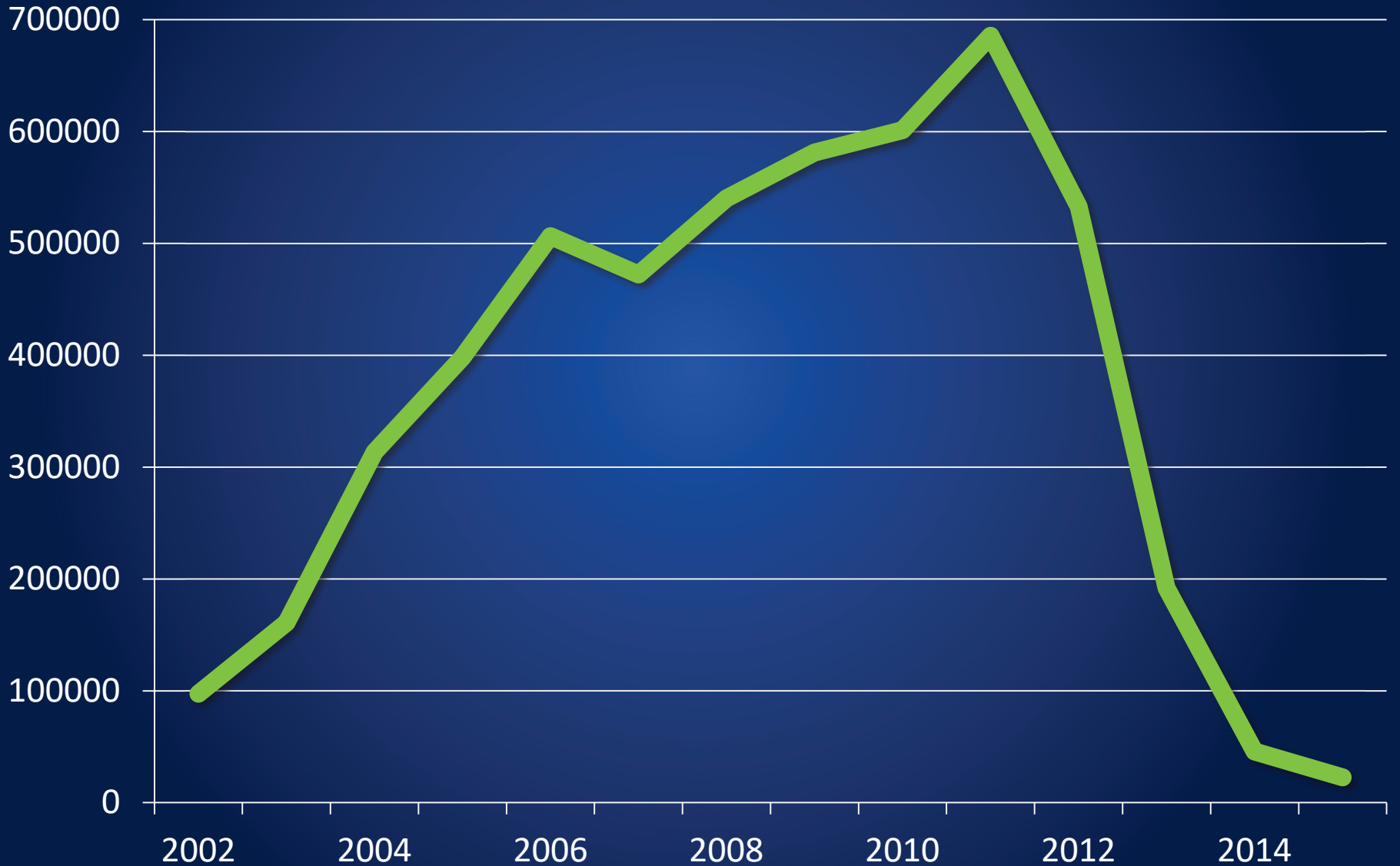
Challenges with Policing Data

- Getting it
- Benchmarking it
 - What is the denominator?
 - What is the racial/ethnic distribution of stops we'd expect *in the absence of bias*?

Outcome tests circumvent benchmarks

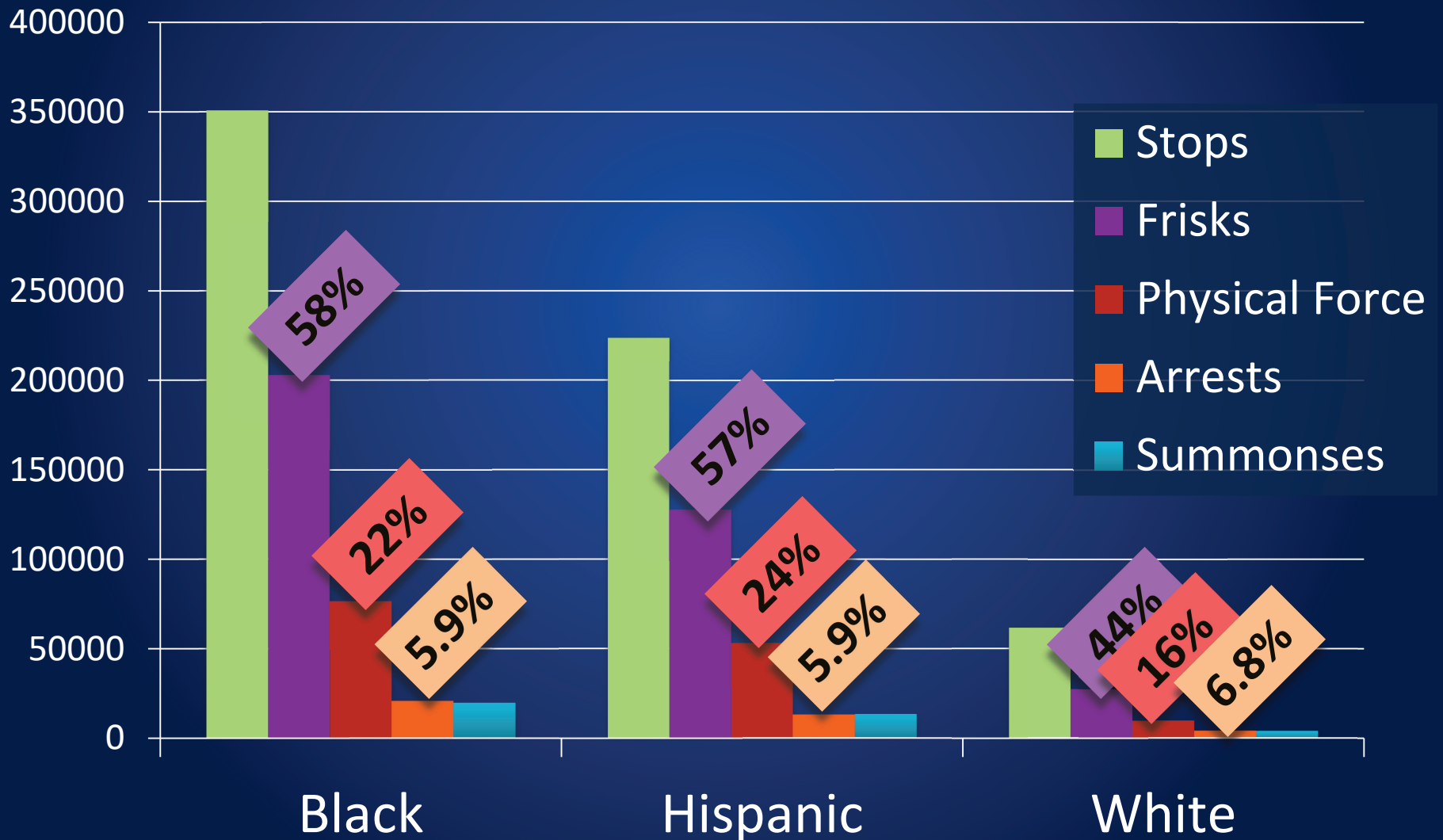
- But require confidence in *completeness*

Case: NYPD Pedestrian Stops Per Year



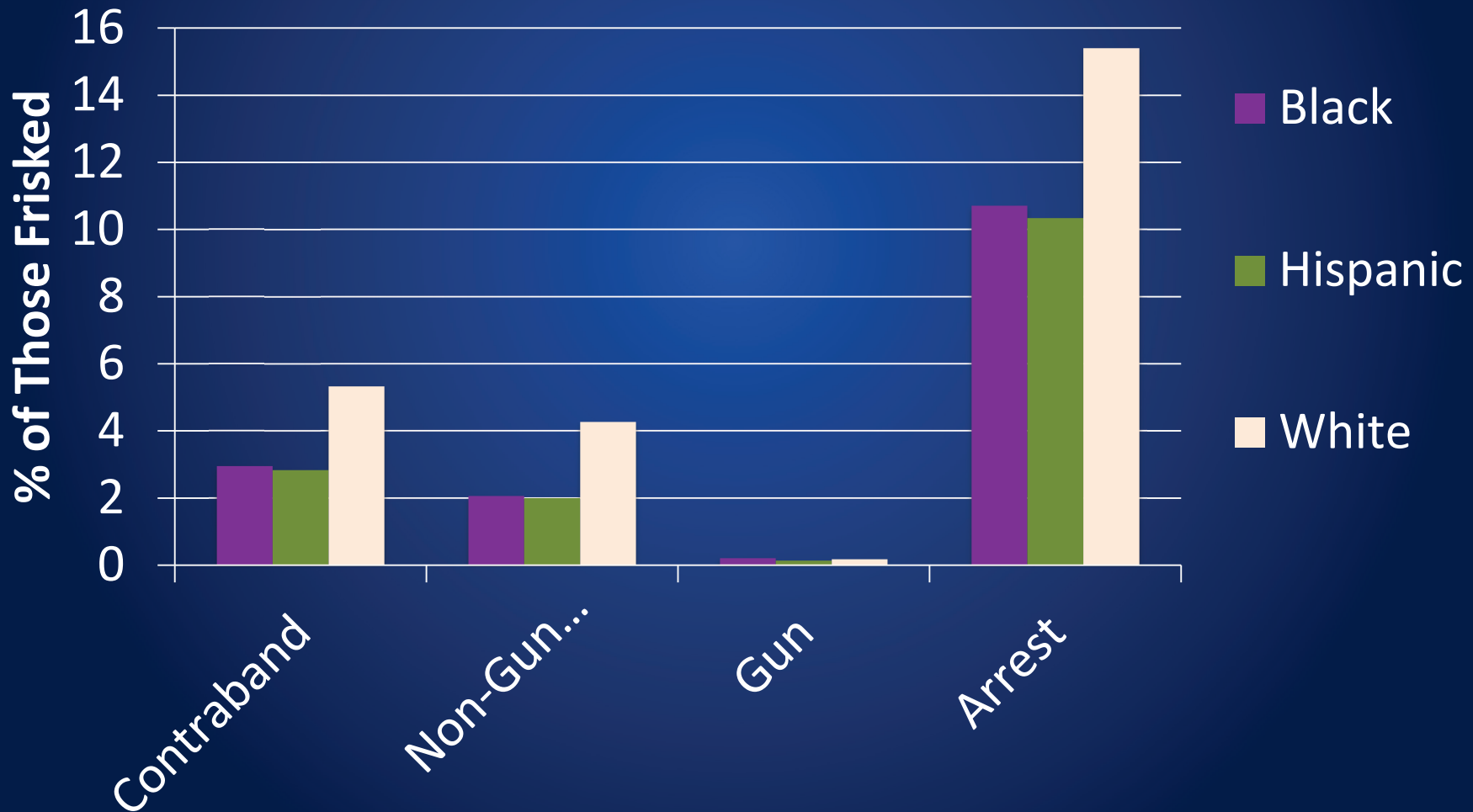
Pedestrian Stops ...and what happens next

NYPD, 2011 (peak year)



Inferring Bias (Circumventing Benchmarks)

Outcomes of Frisks, NYPD, 2011



Outcome (“hit rate”) disparities

- Indicate differential suspicion thresholds
 - *If one group has higher hit rates, it strongly suggests they are subjected to a higher suspicion threshold*

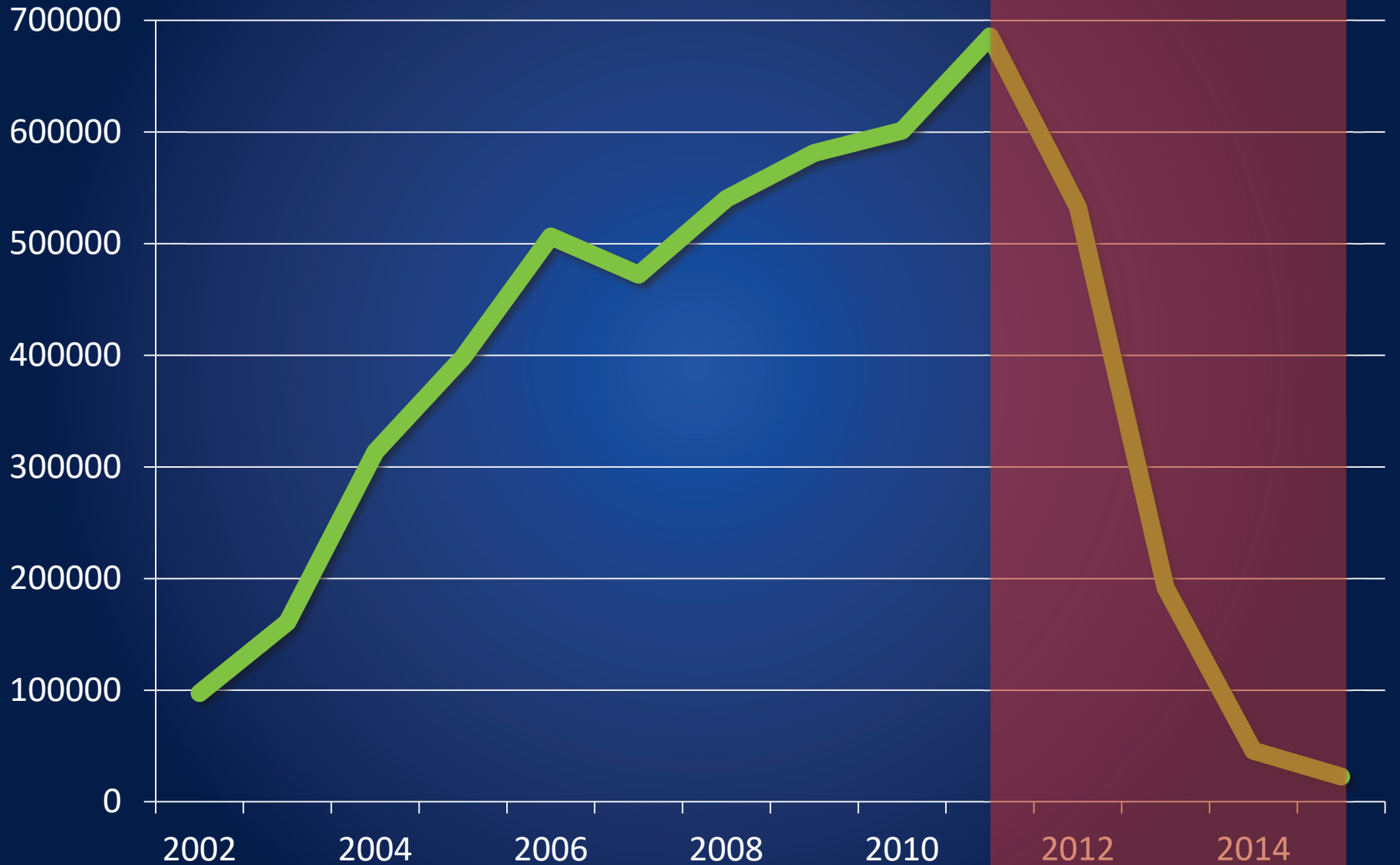
Black drivers are 85 percent more likely to be stopped in Missouri than whites

- Missouri law enforcement stopped black drivers at a rate 85 percent higher than white drivers last year
- In the eighteen years since this figure has been documented, the disparity has never been so great
- White drivers were less likely to be stopped, searched or arrested
- However, those who were stopped and searched were more likely to be found with contraband than black or Hispanic drivers
- Report found 7.1 percent of Hispanics, 6.6 percent of blacks arrested after stops

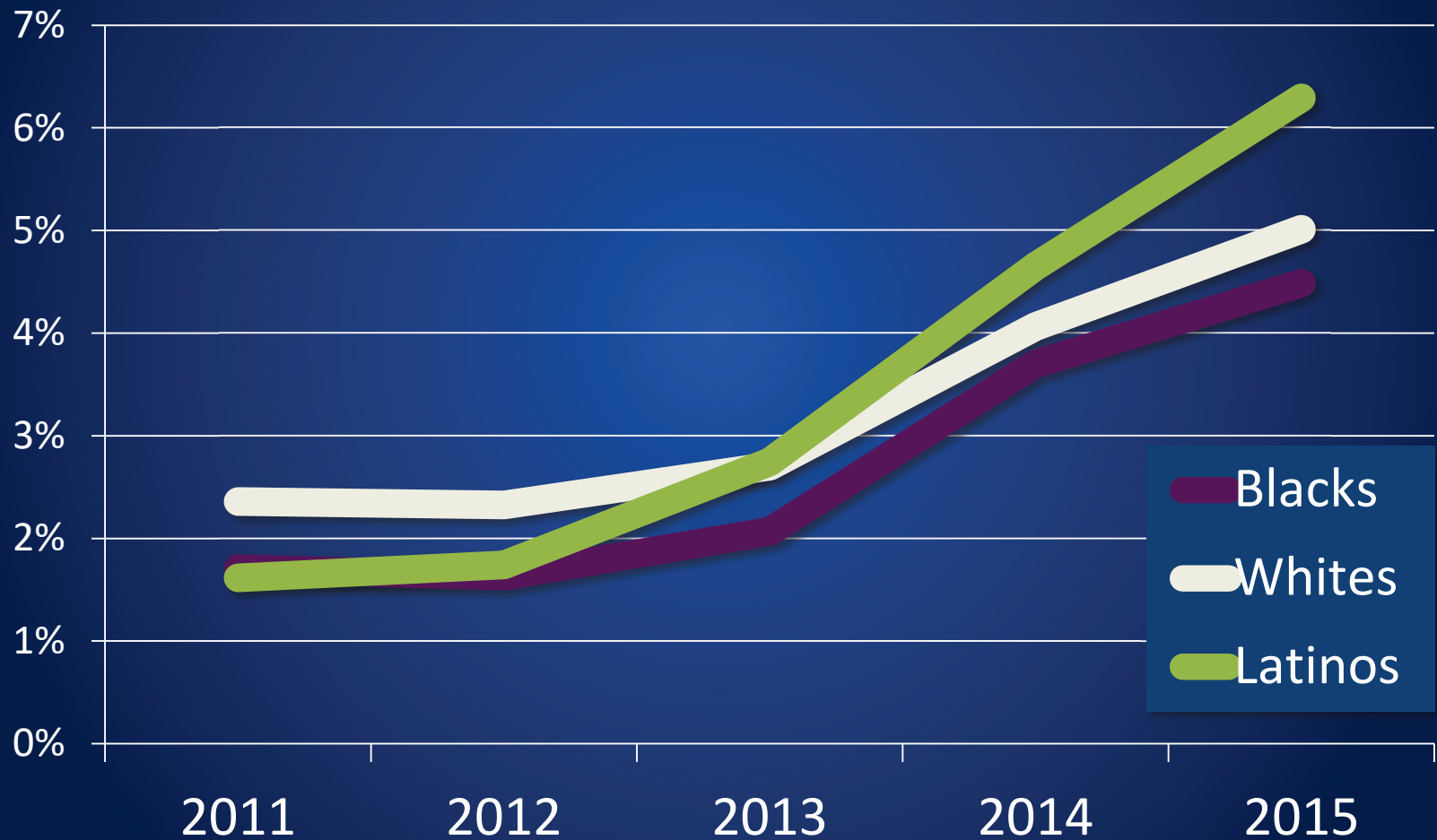
By ASSOCIATED PRESS

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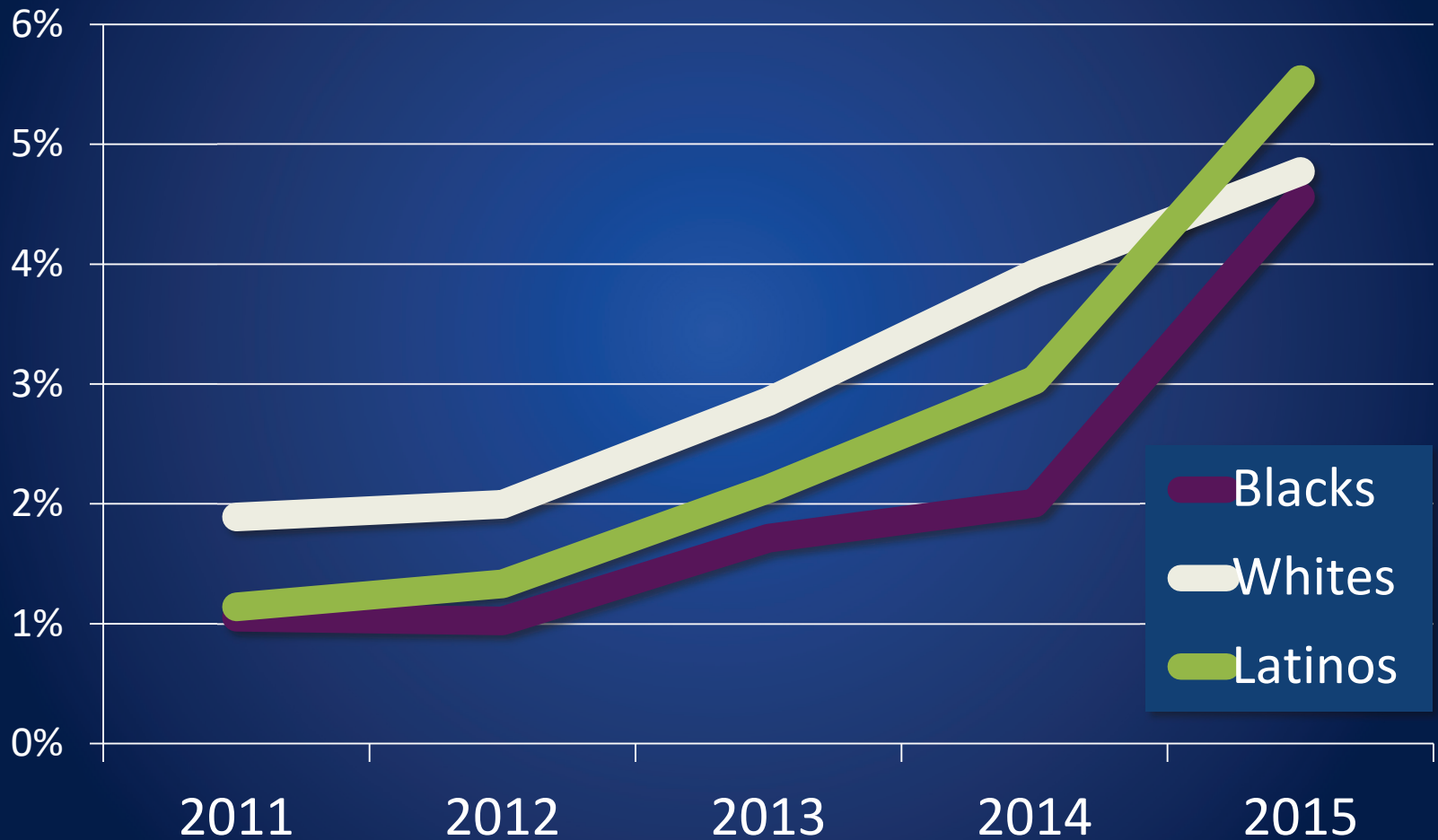
NYPD Stops Per Year



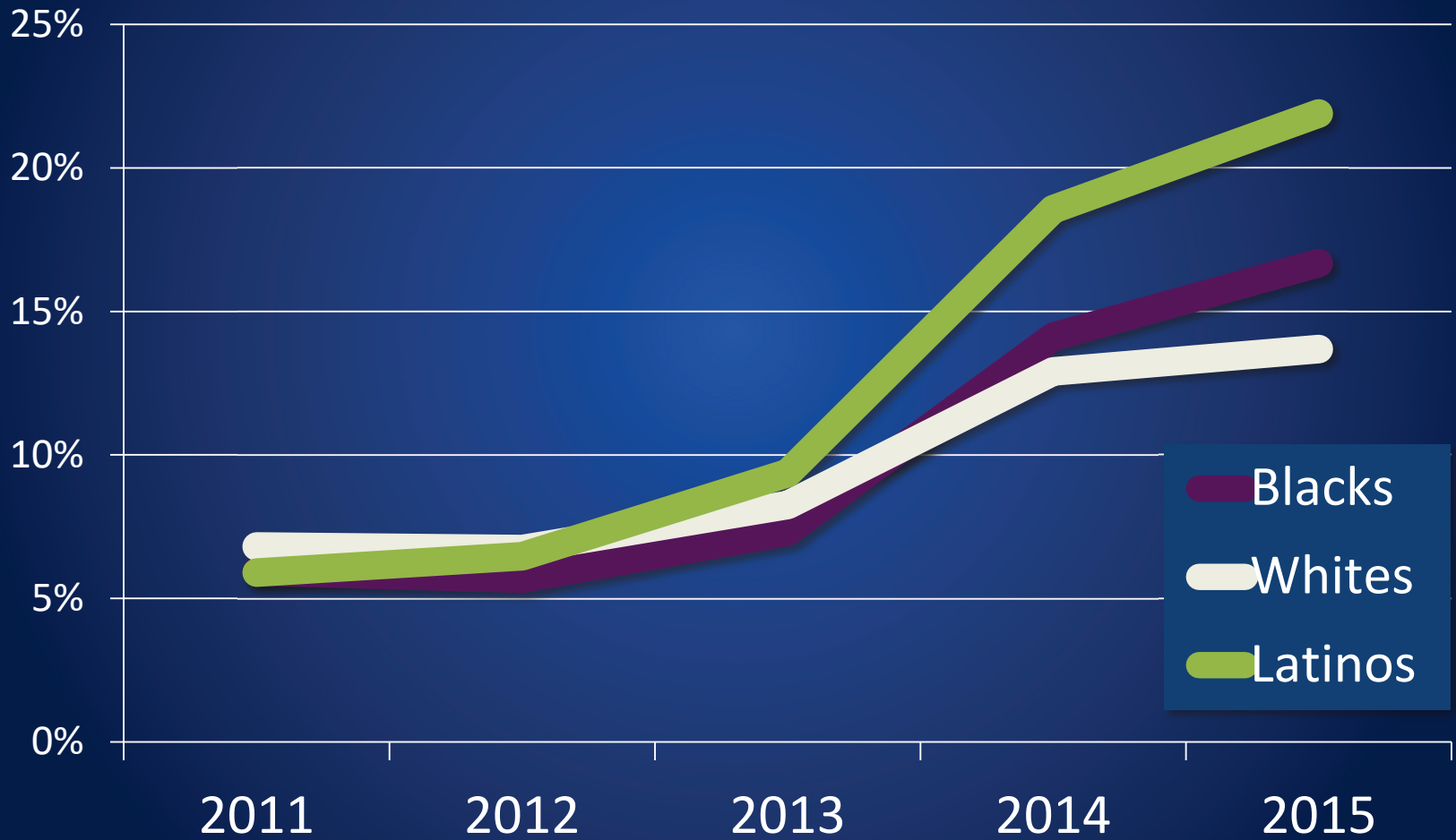
NYPD: % *Contraband* Per Stop



NYPD: % *Weapons* Per Stop



NYPD: % *Arrested* Per Stop



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 - But require confidence in *completeness*

Challenges with Policing Data

- Outcome tests circumvent benchmarks
 - But require confidence in *completeness*
- *Does change in reported stop rates reflect change in stops or change in reporting?*
 - *Need accountability*

