

M.O.B.B. United for Social Change, Inc. (MUSC) focuses on influencing policy that impacts how Black boys and men are treated and perceived by law enforcement and in society. Our focus covers a variety of areas plagued by racial disparities as it relates to their interaction with law enforcement and persons in authority. From the school-to-prison pipeline to the broader criminal justice system, we aim to break down these walls and change the trajectory of racial injustice to ensure that our sons survive and thrive.

MUSC's legislative platform outlines key policy areas that we plan to focus on over this year, across all states. Additionally, as they are introduced in state assemblies or opportunities arise, our legislative agenda will also include support for or opposition again key legislation and initiatives that are aligned with our mission.

2018 Legislative Platform

TRAINING

De-Escalation - De-escalation is essential to reducing police involved shootings and incidents involving excessive use of force by equipping police officers with options and strategies to more effectively deal with members of the public who are in mental and emotional distress; and equip officers to discern when to appropriately use lethal versus non lethal methods to protect themselves. MUSC advocates for the local and state adoption of nationwide minimum standards and requirements for de-escalation training for all law enforcement officers. These requirements should also be tied to law enforcement agency performance management metrics such that LEOs are regularly evaluated on their use of de-escalation tactics.

Crisis Intervention - The safety of both law enforcement officers and citizens is compromised when law enforcement responds to crises involving people with severe mental illnesses who are not being treated. Interactions are safer and outcomes are better when responding officers are fully trained in the Memphis method/CIT, and there is a system of community support to redirect individuals with mental illness from the judicial system to the health-care system. MUSC advocates for local and state adoption of nationwide minimum standards and requirements to provide for an adequate number of patrol officers trained in order to ensure that CIT-trained officers are available at all times. All dispatchers should be trained to appropriately elicit sufficient information to identify a mental health related crisis.

Institutional Racism/Diversity Training - The goal of these trainings is to make police officers aware of their automatic, conscious and unconscious stereotypes that allows racism to perpetuate within the institution of policing, such as the stereotype that all young Black men are criminals, in order to overcome these biases, improving community relations and policing efficacy and increasing the safety of Black Boys and men.

Law enforcement and leadership must address implicit and explicit biases of officers AND, reduce racial profiling of black and brown people which leads to harassment, unnecessary fines and arrests and eliminate excessive force which leads to bodily harm or death at the hands of people who are paid to protect and serve the general public. Institutional racism/Diversity training also seeks to foster greater trust in law enforcement from people of color.

In order to achieve these goals, comprehensive Institutional Racism/Diversity training must be mandatory for every person in law enforcement especially leadership. To date police only receive on average 667 hours of training (much less than the average cosmetologist) and very few of those hours if any involve Institutional Racism/Diversity training. Each state has its own Peace Officer Standards Training Commission (P.O.S.T.) which is responsible for developing and enforcing standards for law enforcement. In addition to setting standards the Commission certifies law enforcement instructors, curricula and specialized schools.

The P.O.S.T. for each state should all require comprehensive Institutional Racism/Diversity Training be part of the curricula or it should be a curriculum all its own. Instructors should be certified to teach this sensitive material and a critical part of the training should also include periodic assessments to determine a person's level of understanding and willingness to put into practice the information taught.

To achieve these goals each state can voluntarily implement a curricula or legislative vehicles can be used to ensure Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity training takes place. MUSC advocates for each state's P.O.S.T. commission to require training as well as a legislative solution to comprehensive training when necessary. The training should be standard across each state. MUSC is advocating for laws and policies that require police departments to provide implicit bias training to new and veteran officers.

OVERSIGHT

Access to Body Camera Footage - Access to body worn cameras are meant to hold LEOs accountable, build trust, and foster transparency. Individual police departments control access and there are varying laws across the country regarding use and access. Financial concerns factor prominently in the use of body worn cameras and access to them (e.g., storage of footage) as well as privacy issues.

There are varying laws focused on access to body camera footage that range from studying the issue to detailing how to request access to body camera footage.

MUSC is advocating for uniform policies to access body camera footage for those police departments that have body worn cameras. In order to execute this policy, it would require an independent entity to oversee either a national law or each of the state laws.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM/STRUCTURAL INTERSECTIONS WITH POVERTY

Teen Life Sentencing - Mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole for juveniles is unconstitutional. The United States is the only country that sentences people to life without parole for crimes committed before turning 18. More than half of our states have any prisoners serving life without parole for crimes committed as juveniles.

MUSC advocates to end the life sentences for teens and to prohibit any life sentence for anyone under the age of 18 no matter what the offense was. That would require all 50 states plus the District of Columbia to ban teen life sentencing and modify sentencing for those who are currently serving a life sentence.

Implementation of this policy would be based on the 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Miller v. Alabama* where states and the federal government are required to consider the unique circumstances of each juvenile defendant in determining an individualized sentence. Also, in *Montgomery v. Louisiana*, a 2016 decision, ensures that the decision applies retroactively so that teens sentenced to life without parole would be impacted as well.

BAIL REFORM

On any given day, an overwhelming majority of persons in municipal and county jails are persons awaiting trial or sentencing who won't be found guilty of anything. Many people will be tried and never convicted, and those who are convicted often receive sentences that do not entail any time behind bars. As a result, the totally innocent can be deprived of their liberty for longer than a convicted felon. And anyone who is bailed out – charged or convicted or not – never gets back the money paid to secure their release. They are incarcerated simply because they cannot afford to pay bail.

Monetary bail practice has a disproportionate number of people of color and poor people being incarcerated during pre-trial simply because they cannot pay bail, or people of color and poor people becoming trapped in increased debt after paying a bail bondsman a nonrefundable lower amount, usually five to ten percent of the bail.

MUSC advocates reform of the cash bail system by replacing it with pretrial risk assessments that a judge could use to decide whether someone accused of a crime is a flight risk or danger to the public. Bail would be an option, but only if deemed necessary to ensure someone's return. It should no longer be the default.

M.O.B.B. United for Social Change, Inc. is the sister organization and advocacy arm of Moms of Black Boys United, Inc. It is a nationwide coalition of moms who are dedicated to making the world a safer place for Black boys and men by eradicating harassment, brutality, and unjustified use of deadly force by law enforcement against our sons.

For more information or to become an advocate, visit www.mobbunited.org or email policy@mobbunited.org