

RESOURCE GUIDE

Why Policing Our Schools Backfires



MacArthur
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70 Million is made possible by a grant from the Safety and Justice Challenge at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.



million

ONE JAIL AT A TIME.

story

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

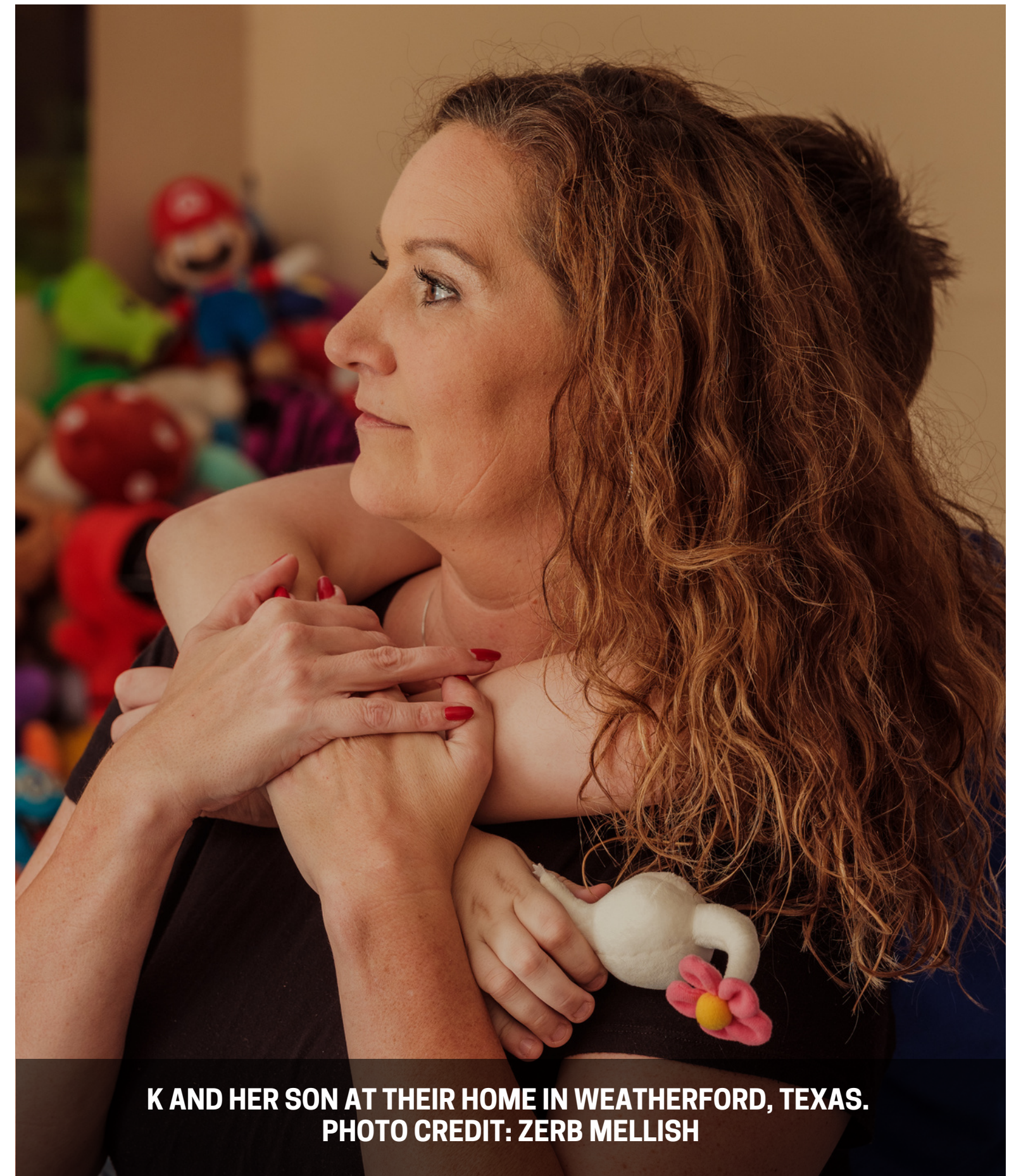
School resource officers (SRO) work in public schools across the nation. According to the [National Association of School Resource Officers](#), "A 2007 Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) found that there were more than 17,000 SROs deployed in public schools nationwide..." While the goal of SROs is to uphold a safe educational environment, there's long-running criticism of SROs effectiveness. An extreme example of ineffectiveness is the tragedy of the Uvalde school shooting, where a gunman killed 19 students and 2 teachers at Robb Elementary while officers took more than an hour to stop the shooter. Other critiques are that SROs are often used to address classroom behavior– handling disruptive students, which hints that they might look at students through a criminal justice lens.

School policing can often replace the necessity of proper school counseling services. This has an effect on all students who are subject to school policing, especially students with special needs. According to a 2021 analysis by the [Center for Public Integrity](#), school policing disproportionately affects students of color and students with disabilities. Students with special needs often have legal documents called an individualized education plan (IEP). [AccessComputing at the University of Washington](#) states IEP as, "This is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child with an identified disability who is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services." Usually, the lack of funding prevents schools from meeting the IEP requirements. This leads to instances where SRO, most of whom are not well-schooled around issues of implicit bias or issues of diversity gravely mishandle situations. Students are physically harmed, at risk for arrest, hospitalization, or worse.

"Look to the school policing budgets that you have in place at the district level and say that even if we took a percentage of the funding away for school policing in this moment and dedicated it to having enough TAs in place to meet the terms of IEPs across the state, then we would have a meaningful, tangible transformation of school environments for millions of kids across Texas." - Andrew Hairston, Director of the Education Justice Project at Texas Appleseed

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What percentage of your district's school budget goes toward school policing or implementing school resource officers? Is there a code of conduct being upheld and enforced for SRO's to interact with teachers and students in the classroom? Are there individualized education programs (IEP) in place for students with special needs?



**K AND HER SON AT THEIR HOME IN WEATHERFORD, TEXAS.
PHOTO CREDIT: ZERB MELLISH**

PEOPLE DOING THE WORK



**DIRECTOR OF ADVOCATE SERVICES AT CIRKIEL LAW GROUP, FERNANDO DE URIOSTE, PICTURED AT THE FIRM'S OFFICE OUTSIDE OF AUSTIN, TEXAS.
PHOTO CREDIT: MICHAEL MINASI**

Dignity in Schools

The Dignity in Schools Campaign challenges the systemic problem of pushout in our nation's schools and works to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. As a national coalition, DSC builds power amongst parents, youth, organizers, advocates and educators to transform their own communities, support alternatives to a culture of zero-tolerance, punishment, criminalization and the dismantling of public schools, and fight racism and all forms of oppression.

Education Justice at Texas Appleseed

We work on a number of fronts to advocate for policy changes at the state level, as well as the local and school district level to close pathways to dropout and eliminate contact with the criminal legal system.

Cirkiel Law Group

Cirkiel Law Group is a Texas-based law firm providing general legal services to our local community as well as representation tailored to protect the civil rights of adults and children across the state and beyond.

Center for Public Representation

EQUALITY: We believe that individuals with disabilities must be afforded the same rights and opportunities, as all individuals, to live full and meaningful lives.

CHOICE: We believe that individuals with disabilities have the right, as all individuals, to make their own choices, including life decisions governing their healthcare, their finances, their relationships, where they work, who they vote for, where they travel, where they live and with whom they live.

INTEGRATION: We believe that individuals with disabilities have the right, as all individuals, to access the same opportunities for community living and inclusion in all aspects of their lives.

School Social Work Association of America

School Social Workers are trained mental health professionals who can assist with mental health concerns, behavioral concerns, positive behavioral support, academic, and classroom support, consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators as well as provide individual and group counseling/therapy. School social workers are instrumental in furthering the mission of the schools which is to provide a setting for teaching, learning, and for the attainment of competence and confidence.

Center for Public Integrity

As the country has reached historic disparities in wealth and across a range of other measurements of well-being, Public Integrity is focusing its investigative reporting on inequality, a problem ingrained in the culture and economy of the U.S. since its founding.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

The NASP vision is that all children and youth access the learning, behavior, and mental health support needed to thrive in school, at home, and throughout life.

National Center for Youth Law

NCYL's Education work aims to create an education ecosystem that centers youth. We work to ensure equitable education opportunities to all children and youth - especially those who experience barriers due to disability, racism, socioeconomic status and more.

National Education Association

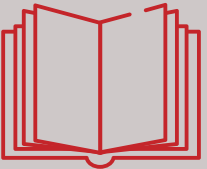
NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States. We bring the expertise, drive, and dedication of 3 million educators and allies to advancing justice and excellence in public education. We are as diverse as the students we represent, but united in our purpose: championing justice and excellence in public education.

LEARN MORE



KELLI SNYDER AND HER SON AT THEIR HOME IN WEATHERFORD, TEXAS. PHOTO CREDIT: ZERB MELLISH

Reading



PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL SAFETY, PRIVACY, ANDEQUITY by The Center for Public Representation and 39 other education, privacy, disability rights, and civil rights organizations

The Prevalence and the Price of Police in Schools by Chelsea Connery

A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools by The National Association of School Psychologists (NASPA)

Safe School-based Enforcement through Collaboration, Understanding, and Respect by U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Justice (DOJ)

Abolishing School Resource Officers Amidst the Black Lives Matter Movement: A History and Case Study in Oakland and Los Angeles by Wendy Gomez

National Organizations Call for Rigorous Training and Appropriate Use of School Resource Officers by The National Association of School Psychologists (NASPA)

School Resource Officers: When the Cure is Worse than the Disease by Kendrick Washington, ACLU-WA Youth Policy Counsel and Tori Hazelton, ACLU-WA Policy Advocacy Intern

Website



Dignity In Schools - Resources

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