
MLG'S Annual "Never Stop Learning" High School Scholarship Submission

Name: Maverick Shuck
Grade: 12th (Senior)
High School: El Dorado High School
GPA: 4.47 Weighted / 3.92 Un-Weighted
SAT: 800 Math / 660 Reading-Writing
Community Service Hours: 434



MAVERICK SHUCK

Thank you for considering me for this scholarship opportunity!

Presented by: Maverick Shuck

If you could change one thing with the justice system, what would it be and how would you change it?

One of the largest issues plaguing the efficiency of the justice system is the utilization and subtle implementation of loopholes that often favor big corporations over the “little man”. This is most evident when big businesses are able to keep delaying the hearing of a pre-trial or even a trial for long periods of time. They do this because the amount of money spent delaying the case is much less than the amount of money that the business is being sued for.

Case in point, would be the 2020 lawsuit filed against the College Board regarding their violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. In this case, the injured party (students who couldn't take the AP Exams because they couldn't afford to have a computer) was seeking a \$500 million settlement. However, for over a year now the College Board has been able to delay the hearing of this case.

The 6th Amendment's provision to a speedy trial is violated by this delay. To make matters worse, when bringing a case regarding a violation of the 6th Amendment, the business will also *delay* that case as well! This behavior makes the 6th Amendment look just like ink on a page that can easily be violated with no repercussions.

I want to change that.

In order to end this loophole that businesses have, there are three steps involved.

The first of these three steps include eliminating the financial incentive to delay cases. In short, make the delay more costly than settling the case outright. I propose that a bill entitled “The Little Man’s Rights” be passed which states, *“After an allotted period of time, 90 - 120 days, if the defendant furthers delaying the hearing of said case, they must pay a fine unless both parties wish to delay the case. The fine for any delay would include a Daily Percentage Rate (DPR) of 0.1% of the proposed settlement (payable now) for the first 30 days the case is delayed. After 30 days, this rate is increased to a DPR of 0.5% for the following 30 days. After 60 days, the rate will be increased up to a DPR of 1.0% for every succeeding day until the case is heard”*. Bottom line, the purpose of this bill is to eliminate the incentive for businesses to delay the hearing of a case.

The second step to ending this loophole would be gathering support for the bill. Now, I am no expert, but I don't think that multibillion-dollar companies and their unions would favor such a bill. As a result, in order to have a chance of getting this bill through the House and subsequently the Senate, it needs to be an Omnibus Bill. The purpose of it being an Omnibus Bill is so that interest groups would support it and gain the widest support possible, even from groups that might normally oppose each other.

The third step is actually a minor one in that a statement needs to be added to the bill that states, *"This bill is passed in the effort to ensure that the 6th Amendment's rights are carried out to the fullest extent of the law"*. This would help end the loophole that businesses have and would in turn favor the little man.

Loopholes that big businesses have utilized for decades have afflicted our justice system and need to be eliminated to ensure that the rights of everyone are carried out the fullest and greatest extent of the law. We need legislation like this to neutralize deep pockets, end getting the justice you can afford and start getting the justice you deserve.

Isabella Mahar

Senior at San Juan Hills HS

MLG Never Stop Learning Scholarship

March 31, 2021

Prompt: If you could change one thing with the justice system, what would it be, and how would you change it?

The School-to-Prison-Pipeline(STPP) is a dark stain on the American education system, holding children back and trapping them in a cycle of ineducation and poverty continuing to imprison instead of restore and rehabilitate. If given all the resources in the world, I would work to end the STPP.

The STPP at its most basic is a system that pushes students, most often those at the largest disadvantage, into the prison system. Occuring in a myriad of ways, it all meets at a nexus of harsh disciplinary policies. These policies then are enforced in ways that lean into personal bias that effect Black and brown, immigrant and disabled students at much higher rates then their peers.

The causes behind the STPP stem to zero-tolerance approaches in the school environment. There have been 100,000 expulsions and 3,300,000 suspensions across the U.S. each year, this number having doubled since 1974. Incidentally, the numbers of suspensions and expulsions started to explode in the 1990's, just when zero-tolerance policies began to be

adopted in schools. However, an important note is that this rise in these approaches did not equate to a higher number of misbehavior, it was students engaging in “risky behaviors.”

Zero-tolerance created major consequences for minor actions.

And they don't even work.

When students enter the system, they are more likely to continuously be involved in the justice system as an offender, more likely to drop out of school and less likely to continue education at all. It's a carousel that keeps turning and impossible to get off.

These zero-tolerance targets students of color and from immigrant families. They do so because those enforcing the policies have their own prejudices and stereotypes. They think that students of color or of immigration status are “dangerous” and “suspicious.” When 61% of those in the U.S. prison system are Black and Latino, yet they only take up 25% there is clearly an issue with how bias affects likelihood of being put in jail.

When students are being disciplined they may not get the advocacy needed to defend themselves. Immigrant students don't necessarily have the same support systems because being first generation a lot of times equates to parents who don't know the ins and outs of the American education system and how to advocate for their kids. That shouldn't be a reason a child ends up in prison.

The STPP leads to students being targeted based on stereotypes and not getting the advocacy they need when being disciplined with higher rates of suspensions and expulsions through zero-tolerance policies where people are disciplined for small offences with a large price.

However, the STPP is not something that is set and stone and can be changed through the use of restorative justice in education. The justice system isn't something that can be fixed alone but instead work with education intersectionally so that way the STPP is stopped in its tracks.

First is to implement social emotional learning during elementary. This program teaches life skills like recognizing and managing emotions and how to maintain relationships helping students throughout life, preventing negative activities later on.

However, all the blame can't be placed on the students, expecting that if they act "correctly" they will avoid the STPP. In reality, you can be the nicest person in the world and your skin color still creates a bias in people to then "discipline" you.

So a lot of responsibility must be pushed on schools. Dismantle any archaic zero-tolerance policies. Training in restorative justice needs to be mandated for all school professionals, teaching those who teach to recognize and dismantle bias, prejudice and stereotypes. Then to take it further and advocate for their students.

Hire professionals in this field full time at schools to not only provide these trainings but then go further and advocate for students during disciplinary proceedings. If possible make sure they are bilingual so that way they can work with all families, to coordinate and have a dialogue between school and home.

Finally, for those in the system currently, there needs to be better resources and programs. Setting up ways to get GED's, associates and bachelor's degrees so that way they can avoid prison in the future by getting stable work. Creating volunteering for those in the HR profession to work with prisoners so they know how to start a career.

The school-to-prison-pipeline keeps good people stuck in a bad system. It is a multifaceted issue and so it needs a multifaceted approach to dismantle and replace it, in order to leave no one behind. By working hand in hand with the justice system, education can create a better world where students can stay students.

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MLG Scholarship

White privilege as many call it is a real thing! White privilege influences education, money, and power. Minorities in this country are convicted of crimes, to the fullest extent of the law, including the death penalty as opposed to their white counterparts. Race can determine many things including your freedom. If you are a white individual the outcome of a crime would be much different than an individual who is African American. In the United States “African American adults are 5.9 times” more likely to be incarcerated than a white adult (The Sentencing Project). One thing that I would like to change about the justice system is that race should not play a factor in the punishment for a crime.

People V. Turner is a classic example of how race can alter the justice system. Brock Turner, a student at Stanford from an affluent family raped a fellow student, while she was unconscious. He was arrested but later released on more than \$100,000 bail. Turner's family was able to pay not only his hefty bail but also a successful attorney to represent him. As a result, he was only sentenced to six months in jail, of which he served only three months.

However, State of Tennessee v. Corey Batey, who was a football player at Vanderbilt University also raped an unconscious woman and received a 15-year sentence for the same crime. Corey Batey will be forced to serve the full 15 years without the possibility of parole. Batey was African American and did not come from a wealthy family or have expensive representation in court.

These are just a few examples of how race plays a factor in the conviction and sentencing of a crime but this disparity happens quite often. Minorities should not suffer heftier punishments for the same crime, due to skin color. The justice system must not allow race to play a factor in the punishment for a crime. Every crime should have a set punishment and nothing should be left up to the judgment of an individual.

In order to alter the justice system a set standard of punishment for each crime would have to be recognized federally. If you commit a crime, a standard sentence would be imposed. The sentence would not be left to the Judge's decision and should be consistent across the board in all states. A specific crime would carry a specific sentence.

Something else to consider is extensive training for law enforcement in regards to removing racial biases in law enforcement. Holding law enforcement to high standards and ensuring that officers do not hold prejudices. This could be accomplished with multicultural training, ethnics training but also in the hiring process. There should be training that is completed before being on the street but also with yearly refreshers. No officer that holds racist views should be on the streets. This flaw in the justice system begins on the streets, because how could it be that “ people of color make up about 30% of the United States' population, but they account for 60% of those imprisoned. By some estimates, one in three black men is imprisoned in his lifetime, compared to one in 106 white men.” (

Baughman, Robertson, and Sah , [The Conversation](#))

Diversity within our judicial system can also bring about change in regards to race playing a factor in how the justice system applies punishment. We as a country should value a diversified judicial system. Not the current white male-dominated system. “White men comprise 58 percent of state court judges, even though they make up less than one-third of the population.” (Jawando an Anderson 2016) Diversifying the judicial system would bring about equal representation for all ethnicities. Along with diversifying judges, juries should also be looked at and examined. A jury should be composed of peers, however not too often do you see African Americans on a jury trial for an African American. This should be a requirement, that the jury effectively represents the defendant.

In the end, race continues to be a key component in the justice system. In order for systemic change to come about, key components of our judicial system would need to be altered. Until systemic racism is removed from the justice system, minorities will not have equal justice.