Stop-and-frisk police program to come to Detroit

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A version of New York City's notorious stop-and-frisk program is being developed for Detroit under the direction of Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr.

According to the *Detroit News*, Orr has authorized the Detroit Police Department (DPD) to hire consultants from the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, a right-wing think tank, and the Bratton Group, the law enforcement consulting firm, both based in New York, to reorganize the Detroit police and implement stop-and-frisk.

These consultants have indicated they will utilize the Detroit Traffic Unit to "prevent street crime through the use of traffic stops." The contract states, "The DPD Traffic Unit [will] evolve its mission from principally the issuance of tickets toward the prevention of crime."

Detroit Police assistant chief Eric Ewing claimed, "We are not telling our officers they have to go out and stop X number of people each day." But this, of course, is precisely what happened when the program was implemented in New York.

The stop-and-frisk policy is entirely in line with the dictatorial policies being carried out in Detroit, whose unelected emergency manager has pushed the city into bankruptcy as a means of slashing public services and savaging present and retired workers' conditions.

Orr is well aware that even greater social devastation lies in store for Detroiters and has therefore made the buildup of the police a priority, a project for which money is no object. Orders have been placed for new Tasers, police cars and police computers, while the city is shutting down schools, recreation centers and other city services.

Furthermore, Orr and his cohorts made their priorities clear his summer when they agreed to a two-year contract with new police chief James Craig at an annual salary of $225,000. Previously, the pay for police chief ranged from $85,700 to $140,500. Detroit mayor Dave Bing earns $158,559.

The cost of consulting the Manhattan Institute and the Bratton Group has not been disclosed.

Furthermore, this week, Orr made a point of disabling the Board of Police Commissioners, the citizen oversight board that rules on DPD policy and personnel, by refusing to name replacements to vacated seats. The board no longer has a quorum and can't make any decisions. Orr issued an executive order giving Craig "the ability to bypass the board on personnel matters, one of its most crucial functions" (*Detroit News*).

The board was established in 1974 at the height of opposition to the murderous DPD operation called STRESS (Stop The Robberies Enjoy Safe Streets). The STRESS police decoy unit was allegedly responsible for killing 22 Detroiters during its two-and-a-half-year existence.

Craig has also made it a priority to see the removal of the federal consent degree under which the DPD has operated since 2003. Detroit police officers were shown to have carried out an average of 10 fatal shootings a year between 1990 and 1998 and led the nation in the rate of such shootings. A *Detroit Free Press* investigation revealed that police carried out "questionable police shootings, illegal dragnet arrests of possible witnesses to homicides, and mistreatment of inmates in police lockups" (see "Detroit leads US in police killings").

In New York City, the stop-and-frisk program has generated widespread anger in working class neighborhoods. Whistleblower policeman Adrian Schoolcraft made public recordings of instructions he and other officers were given in regard to arresting blacks in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. The

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New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) pursued a class action suit against the openly discriminatory policy.

An NYCLU report issued in March 2013 revealed that New York police had detained a staggering 5 million people in the city under the stop-and-frisk program, with 4.4 million innocent of all wrongdoing. An earlier report issued by the NYCLU pointed out that the overwhelming majority of those stopped were black and Hispanic. In 2012, 532,911 New Yorkers were stopped, with 89 percent charged with no crime. Of those stopped, 284,229 were black (55 percent), 165,140 Latino (32 percent) and 50,366 white (10 percent).

On August 12, US district judge Shira Scheindlin issued a 195-page ruling against stop-and-frisk, terming it unconstitutional and a form of “indirect racial profiling.” Scheindlin, a liberal appointed by President Bill Clinton, did not order the end to the practice, but merely its reform to comply with constitutional requirements. The ruling is being appealed by New York City’s billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has made stop-and-frisk a central feature of his administration.

The same program is used in numerous cities across the country, based on the reactionary *Terry v. Ohio* ruling by the US Supreme Court in 1968 allowing wide latitude for the stopping and patting down of individuals on the basis of police “suspicion.”

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