

## Check Mayor's Motion on Street Checks:

The motion to ban Police street checks is another example of Mayor Stewart's compliant posture to appease the anti-authority activists pervading City Hall. Paralyzed by political angst, concerned any objection will draw discontent and garner unfavourable media coverage, Civic leaders will often default to the path of least resistance. Public pandering and social guilt have given these groups too loud a voice and like Dr. Frankenstein we've come to fear our creation.

Under the bombardment of unproven allegations that VPD Officers are racial profiling Indigenous and Blacks disproportionately, elected Officials choose the easy solution by once again making Cops the scapegoats. Another Band-Aid over the numerous other Band-Aids concealing a festering lesion that is the Downtown Eastside where a majority of these encounters take place.

For Officers, it's not the ethnicity of an individual but rather the suspicious circumstances in which that individual is found which warrants closer scrutiny. Legal street checks are an invaluable tool for crime prevention and crime detection, two of the fundamental principles of effective policing which law abiding citizens accept in order to uphold the safety and security of their community.

The more pertinent question is why Indigenous peoples in particular are over represented in street checks and in our jails. Many come from poverty-stricken reserves rife with mental illness, suicide, substance addiction, sexual abuse, FAS, domestic violence and hopelessness. Reverberating legacies of the rippling and crippling aftermath of post colonialism. Their futures predestined for failure, street level crime is often the only available option which increases the probability of Police interaction. Conversely, those occupying the higher socioeconomic rungs are better equipped to conceal their criminality behind white collar facades.

Along with calls to defund the Police and allegations of systemic racism this latest salvo is another ploy lobbed by groups well versed in the hot button issues of the DTES to obscure their actual objective. It's less about altruistic motives than it is about more funding and resources to prop up futile social programs lacking in efficacy, transparency and accountability. This time priming their political launching pad with a ban Police street check smoke screen to intimidate politicians and bluff the citizenry. These supposed advocates for the marginalized and dispensable conceal their agenda in self righteous ideology, deceiving the people they're ostensibly defending. By demanding more Band-Aid solutions and re-routing of resources the status quo is preserved.

Countless Politicians have descended into the area, standing on podiums of vacant pledges they go on to reap the accolades and rewards of office. Meanwhile the people are relegated to mere footnotes until the next politico steps on their broken backs to jumpstart a career.

If we're truly sincere about significantly addressing the social ills the pus encrusted bandages must to be ripped open to expose the putrefying sore. Real solutions, such as forced addiction treatment, will be unpleasant, foul and nasty...like medicine and intensely controversial, unlike Mayor Stewart's placating gesture of banning Police street checks.

It will take great courage and conviction, qualities acutely lacking in our leadership because the rest of us are hypocrites, willfully blind to the stark truth. We lament the horrid conditions but as long as it's "Not In My Back Yard" it's tolerable. The tragic reality being the Downtown Eastside is our cracked mirror that we're reluctant to gaze into for fear of the grotesque image leering back. Until we confront this monster, the cycle of despair and death will continue and soon Cops won't even be allowed to exit their vehicles. It's all smoke and mirrors, hypocrisy has always permeated our best intentions in Canada's poorest neighbourhood. Pass the Band-Aids please.