



Citizens
for
Juvenile
Justice



Massachusetts Coalition
To Prevent Gun Violence

GUNS, SAFETY & THE EDGE OF ADULTHOOD



Citizens for Juvenile Justice and the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence are proud to present a youth justice forum on productive approaches to working with young people whose lives are impacted by the complicated mix of guns, violence and trauma



Wednesday, April 7

11 am - 1 pm



CfJJ and MACOPGV Joint Statement of Purpose

Policies that purport to end the trauma of gun violence by increasing the punitive surveillance of individuals with mental illness, increasing police presence and surveillance of students at schools, or bringing more people into contact with the criminal justice system may ultimately create more if different, trauma.

*Dr. Madison Armstrong and Dr. Jennifer Carlson
New York Times, March 26, 2021*

Today's event is a part of an ongoing collaboration between Citizens for Juvenile Justice (CfJJ) and the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence (MACOPGV) that began over a year ago. This partnership began with a series of questions and then conversations between CfJJ and MACOPGV staff about the intersection of juvenile justice reform and violence prevention. Questions such as: how do we address the ways that gun-related policies and legislation have augmented the criminal justice system, causing more legal system impact in the very communities experiencing the highest levels of trauma-related to gun violence? How do we get better data on the scope and prevalence of youth involved with the legal system because of gun-related charges? Understanding that these are complex questions that bring up issues of equity, racial and economic justice, we began a collaboration to promote policy change that would both transform the juvenile justice system and increase protective factors for youth that would in turn prevent gun violence.

Our work together began with Raise the Age, long a legislative priority for CfJJ that MACOPGV adopted as well in the last legislative session. Raise the Age ends the automatic prosecution of 18-20-year-olds in the adult system and shifts them into the juvenile system, which is more focused on youth development, greater access to confidentiality, better connection to education, services, and supports, and deliberate family engagement and involvement. Those interventions are demonstrated to improve outcomes and decrease rates of recidivism, therefore decreasing future rates of violence and involvement with the system. The work continues in this legislative session with shared priorities Raise the Age, expanded expungement, and a diversion bill. All of these bills seek to reform the current system and improve outcomes for youth: by increasing services; clearing youth records to make it easier for youth to access housing and other resources they need to be safe and healthy and diverting youth away from justice system. So many young people end up involved with the legal system due to racial disparities and a history of trauma, yet legal system involvement creates more trauma. If we truly want to prevent violence, we must ensure that all youth are treated equitably and given access to the resources they need to be safe and healthy. To this end, CfJJ and MACOPGV have a shared approach: investment in youth is an investment in violence prevention.

EVENT AGENDA



- **Welcome Remarks**

- **Ruth Zakarin, Executive Director, MACOPGV**

- **Introduction from Moderator**

- **Lavell Fulks, Associate Director, Violence Intervention & Prevention Initiative, Boston Public Health Commission**

- **Keynote - Center for Court Innovation, New York City**

- **Elise White, Deputy Research Director**
- **Basaime Spate, Community Research Coordinator**
- **Anjelica Camacho, Research Associate**

- **Panel Discussion**

- **Isaiah Delmoral - Director of Good Vibes, New North Citizens Council**
- **Raena Camacho - Community Engagement and Mobilization Coordinator, HEAL Center, NorthStar Learning Center**
- **Ron Waddell - Executive Director, Legendary Legacies**
- **Mona Igram - Attorney-in-Charge, Youth Advocacy Division - Lowell/Lawrence, Committee for Public Counsel Services**

- **Question and Answer Session**

- **Legislative Priorities**

- **Sana Fadel, Deputy Director, CfJ**

- **Closing Remarks**

- **Leon Smith, Executive Director, CfJ**

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

.....

AN ACT TO PROMOTE PUBLIC SAFETY AND BETTER OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG ADULTS (REPS. O'DAY & KHAN HD.1432 / SEN. BONCORE SD.697)

In 2013, Massachusetts raised the age of juvenile jurisdiction to include 17-year-olds and has since seen a 51% reduction in juvenile crime – outperforming national reductions in both property and violent crime. This bill would end the automatic prosecution of 18- to 20-year-olds as adults to prevent deeper legal system involvement by ensuring they are held accountable and engaged in treatment, education, and vocational training that are more effective for older adolescents. The juvenile system is well-suited to, and currently does, process young people accused of, and adjudicated for, violent crimes, with half the recidivism rate of similarly aged young people incarcerated in the adult system.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO JUDICIAL SUPERVISION TO PROMOTE CHILD WELL-BEING (REP. FLUKER OAKLEY HD. 3768/ SEN. CREEM SD.1878)

Judicial pre-arraignment diversion, passed in 2018, allows judges to divert young people prior to arraignment at which time a juvenile record is created. Judicial diversion allows for a neutral party to decide if a youth and public safety are better served through alternatives to the JJ system (earlier points of diversion are by police and prosecutors). The 2018 statute excluded several offenses, including low-level conduct as ineligible for diversion. According to a Harvard Law study of racial disparities in Massachusetts' courts, "one factor—racial and ethnic differences in the type and severity of initial charge—accounts for over 70 percent of the disparities in sentence length." These charging disparities also impact Black and Latinx youth disparate access to judicial diversion. Expanding list of offenses that are eligible for judicial consideration allows an individualized hearing, while maintaining the discretion of a judge to allow or reject diversion for a youth.

Fact sheets for these bills can be found at cfjj.org/advocacy

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



AN ACT RELATIVE TO EXPUNGEMENT (REPS. DECKER & KHAN HD.2315 / SEN. CREEM SD.1355)

In 2018, Massachusetts passed legislation that created an opportunity to expunge juvenile and adult criminal records for individuals whose offense was charged prior to their 21st birthday, and it was expanded in the 2020 policing bill to increase the number of offenses eligible for expungement. While these are tremendous steps forward, the law maintained significant limitations by setting limits on number of charges, including cases ending with non-convictions and non-adjudication and keeping a life-time ban on expungement for records containing any of over 150 offenses. Very few individuals who this law intended to help access education, employment and housing are actually eligible based on these criteria. This bill will the remaining gaps in the new law by:

1. Removes the case limit for cases that ended in a non-conviction or non-adjudication and for juvenile cases that ended with an adjudication; the House bill also removes the case limit for offenses leading to a conviction;
2. reducing the offenses categorically ineligible for expungement to offenses resulting in serious bodily injury or death and sex-based offenses currently ineligible for sealing;
3. defines the “best interest of justice” that the law sets for judges to decide on expungement petitions
4. allowing the transmission of juvenile records to the FBI only after an adjudication;

Fact sheets for these bills can be found at cfjj.org/advocacy

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



AN ACT TO PREVENT THE IMPOSITION OF MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES BASED ON JUVENILE ADJUDICATIONS (REP. MIRANDA HD.1956 / SEN. ELDRIDGE SD.138)

Juvenile adjudications (though legally not convictions) count towards mandatory minimum sentences in adult cases, and particularly young people in the adult system. This bill excludes juvenile cases as predicate offenses that trigger mandatory minimum sentences in a future case as an adult. Youth of color, including many LGBT youth, are disparately involved in the juvenile justice system. Black and Latinx youth are more likely than white youth to be advanced through the juvenile justice system – rather than being diverted at most decision points through formal or informal resolutions of their cases. Black and Latinx youth are 1.5 and 2.5 times, respectively, more likely than white youth to have a delinquency petition. Then, those juvenile adjudications follow them into adulthood, leading to more severe punishment for Black and Latinx adults. In 2018, the SJC affirmed that interpretation of the law but suggested the Legislature review the wisdom of allowing juvenile cases trigger mandatory minimum sentences. The late Chief Justice Gants, in a concurring opinion joined by current Chief Justice Budd, urged “the Legislature to consider the wisdom and fairness of the mandatory-minimum aspect of those enhanced sentences, especially where the predicate offenses were committed when the defendant was a juvenile.”

Fact sheets for these bills can be found at cfjj.org/advocacy

MODERATOR BIO



LAVELL FULKS

Lavell Fulks is a public health professional and community advocate based in Boston, MA. Currently, he serves as a Senior Program Manager at the Boston Public Health Commission's Violence Intervention program. Lavell has focused his advocacy primarily in the areas of violence prevention and youth services by supporting holistic and community-based policies that advance public health practices, revitalize the local economy, and promote resident well being. In 2019, the City of Boston awarded Lavell with the Community Service Award for his leadership in mobilizing and building the capacity of residents, and his work in serving community members impacted by violence and trauma. He is an active member of the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence Community Council. His educational background is in the field of Psychology, and he is currently completing the Institute of Nonprofit Practice's Core Certificate seminar.

SPEAKER BIOS



ANJELICA CAMACHO

Anjelica Camacho is a research associate at the Center for Court Innovation. She is a street ethnographer with 10 years of experience conducting fieldwork in New York City with hidden populations, including drug users, people in the sex trade, and gang- and gun-involved youth. She joined the Center in 2017, and previously directed fieldwork on a National Institute of Justice study of gun use in New York City. She is currently directing fieldwork at the Brooklyn site for a 5-city participatory action research project on gun culture in U.S. cities funded by the National Consortium on Gun Violence. Her work combines research with harm-reduction models and is based in her belief that it is essential for black and brown communities to harness data at all stages of the research process, from data collection to writing to dissemination.

SPEAKER BIOS



BASAIME SPATE

Basaime Spate is a community research coordinator at the Center of Court Innovation. He has extensive experience working with on issues of gun violence, primarily with Save our Streets Crown Heights—New York City’s first Cure Violence program. There, he worked as an outreach worker and hospital responder. He has been a researcher with the Center since 2017, and served first as a research associate and then site supervisor on a National Institute of Justice study of gun use in New York City. He is currently working on the planning and implementation of a 5-city participatory action research project on gun culture in U.S. cities funded by the National Consortium on Gun Violence.

SPEAKER BIOS



ELISE WHITE

Elise White is the deputy research director of the Center for Court Innovation. Dr. White's work focuses on qualitative research and ethnography with hard-to-reach populations, exploring their experiences with interpersonal and social trauma, methods of resistance and resilience, and the relationship of these to the criminal justice system. She has worked on criminal justice reform issues for more than 20 years, including designing, running, and evaluating violence prevention programs; alternative-to-incarceration programs; youth organizing programs for public housing residents; and more. Among other projects, she is currently leading a 5-city participatory action research project on gun culture in U.S. cities funded by the National Consortium on Gun Violence Research.

PANEL BIOS



RAENA CAMACHO

Raena Camacho serves as the Community Engagement & Mobilization Coordinator for the HEAL Center - a North Star initiative - located in the heart of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Gun violence prevention (GVP) hits home for Ms. Camacho as she has personally suffered the long term trauma of gun violence, the loss of family and friends in the form of gun related murders and injuries; incarcerations due to the possession of a firearm and gun suicides, which accounts for 60% of all gun deaths. A graduate of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Ms. Camacho received a BA in English: Writing, Rhetoric & Communication and went on to study an interdisciplinary Master's of Science in Global Studies and International Relations with a concentration in Diplomacy at Northeastern University in Boston, MA. Ms. Camacho comes to the HEAL Center by way of Mother Nature Hydroponics and Ayurveda Newport, former CEO of both, she has spent the last decade cultivating the community in restorative practices and life enhancement skills that serve as a catalyst in bringing the body back into homeostasis through healthy eating, healthy living and healthy thinking. A SAMA certified Massage Therapist, Ayurvedic Touch Technician, Ayurvedic Health Counselor, and a NAMA certified Ayurvedic Associate, Ms. Camacho specializes in triaging trauma using a whole body approach, which deals with trauma and disease as a whole in correlation to the person and not the symptoms. A certified Grief Recovery Method Specialist, Ms. Camacho believes in providing culturally responsive care to marginalized communities with real world training and cross cultural skills. Ms. Camacho also served Brockton's Mayor Harrington and Mayor Linda Belzotti under the City's BBB/B21 economic development firm a quasi-entity, promoting sustainable action strategies and activities which fostered the economic, cultural and physical improvements of the City - in conjunction with the Small Business Association (SBA) and the Metro South Chamber of Commerce. She also served as public relations committee chair and member of the board of directors for the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS). "Paying it forward" has served as her life's mantra, she enjoys volunteering her time to grassroots organizations with a rooted focus in social justice, social reform and social reconstruction.

PANEL BIOS



ISAIAH DELMORAL

Isaiah Delmoral is a born and raised resident of the city of Springfield, MA. Isaiah is a proud alumni of Springfield public schools, and he continued his education at Western New England University and Cambridge College. Isaiah has been working for at-risk young people for the past 6 years, serving as a youth pastor and mentor. He currently is proudly serving as the Program manager for New North Citizen's Council's Good Vibes Program and works in collaboration with the MA Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence in the capacity of the community council.

PANEL BIOS



MONA IGRAM, ESQ

Mona is a lifelong public defender. She has worked as a staff attorney at the New Hampshire Public Defender, in private practice accepting court appointments in juvenile and care and protection cases, and has been the Attorney in Charge for the Youth Advocacy Division Lowell office since it opened in 2011. Mona believes that public defenders are poised to assist clients in challenging the institutional and structural racism that forms the foundation of the criminal legal system. She is a founding member of Juvenile Defenders Dismantling Racism (JDDR), which seeks transformative change for youth in the juvenile legal system. She is also a 2020 Ambassadors for Racial Justice Fellow, a program of the Georgetown Juvenile Justice Center and the National Juvenile Defender Center. She is a board member of Elevated Thought, an art and social justice organization in Lawrence, and serves on the board of the Middlesex Defense Attorneys and the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa and the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law, and an avid Iowa Hawkeye fan.

PANEL BIOS



RON WADDELL, JR.

Ronald B. Waddell Jr. is a certified transformational life coach through the Association for Christian Character Development, a certified Gang Specialist through The National Gang Crime and Research Center and a Certified Youth Mental Health Specialist. He is a Certified Recovery Coach and holds a certificate in Non-Profit Management and Leadership from Boston University. He has completed and co-facilitated multiple re-entry groups inside MA Houses of Corrections. He recently completed the Black. Addiction Counselor Education program through BSAS and is a candidate for his LADC I. He presents at local, state, and national state events and speaks passionately and eloquently about issues affecting marginalized communities, specifically young men of color. Although Ron experienced homelessness and abandonment at a young age, drove him to become a social activist, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. He is the founder of Legendary Legacies Inc. (LL) a non-profit organization with a mission to equip young men, ages 17-24, with the tools to identify their purpose and live their passion for their community's betterment. LL has a focus on working with individuals that local police have identified as "proven risk." or "impact players." These individuals are substantially gang involved. In his downtime, he enjoys reading, hiking, cooking, and poetry. He lives in Worcester, MA, with his two sons, Joshua, age 8, and Isaiah, age 7.



**Citizens
for
Juvenile
Justice**

Citizens for Juvenile Justice (CfJJ) is the only independent, non-profit statewide organization working exclusively to improve the juvenile justice system in Massachusetts. We advocate for a fair and effective systems of justice promoting positive development and success for young people.



@CFJJMA



@CITIZENSFORJUVENILEJUSTICE



@CFJJMA

44 School Street, Suite 400, Boston MA 02108
cfjj@cfjj.org | 617.338.1050 | www.cfjj.org



Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence

The Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence envisions a world where every one of us, in every zip code, lives free of the threat of gun violence. The Coalition brings together impacted communities, advocates, public health experts and policy-makers to prevent gun violence in all its forms.



@MACOALITIONPGV



@MASSACHUSETTSCOALITIONTOPREVENTGUNVIOLENCE



@MAC2PGV



INFO@MAPREVENTGUNVIOLENCE.ORG

www.mapreventgunviolence.org