

Rethinking Safety

Defenders & Schools Supporting
Positive Youth Development



Defenders of Youth Rights

Agenda



- **Visioning a Better Future**
- **Resources & Priorities**
- **Student Wellbeing & School Safety**
- **Reforms to Keep Youth in School**
- **Supporting Students & Reforms**
- **Next Most Elegant Step**



Visioning a Better Future

“[W]e must dream beyond what we are told is possible or realistic. Because we have the power collectively to change what is possible, to lay foundations so that when a moment like this arises, we are ready to take advantage of it.”

Andrea J. Ritchie, *Practicing New Worlds: Abolition and Emergent Strategies*



Resources & Priorities

“Don’t tell me what you value.
Show me your budget, and I’ll tell you what you value.”

– President Joe Biden

State Spending on Education vs. Incarceration

\$250,000.00

\$200,000.00

\$150,000.00

\$100,000.00

\$50,000.00

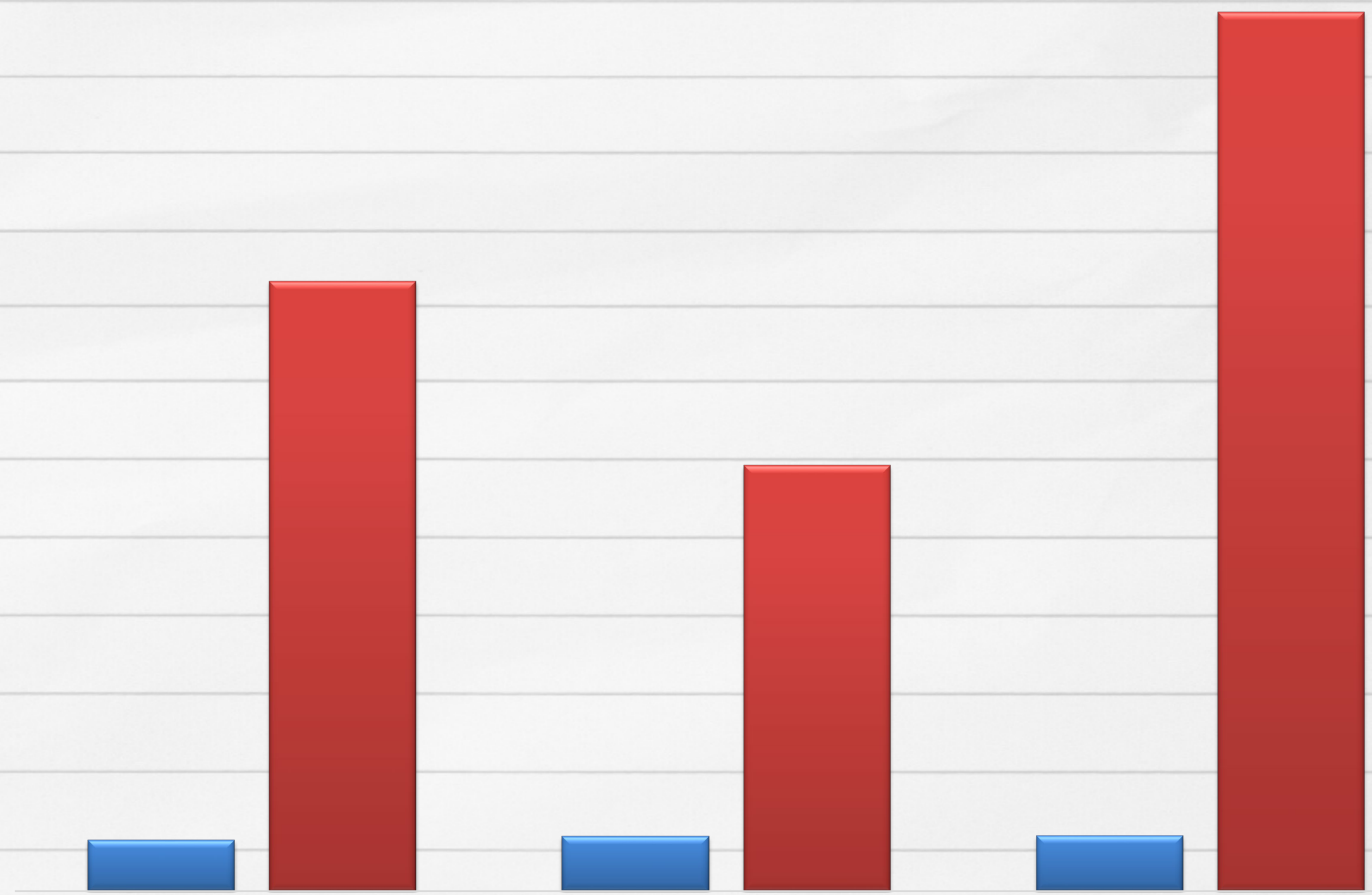
\$0.00

Alabama

Georgia

New Mexico

Education Incarceration



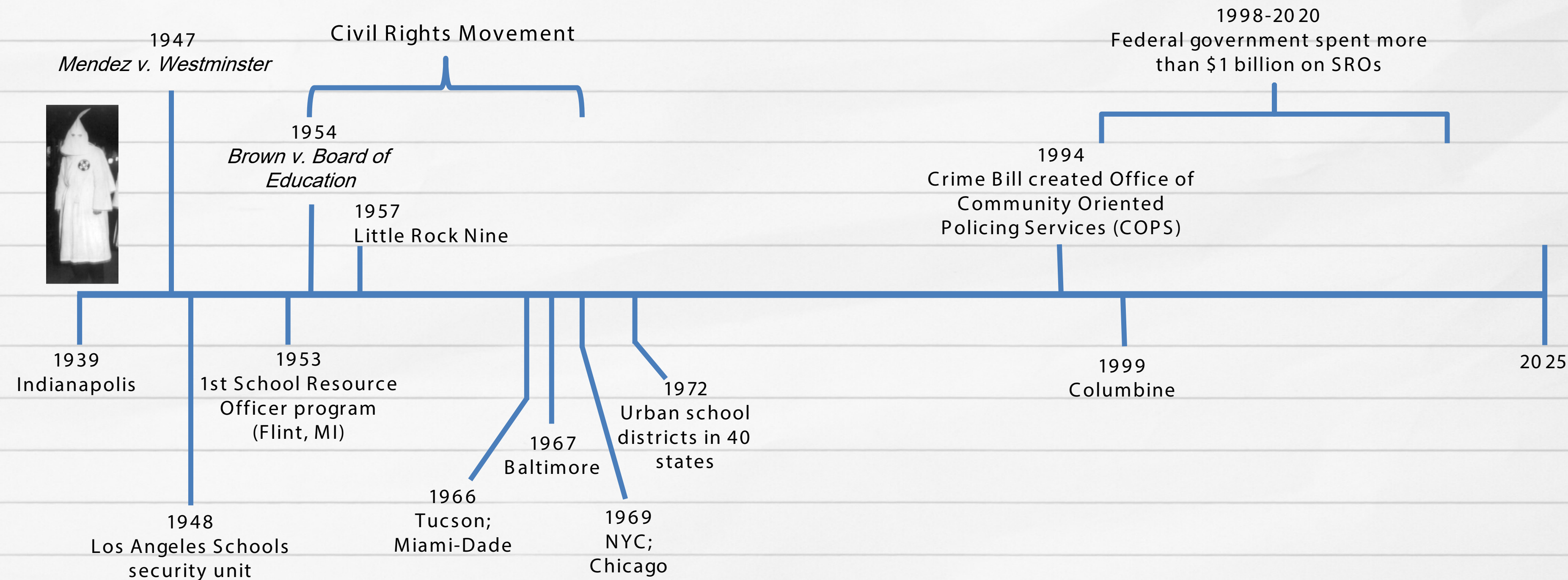


“If you can live in a neighborhood like that, then you won’t turn your nose up at carceral systems, cause you will be used to it. It’s nasty, but it’s nasty where you were. You’re used to it.”

“They’re priming us for detention.”

“Metal detectors and security guards may be able to keep guns and knives out of school buildings, but they cannot keep the chaos that disrupts our communities and the lives of our children out of our classrooms.”

Grace Lee Boggs, *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*



History of Police in Schools

Scarce Educational Funds Going to Putting Police in Schools

1.7 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no counselors.**

3 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no nurses.**

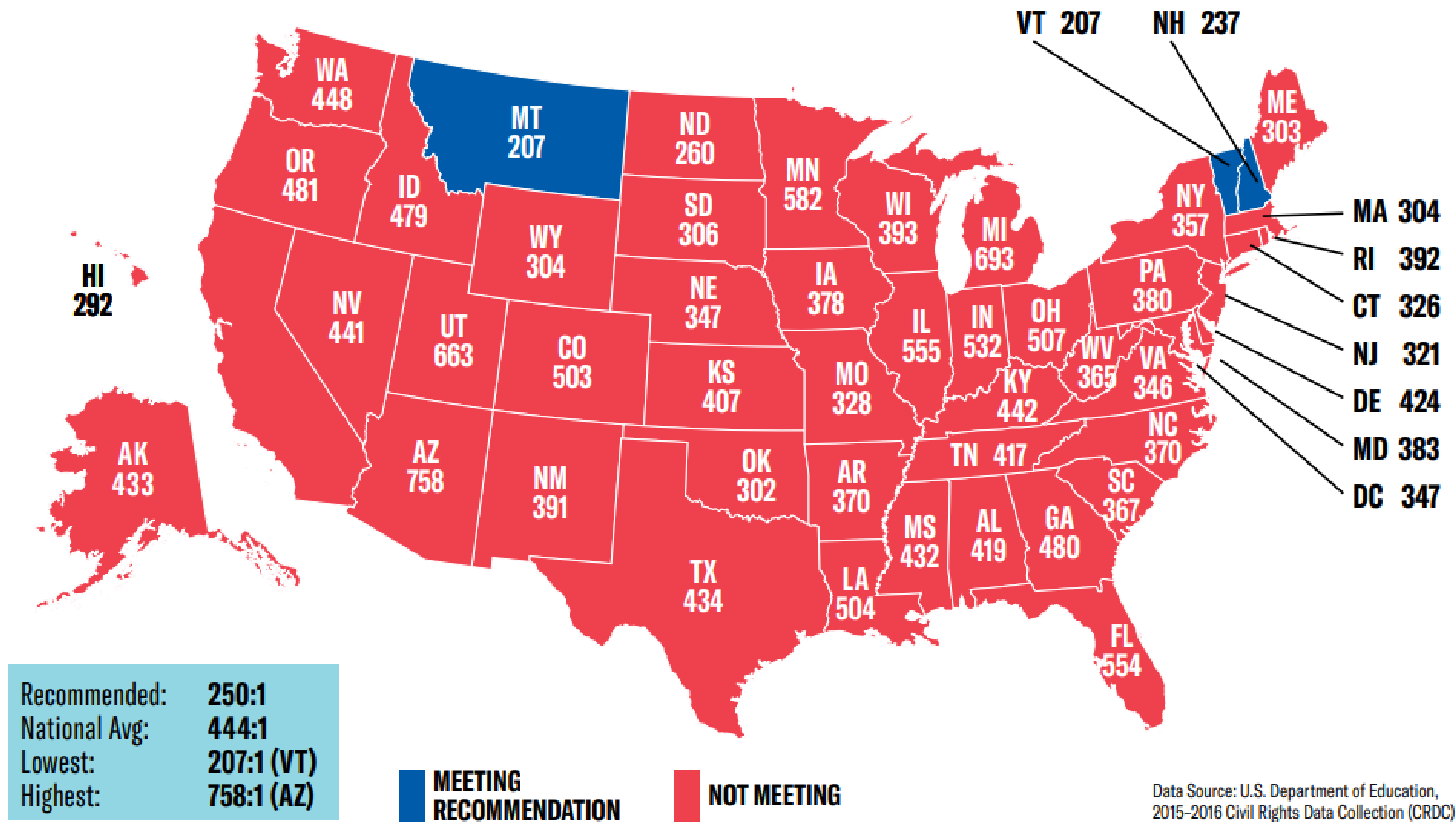
6 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no school psychologists.**

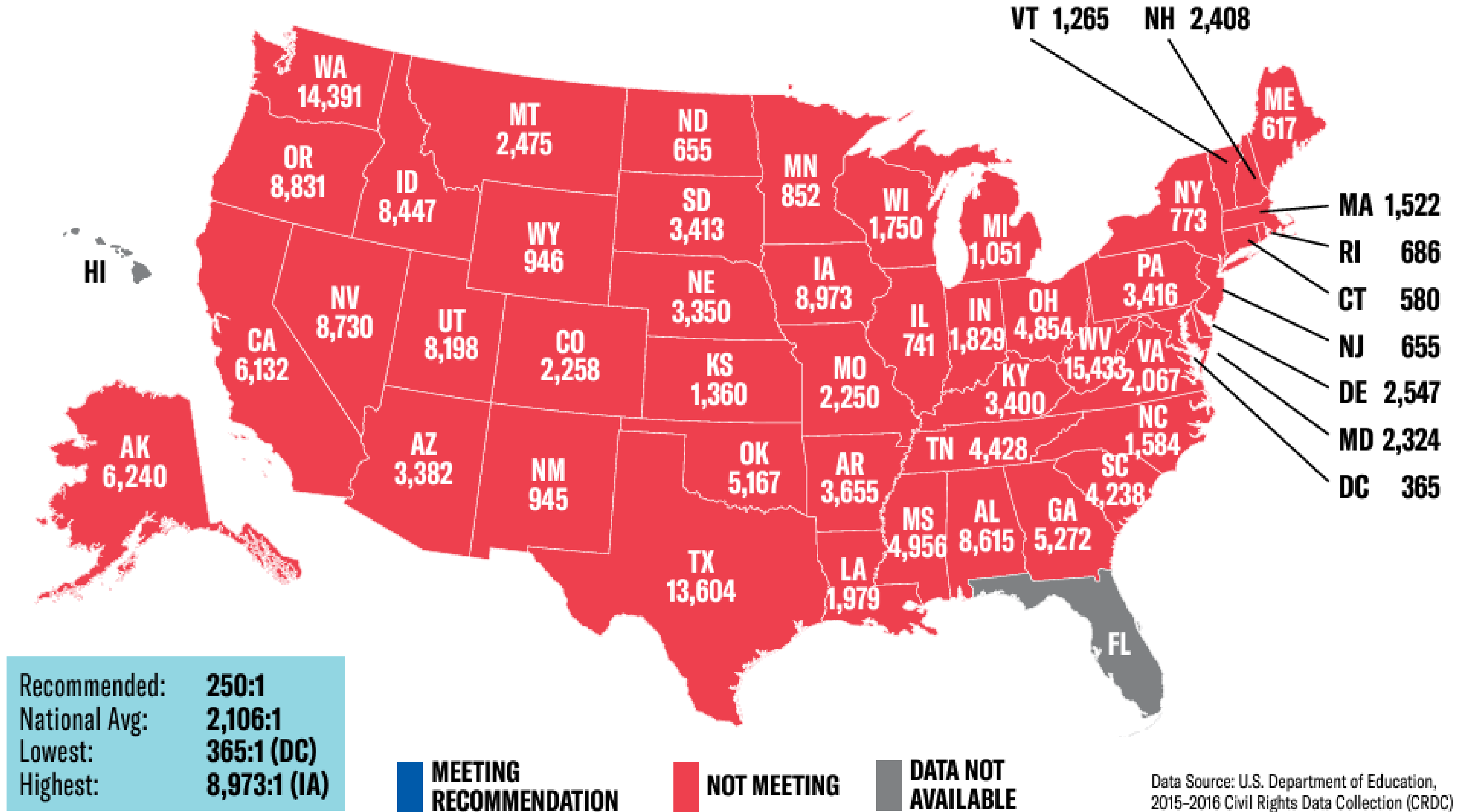
10 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no social workers.**

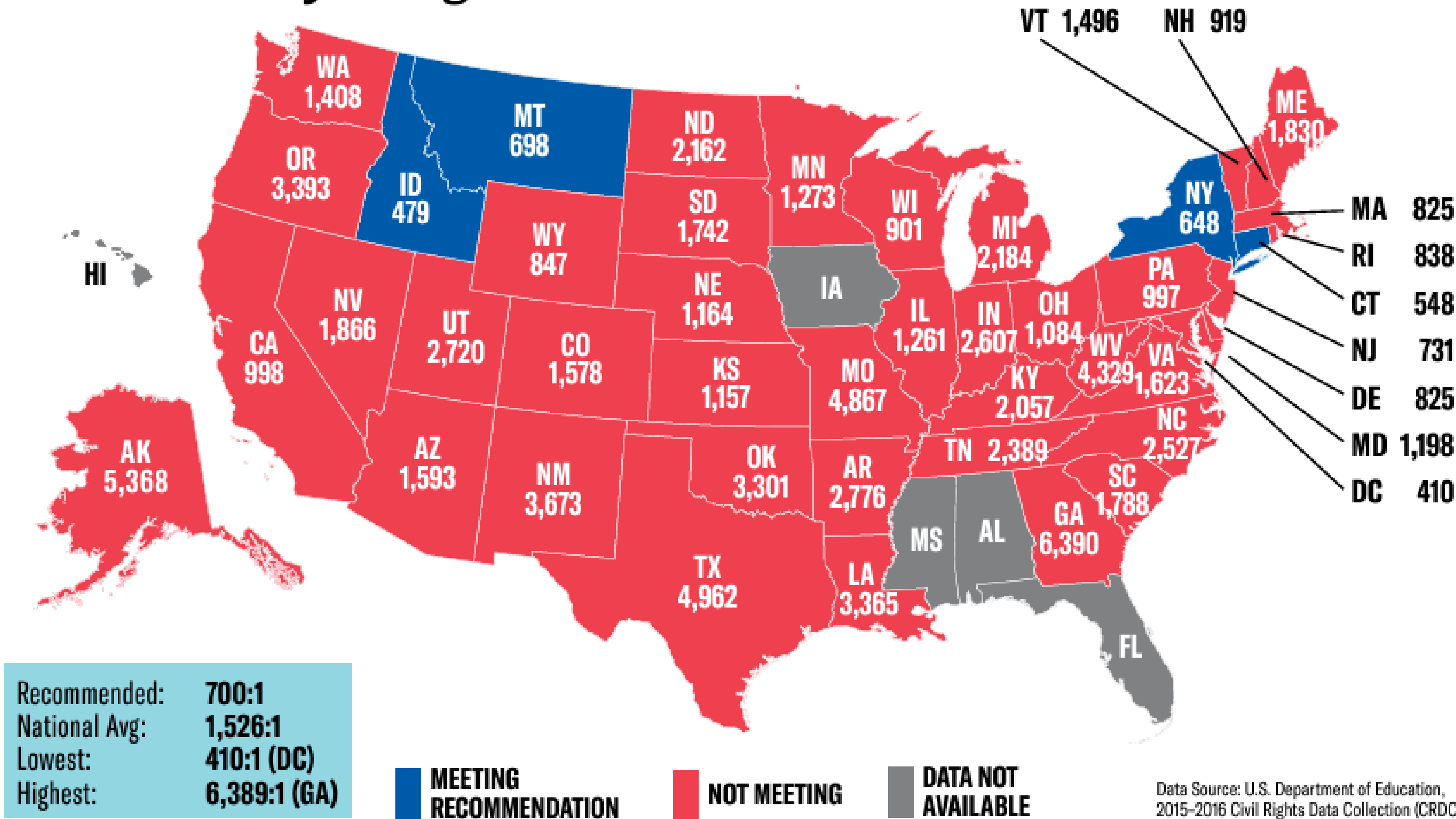
Student-to-Counselor Ratios



Student-to-Social Worker Ratios

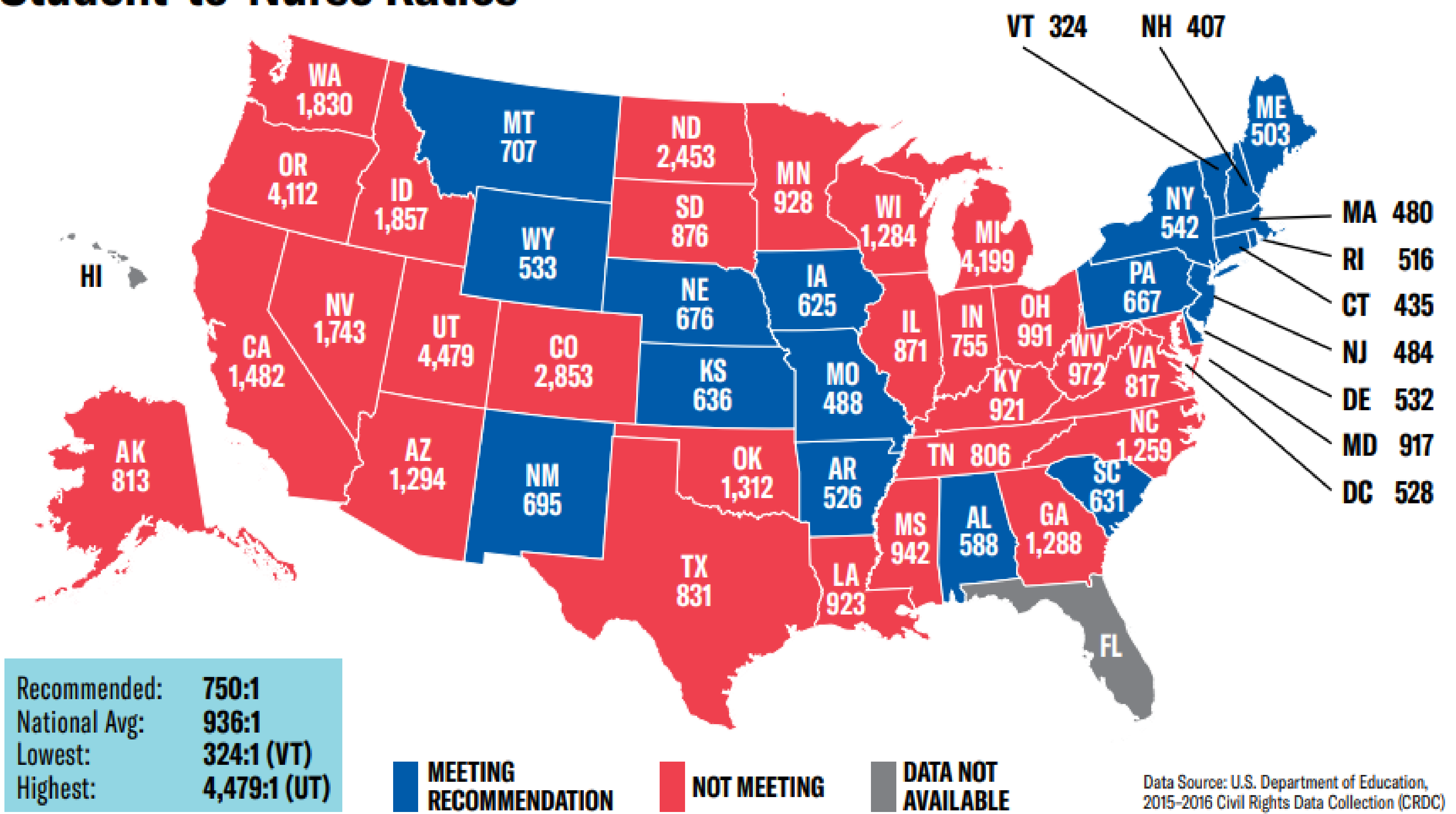


Student-to-Psychologist Ratios



Data Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

Student-to-Nurse Ratios



What Does This Mean for Student Wellbeing & School Safety?

- “There is no clear empirical basis for the claim that SROs reduce student crime rates.”
- A greater number of studies suggest there is no impact or increased student misconduct
- Presence of SROs can make schools less-inclusive social climates
- Students less likely to misbehave in schools with inclusive social climates, where students feel valued, respected, listened to, and part of a community

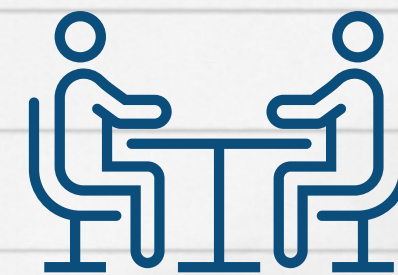
- Schools with more mental-health providers see:
 - improved attendance
 - lower suspension, discipline, and expulsion rates
 - improved academic achievement
 - improved graduation rates
- Empirical evidence shows that school staff who provide health & mental health services improve health outcomes and improve school safety



What Young People Need for Positive, Healthy Development



Fresh Air & Free Time



Counseling



Sports &
Extracurricular
Activities



Family, Community,
Spiritual, or Other
Mentorship



Revise school district
codes of student
conduct

Ensure students know
their rights & have a
qualified advocate in
discipline matters

Increase counselors &
social workers

Reforms that keep Youth in School

Adopt restorative
justice practices

Implement Positive
Behavioral
Interventions &
Support (PBIS)

Remove or restrict
SROs

Supporting Court-involved Students

Advocate on behalf of students facing delinquency cases/ encourage teachers & staff to

Streamline process for court-involved youth to re-enroll

Understand education-related probation conditions

Provide diversion programming

Review practice of sharing student information with courts

Ask court-involved students: what do they need to succeed?

Supporting Reforms Upstream

Watch hearings at your local juvenile court

Invite youth defenders to offer know-your-rights training

Contact your state legislator and asked for additional resources for alternatives to juvenile court

Tour your local detention facility

Invite youth defenders to advocate for youth in disciplinary matters

Support efforts to shrink the juvenile legal system (e.g. raising the minimum age, increasing diversion)



Next Most Elegant Step

“An elegant step is one that acknowledges what is known and unknown, and what the capacity of this group actually is. An elegant step allows humility, allows people to say, ‘Actually we need to do some research’ or ‘Actually we need to talk to some folks not in this room’ or ‘Actually we need a full day to build this plan out into something realistic and attainable.’”

adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds

“We must offer people a vision of how things could be and the opportunity to connect with the people, projects, and movements that can bring this vision to fruition.”

Kelly Hayes & Mariame Kaba, *Let This Radicalize You: Organizing and the Revolution of Reciprocal Care*

THANK
YOU VERY
MUCH!