

Policing in the USA

Hello, my name is Michael Reynolds, I'm 17 years and I attend Loyola High School in Detroit, Michigan. The police have impacted my life in many ways. When I was in first grade in Detroit, I lived in extreme poverty. One day I walked into class for career day, and a police officer changed my life. Because I lived in poverty, I did not have many of the essentials I needed to survive the frigid winters, including a proper coat, boots, or even socks. After school I was walking the long mile home and the police officer that presented in my class stopped to ask why I didn't have a coat. He took me to get a hot meal, and bought me a coat and boots. For the next three weeks I was warm and comfortable because of the kindness of this police officer. But I will tell you that after three weeks I was robbed and someone stole my new warm coat.

With me being young and innocent, I had not formed an opinion about law enforcement.

We're going to fast-forward a few years in life to the beginning of my high school career. As I walked down the hall, one of the police officers employed in the school noticed I did not have my identification badge with me. Before I could explain why I did not have my badge I was escorted to the office and suspended for an entire week. I had to leave the school premises immediately. Walking to the bus stop, a different police officer pulled me over and demanded to know why I was not in school. As I tried to explain I was thrown into the back of the police car. They drove back to my school to see if I was telling the truth and I was left waiting in the car for over two hours. When they came back they told me I was in fact suspended, but because the school did not provide me with the proper forms my guardian and I both had to pay tickets for

me being off of school property. The tickets together were \$600 dollars, and I had a court date for each one.

Was forgetting my ID worth missing school? Me being kicked out of school did not solve or help anything. I was at home alone watching Jerry Springer, doing nothing.

Many young people today have fear of the police in their communities and schools. There is a discrepancy between the goal of keeping communities safe, and the *reality* of policing today. The School to Prison Pipeline is a pipeline that funnels minority students into the juvenile justice system. These are my recommendations to solving some of the major problems surrounding youth, the School to Prison Pipeline, and 21st century policing the in the United States.

- Like the officer that reached out to me when I was in first grade, police should get involved in the communities they serve to build relationships and create allies. (Community Service, Community Events, Explorers Camp, Block Clubs)
- Put resources into prevention and intervention in schools instead of strict and mandatory suspensions and expulsions. Support educators, parents, students, and counselors to get trained in restorative practices and other solutions to keeping kids in school.
- Let's create new policies that benefit youth and modify the policies that are major contributors the School to Prison Pipeline.
- Young people should not be kicked out of school for minor infractions. If a suspension is necessary, it should be an in-school suspension so students still receive an education and are kept off the streets.