

Disproportionate School Suspensions Attract the Attention of a New York Civil Rights Violation Lawyer

A new study reveals that students of color and students with disabilities are more likely to be suspended from high school in New York City.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK — February 1, 2011 – As suspensions served by New York City students have sharply increased in the past ten years, black and special education students were more likely to be kicked out of class, revealed a new study by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) and the Student Safety Coalition.

Only one third of New York City students are black, but these students served more than half of the suspensions, the new study shows. The report also contends that black students typically served longer suspensions and were more likely to be suspended for “subjective” misconduct, like disruptive and disrespectful behavior, including profanity and insubordination. These are acts that used to be handled with a visit to the principal’s office or detention.

The report has attracted the attention of New York civil rights violation lawyers like David Perecman, as well as education leaders and education groups.

“Zero tolerance discipline policies apparently have resulted in an increase in suspensions that are disproportionate among black students,” said New York civil rights violation lawyer Perecman.

The NYCLU believes this harsh approach to discipline, combined with aggressive policing in high schools, pushes kids from the classroom into the criminal justice system. On the NYCLU site, this system is called the School to Prison Pipeline.

The organization cites studies that show that students who are suspended tend to be suspended repeatedly, until they either drop out or are pushed out of school. The NYCLU, which obtained the raw data through Freedom of Information law requests, argues that this all adds up to an academic culture that sets up blacks and disabled students to fail.

In total, the number of served suspensions was close to 74,000 in 2008-09, up from approximately 44,000 in 1999-2000, the report shows.

“When some minority students receive harsher or different disciplinary punishments than whites and they are disproportionately impacted, this only serves to deepen the all too familiar resentment and frustration in many communities,” said Perecman, a New York civil rights violation lawyer for over 30 years.

A City Education Department spokeswoman noted that crime in school has gone down "year after year" and that race is not a factor in suspension decisions.

“Any time an individual’s civil rights are violated or are perceived to be violated, it is a serious concern that must be addressed. All students deserve the same access to quality education on an equal basis across the United States and, certainly, in New York,” civil rights violation lawyer Perecman said.

About David Perecman and The Perecman Firm, PLLC:

For the past 30 years, the New York false arrest, excessive force by police, police negligence, and civil rights violation lawyers at The Perecman Firm, PLLC have handled all types of cases including civil rights violations. David Perecman, founder of the Firm, is a Board Director and the past Secretary and Treasurer of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association (NYSTLA) and a chair of its Labor Law Committee. Mr. Perecman's achievements have brought him recognition as an Honoree in the National Law Journal's Hall of Fame, in New York Magazine's "The Best Lawyers in America" and The New York Times Magazine "New York Super Lawyers, Metro Edition" for the years 2007-2010.

The Firm has recovered millions of dollars for its clients. Among the more recent victories, Mr. Perecman won a \$15 million verdict* for a construction accident, a \$5.35 million dollar verdict** for an automobile accident, and a and a \$40 million dollar structured settlement for medical malpractice****.

*later settled while on appeal for \$7.940 million

** later settled for \$3.5 million

*** later settled for \$90,000.00

**** total potential payout

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