



# So You Want to Be An Activist

## Advocacy 101

Juvenile Justice Coalition Advocacy Training Series

# Building a Policy Agenda

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## What is Public Policy?

A pattern of **government decisions and actions** to **solve public problems**, serving the **public interest**

# Building a Policy Agenda

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**Q1: Name one way that a government agency has helped you.**

<https://pollev.com/sanafadel065>

# Building a Policy Agenda

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**Q2: Name one way that a government agency has stopped you from helping yourself or being able to accomplish a goal.**

<https://pollev.com/sanafadel065>

# Building a Policy Agenda

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**Q3: Name one way that a government agency can help you but is not doing it now.**

<https://pollev.com/sanafadel065>

# From Campaign to Implementation: The Public Problem

2012

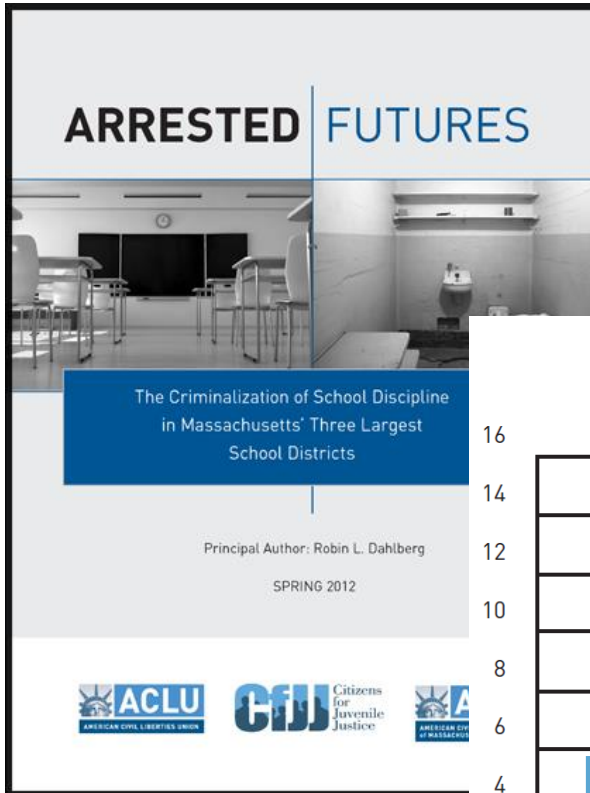
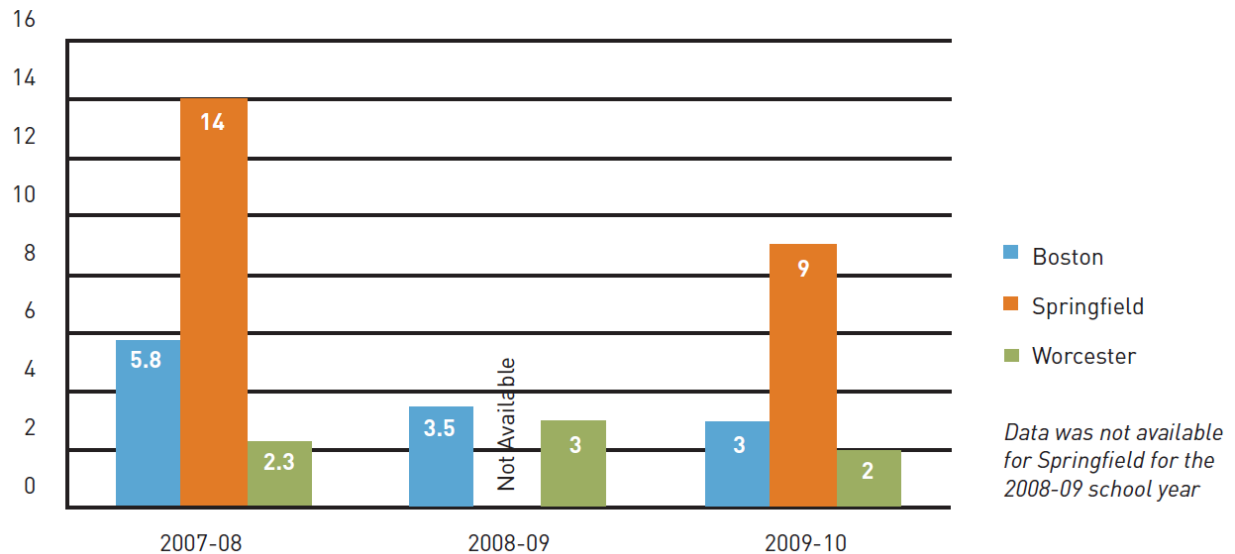
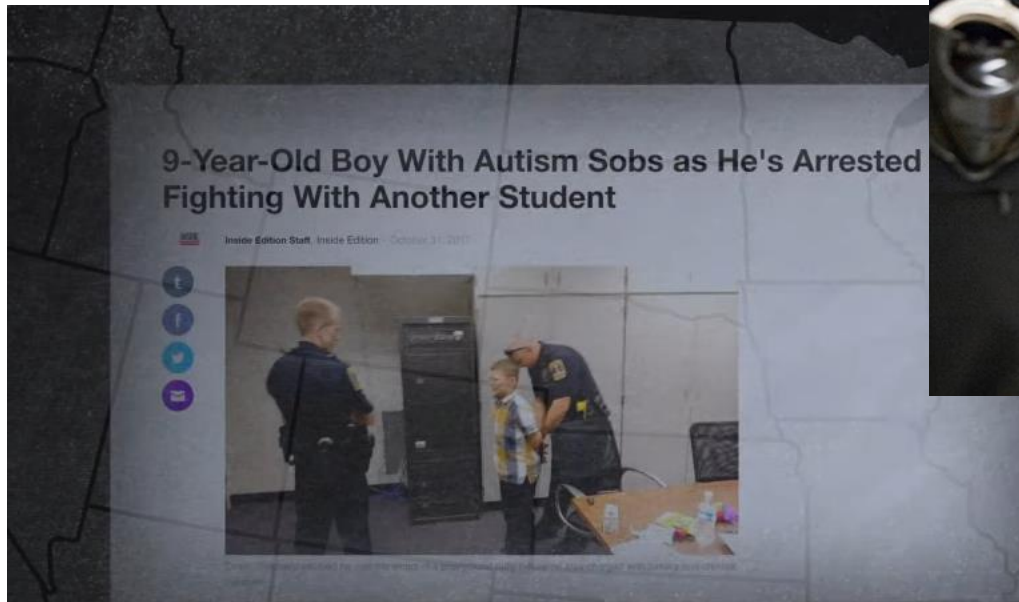


Table 3: Number of Arrests Per 1,000 Students for  
Boston, Springfield and Worcester



# From Campaign to Implementation: Government Decisions and Actions



# From Campaign to Implementation: Policy Successes

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**2018**

**Raised Lower Age of  
Arrest from 7 to 12**



**Decriminalized  
Student Misbehavior**



**Create Legal Parent-  
Child Confidentiality**





# From Campaign to Implementation: Policy Successes

**2020**

**Ended state mandate of  
placement of school police in  
all school districts**



**Limits on racial profiling  
and surveillance of students**



# **Advocacy Basics**

Civics 101



# Civics 101: Levels and Branches of Government



# Civics 101: Levels of Government

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**Federal:** applies to everyone in the United States:

- Civil rights
- Right to education
- Climate policy
- Medicaid/Medicare
- SNAP/food stamps
- Federal tax dollar spending



# Civics 101 – Levels of Government

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**State:** applies to everyone in Massachusetts

- MBTA
- MassHealth
- Student discipline
- School policing
- State tax dollar spending



# Civics 101 – Levels of Government

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**Local/Municipal:** applies to each city or town separately:

- Policing policies
- School curriculum
- Public library
- Property taxes
- Local revenue spending
- Green space and parks



# One Issue: Multiple Levels of Government

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## Education Policy

- **Federal:** Special Education and civil rights of students, standardized testing
- **State:** Special Education funding, student discipline laws, MCAS testing
- **Local:** City/town school funding, school policing decisions, education curriculum

# One Issue: Multiple Levels of Government

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## Criminal Legal Policy

- **Federal:** prosecuting local police departments for systemic civil rights violations; trafficking; crimes across state lines; federal prisons
- **State:** prosecuting violations of crimes within state; bail and detention policies; criminalizing/ decriminalized offenses; expungement; licensing of individual police officers
- **Local:** Police policies and enforcing state criminal laws



# Civics 101: Branches of Government

**Executive:** responsible for implementing the law and running agencies that run government programs



**Federal**  
President



**State**  
Governor



**Local**  
Mayor or Town  
Manager

# Civics 101: Branches of Government

**Legislative:** responsible for making the laws



**Federal:** Congress



**State:** General Court



**Local:** City Council

# Civics 101: Branches of Government

**Judicial:** responsible for interpreting the law and deciding how the law applies to people and circumstances



## **Federal:**

Supreme Court  
US Appeals Court  
US District Court

## **State:**

Supreme Judicial Court  
Appeals Court  
District/Juvenile Court

# Levels of Government Scenario

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## Florida Voter Purge Draws Lawsuit From Groups Claiming State Is In Violation Of Voting Rights Act

<https://www.cfjj.org/grassroots-training>

### 2023-2024 Grassroots Training Series

#### Session 1: Advocacy 101

TUESDAY, MAY 2ND FROM 3:30PM TO 5:00PM

REGISTER HERE

TRAINING MATERIALS:  
SCENARIO 1

STUDENT DISCIPLINE  
SCENARIO

LAW ENFORCEMENT  
SCENARIO

# Discussion Questions

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- 1) Which level (or levels) of Government and which branch (or branches) are discussed in the article?

Federal lawsuit alleging violation of Voting Rights Act

Level: Federal

Branch: Judicial

State “purging” of registered voters

Level: State

Branch: Executive

- 2) What is the policy the Governor is defending? What is his method of advancing this policy?

Limiting voting access of students and minorities by removing voters suspected of being non-citizens. Implementing election laws using **executive** powers regarding eligibility and deciding on location and hours of polling locations.

# Discussion Questions

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- 3) What is the policy the advocates are defending? What is their method of advancing this policy?

Expanding voting access by filing a federal lawsuit alleging state's executive branch voting law implementation disproportionately excludes Latinos and people of color.

- 4) How do these branches of government interact? How is it an example of checks and balances?

Executive power allows the Governor to decide how to run elections. However, a different branch (judicial) can limit that power by ruling that the implementation violates the constitution. Federal courts dictate limitations on state administration.

# Advocacy Strategies



# Sources of Public Policy



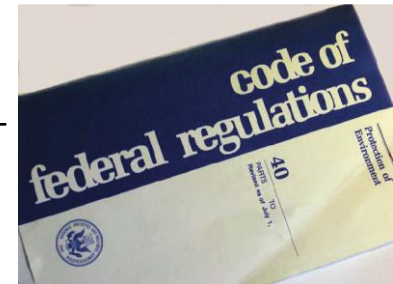
**Legislation**



**Budget**



**Executive Orders**



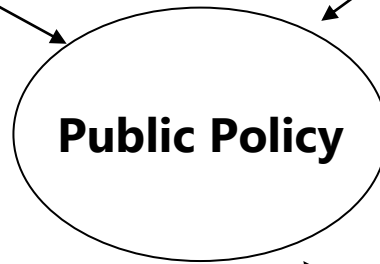
**Agency Policies and Regulations**



**Court Rulings**



**Ballot Initiatives**





# Same Goals - Different Strategies

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**Demonstrate power in numbers**

**Mobilize and connect grassroots**

**High visibility action**

# Same Goals - Different Strategies

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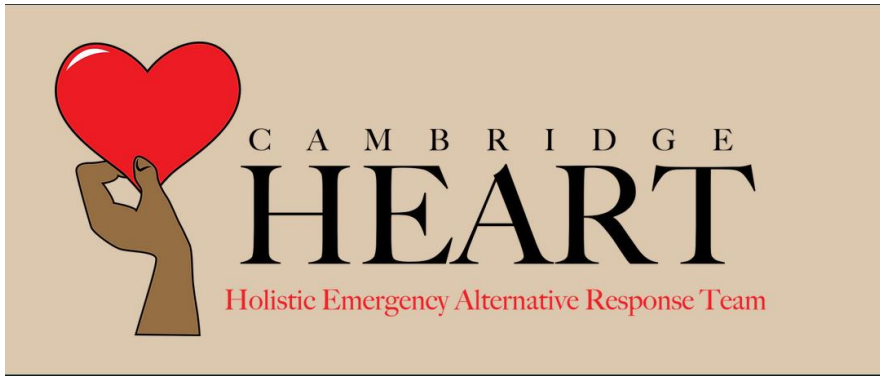
**Mobilizing constituents with a shared problem to take collective action**

**Building leadership within this constituency**

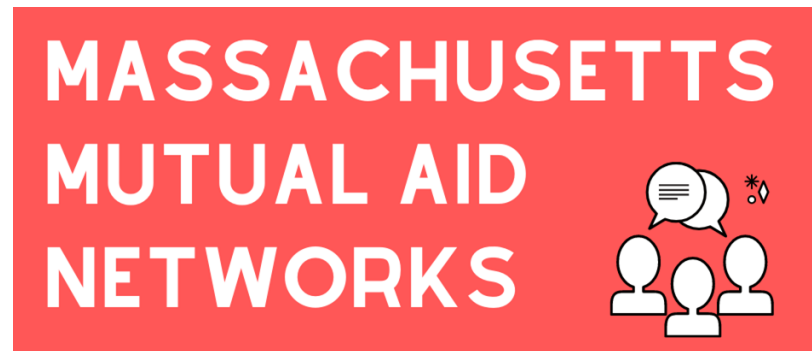
**Personal activism over the long term**

# Same Goals - Different Strategies

## Build Alternatives



**Disrupt social and community problems by creating a community-led response and alternative**



# Same Goals - Different Strategies



**Inside Game**

**Campaigning to influence or be among those in positions of power and decision making**

# Components of a Policy Campaign



# Policy Scenario: Breakout Sessions 1 & 2

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## Former Falmouth students question racial disparity in discipline

<https://www.cfjj.org/grassroots-training>

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SCENARIO

LAW ENFORCEMENT  
SCENARIO

# Policy Scenario: Breakout Sessions 3 & 4

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## **New Bedford mothers unite to help sons ID'd as possible gang members**

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SCENARIO

# Step 1: Set Clear Policy Objectives

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- What is the policy problem that the activists are trying to solve?
- What is the public policy that is ensuring that this problem is in place?
- What is the source of that particular public policy? and at which level(s) of government?
- What is the solution?
- What policy making tool best advances this solution? and at which level(s) of government?



# Setting A Youth Justice Agenda



# Step 2: Policy Making Process

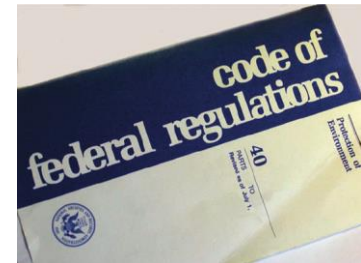
What policy making tool best advances this solution?  
and at which level(s) of government?



**Legislation**



**Budget**



**Agency Policies  
and Regulations**

# Brainstorm Your Policy Priority

Choose a policy priority that will meet **one** of these three criteria:

1. A change in the law that will help you and others in your community (**legislative** campaign)
2. Investing state dollars to create a new or expand an existing state program that helps you and others in your community (**budget** campaign)
3. Changing the rules of a program so that it works better (**administrative** campaign)



# Setting the Strategy to Advance Your Policy Priorities

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**Question 1:** What are the barriers to reaching this goal?

**Question 2:** What changes/solutions does the state need to do to reach this goal?

**Question 3:** What actions are you willing to take to advocate for this goal?

# Questions? Feedback

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Please share your **feedback** on today's session at  
<https://forms.gle/48npRhJsbkwA3fVR6>

# Please join us for our next training

## Influencing Legislators

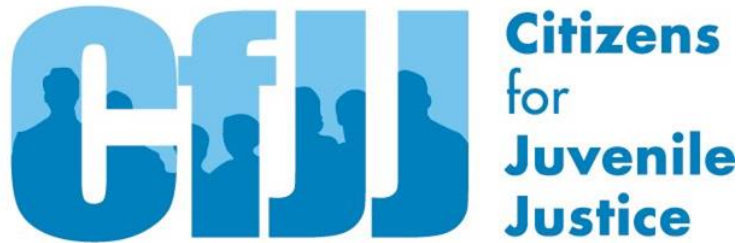


**Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>**  
**3:30PM to 5:00PM**

<https://www.cfjj.org/grassroots-training>

# Contact

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join our email list

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