



Panel Discussion to Explore Links Between School Discipline, Criminal Justice System

Event scheduled for Tuesday, May 20, 6 p.m. at Boston Public Library will also examine racial disparities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BOSTON -- Tuesday, the ACLU of Massachusetts and other groups will hold a panel discussion on the relationship between school discipline and the criminal justice system.

WHAT: Panel discussion on school discipline, criminal justice, and racial disparities

WHERE: Boston Public Library, Mezzanine Conference Room

WHEN: Tuesday, May 20, 2008, 6 p.m.

The relationship between school discipline and the criminal justice system is increasingly fraught with racial tension. Today, misbehavior that would traditionally have been addressed at the school level often results in police involvement, and students of color are disproportionately impacted.

On Tuesday, expert panelists will explore the contemporary legal and social ramifications of these issues and discuss ways to document and address the problems. The event is sponsored by the Boston Lawyers Chapter of the American Constitution Society, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, with support from the Juvenile Justice Center at Suffolk University School of Law and the Boston Bar association.

Panelists

Dennis Parker, ACLU Director of the ACLU National Office's Racial Justice Program (RJP)

Concentrating on issues of the school-to-prison pipeline which funnels children of color from the educational system into the criminal justice system, racial profiling, affirmative action, indigent representation and felon enfranchisement, the RJP seeks to remove barriers to equal opportunity for communities of color through litigation, public education, community organizing and legislation. Prior to joining the ACLU, Mr. Parker was the Chief of the Civil Rights Bureau of the Office of the New York State Attorney. Mr. Parker also worked for 14 years at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, where he litigated and supervised the litigation of scores of cases involving elementary and secondary education, affirmative action in higher education and equal educational opportunity.

Hon. Jay D. Blitzman, Justice of the Massachusetts Juvenile Court, Middlesex Division

Judge Blitzman was appointed to the juvenile court bench in 1996. Prior to his appointment, Judge Blitzman was a founder and the first director of the Youth Advocacy Project, a community-based interdisciplinary legal services organization based in Roxbury, Mass. He is a frequent presenter at Continuing Legal Education programs and a familiar presence on noted law school faculties. Judge Blitzman has been appointed to, chaired, and/or served on many committees for the Supreme Judicial Court and the Massachusetts and Boston Bar Associations focused on criminal procedure, judicial ethics, juvenile justice, the unmet needs of children, and access to justice.

Daniel J. Losen, (J.D., M.Ed.), Senior Education Law and Policy Associate at the The Civil Rights Project (CRP) at UCLA

Mr. Losen is a Senior Education Law and Policy Associate at the The Civil Rights Project (CRP) at UCLA (formerly at Harvard Law School) where he also has been a lecturer on law. He frequently serves as an independent consultant on education and racial justice issues for civil rights advocates as well as for state and district education agencies. His work concerns the impact of federal, state and local education law and policy on students of color. Before becoming a lawyer, Mr. Losen taught in public schools for 10 years, including work as a school founder of an alternative public school.

Moderator: Wendy Kaplan, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, Boston University Law School

Ms. Kaplan's primary clinical work involves education, training and case supervision of third-year law students representing defendants in criminal and delinquency trials. She also teaches a seminar on juvenile delinquency that explores the historical and legal foundations of our juvenile justice system, and investigates policy changes regarding the treatment of delinquent children. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Suffolk Lawyers for Justice, a non-profit that provides legal services to indigent criminal defendants. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Children's Legal Services, Inc. and is a member of the Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee of the state's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

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