

WISCONSIN

POLICY FORUM

WRONG WAY: BLACK AUTO DEATHS UP IN WISCONSIN

Death rate for black Wisconsinites doubled in five years; Speeding deaths up in Milwaukee

WHO ARE WE?

The independent, nonpartisan Wisconsin Policy Forum is a nonprofit supported by businesses, local governments, institutions, other nonprofits, and individuals. They help us make our research available to all and ensure we serve as a true statewide “forum.”



WHAT DO WE DO?

We produce public policy research that helps generate informed and fact-based public policy decision-making at the state and local level.



**At least seven people,
including four children,
hurt in Milwaukee crash
on Friday**



At least seven people, including four children, were injured Friday after a two-car crash in the 4400 block of North Hopkins Street on Milwaukee's west side. Emergency crews were dispatched to the crash at 10:39 a.m.

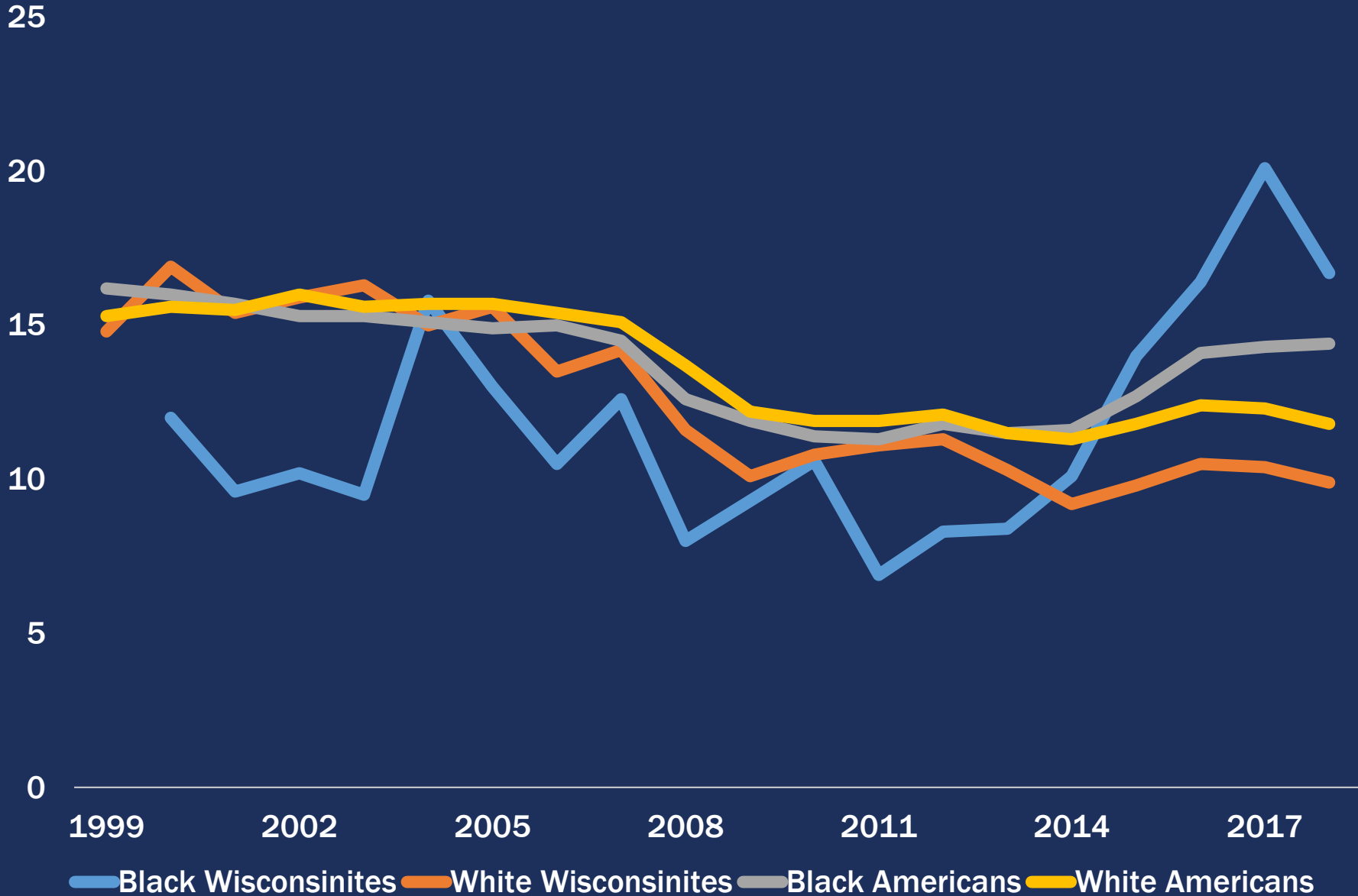
RICK WOOD / MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

JOE TASCHLER | MILWAUKEE JOURNAL
SENTINEL | 2:20 pm CST January 31, 2020

Recent years brought a sharp increase in deaths of black Wisconsinites in motor vehicle crashes.

Long-term trends saw the rate of such deaths overtake those of white and Hispanic Wisconsinites and all black Americans.

Black Wisconsinites' Fatality Rate Diverges



**Age-adjusted
Motor
Vehicle Crash
Deaths per
100k**

So what is causing this?

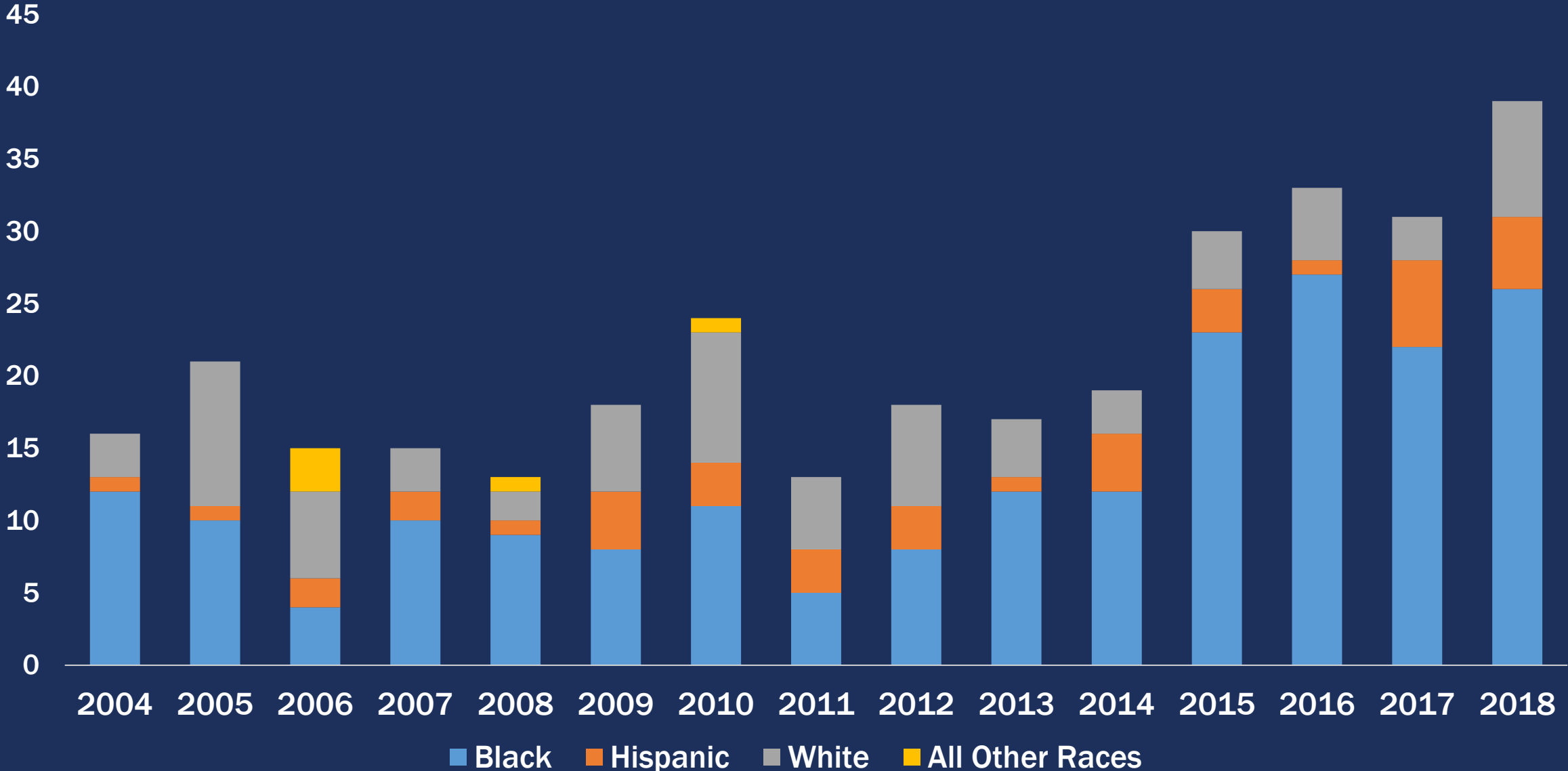
We don't presume to know all the answers. But here are a few things we found.

About two-thirds of these fatalities occurred in Milwaukee, matching the share of the state's African-American population that resides there.

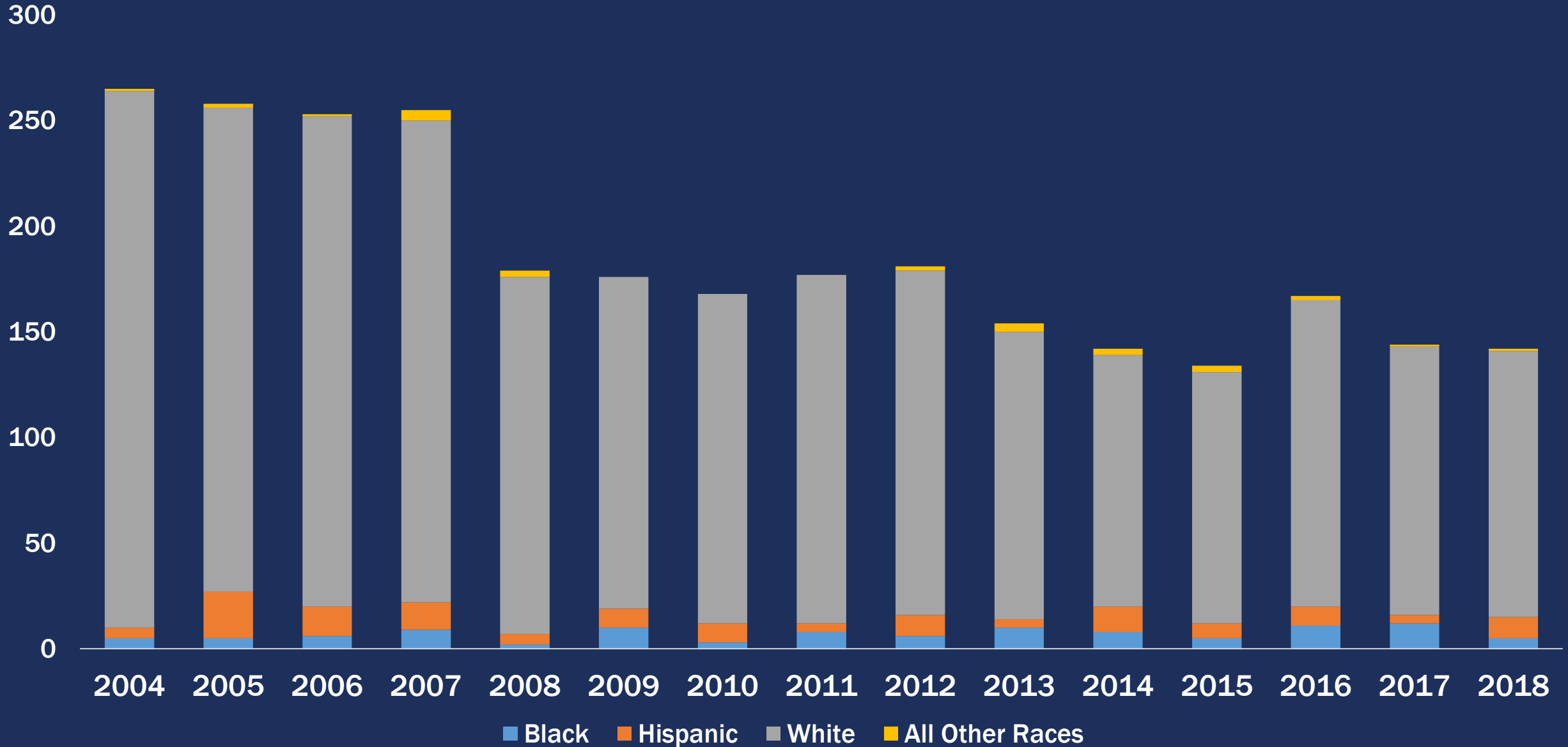
Milwaukee also saw a recent spike in speeding-involved fatalities.



Speeding-Involved Fatalities in Milwaukee



Speeding-Involved Fatalities in the Rest of the State



We do not suggest this is only about reckless driving!

Other possible contributors to this trend include:

- Sharp decline in public transit ridership in Milwaukee in the last decade, relative to the rest of the country
- Past lack of access to free driver's education in public schools
- Greater recent change in unemployment among black residents, causing a greater change in miles driven.



Final analysis: Our look at auto fatality numbers in Wisconsin shows how the problem has escalated and reveals its disproportionate impact on our state's African-American residents.

We hope this report provides important context and adds urgency to efforts to reverse this tragic trend.