

Editor's Note

Albizu Campos Speaks! is the student newspaper of Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, located at 2739 W Division Street. It is meant to offer students a platform for their thoughts, experiences, and concerns without extensive editorial control. The students created their own style guide, came up with their own ideas, conducted their own journalistic research, and wrote their own articles. They received support and encouragement from their teacher, David Carter, but the work is their own. Please enjoy what they have to say about their experience as students and as young people growing up in Chicago.

This issue is also our first collaboration with NEIU's student newspaper, *Que Ondee Sola*, the oldest Latine student newspaper in the US. The editorial team from *QOS* visited us to assist in the brainstorming process, and we have begun an article exchange with *QOS*.

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Criminal Injustice

What leads Chicago's youth to face incarceration?

Jeremiah Robinson & Kayden Santana

Chicago is no stranger to crime nor mass incarceration. It is actually a city with the reputation of being a central crime hub of the United States of America. From the Italian mob in the 1920s to the hundreds of unorganized street crews that run rampant across Chicagoland today, Chicago is the stomping grounds of some of the most infamous street tales across the nation, that often become more mythology than actual fact. We often focus on the aftermath or the climax of such stories but in doing so we neglect the baby steps that paved the road for these countless individuals in the first place. Most people don't just wake up at 14 years old and decide to drop out of school and join a gang. It's usually deeply rooted in one's childhood. Were they abused? Were they failed by their environments and families before they even had a chance to understand their own identity? Questions like these need to be asked and people from troubled backgrounds deserve to be heard and understood.

A common underlying issue that is directly related to crime and imprisonment is mental health, and again just like the journey of the vast majority of those with a record, it starts from childhood. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), over

56% of inmates in state prisons have experienced some form of mental health issues, while 43% of inmates have been diagnosed with a mental illness in their past. That's not including the countless people who've slipped through the system undiagnosed. According to a 2023 study from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC), "40 percent of youth in high schools felt hopelessness, 20 percent considered attempting suicide, while 20 percent reported having unmet mental health care needs." Since young people are especially susceptible to mental health issues, they may be potentially more at risk of being incarcerated.

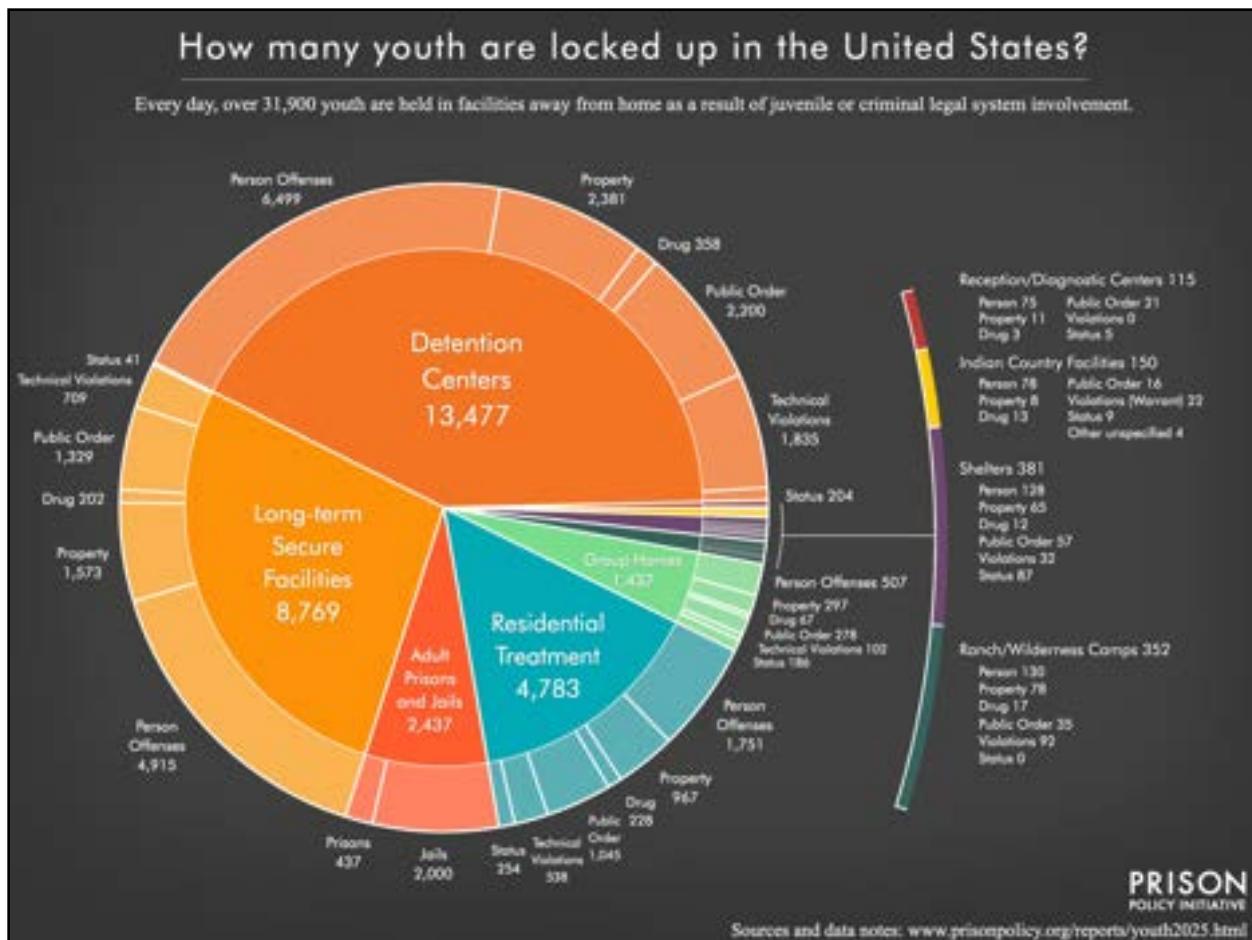
The statistics are concerning and often are ignored. Many tend to forget that prisoners are human beings as well, they have their own feelings and needs that deserve to be tended to. Having someone to talk to is the bare minimum. Just because someone has a criminal record, does not mean they shouldn't have the right to the

proper care they need. Not allowing them to have basic necessities such as medication and therapy only worsens their situation, and stops them from being able to have a proper chance at a new life.

According to NAMI, more than 50% of prisoners did not continue receiving their medication for mental health conditions upon first arrival. In general, treatment is very inconsistent. Some people need medication to feel stable and to be able to function throughout the day without their own neurological disadvantages further bringing them down. For a system that claims to help people, then why don't they go to the root of their behavioral problems and put in a genuine effort to solve it? Because that requires more money and more effort. They're not willing to put in the extra work or devote extra dollars for people that are criminals; it's much easier to lock them away and allow the system to take care of it. Nobody thinks much of it because, to them, a criminal record matters more than what



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caused the crime in the first place.

Youth in behavioral hospitals, foster care, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), residential facilities, etc., are more than likely to end up incarcerated or face an early death compared to youth who haven't experienced any of these things. These youth are more likely to be part of the Black, Native American, Hispanic, LGBT, or other marginalized communities.

According to Fox 32, there were 907 cases of abuse filed at Illinois youth centers and the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center between 1996 and 2023. The victims ranged from 14-16. The amount of cases against

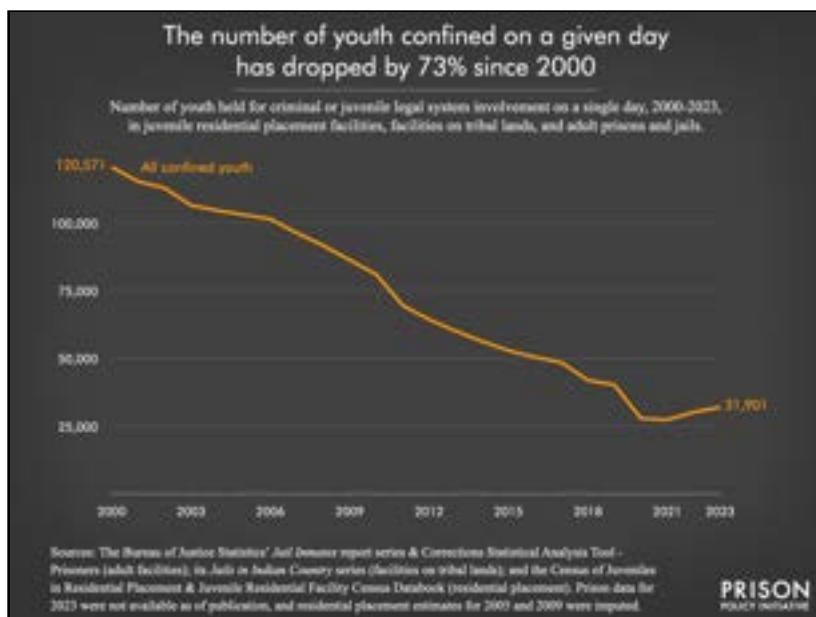
them is appalling, and it just clearly demonstrates how mistreated and overlooked those who are in the system are. Many victims describe in detail how their assault happened. Most of the abuse involved sexual assault, and being chained down against their will, leaving the victims with trauma and PTSD.

Teenage incarceration has seen as high as more than 100 thousand youth inmates across the nation in the 90's and 2000's during the "superpredator" scare, to a significant decrease today of about a little over 30 thousand according to the CSG Justice Center website. That is still enough people to fill up an entire small city! To unpack this problem more, we interviewed a select few

individuals and asked them about their personal experiences that led to them being incarcerated as a teenager.

Jeremiah Robinson: From ages 12 to 16, I've at some point in my life been through all of these different programs and facilities. I personally feel like every time I was taken away from my home I came back worse and further lost. Behavior hospitals were nothing more than a mini-juvie daycare disguised as a mental treatment center. Neglect from nurses, abuse from staff, fights, anything you can name happens in there. There isn't any real hand of help or improvement, just a place where parents often drop their "rebellious" children off at. Residen-

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tial centers often remind me of the Native American boarding schools; they strip anything left of your identity from you, dehumanize and prevent any contact with your family or the outside world in general. You can be held indefinitely without any legal process because guess what? When you're a minor in the system, you have little to no rights as a human to begin with.

Back in 2021, when I was 15, I was incarcerated in one of the jails in Hillside, Illinois, for two counts of aggravated assault with a weapon, A class three felony case punishable by six years charged as an adult if found guilty. I was released and was fighting it from home on monitored court supervision. At some point however, I was held in a residential center in East St. Louis. You know the kicker? The judge never sent me down there. It was actually while I was taken by DCFS from a hospital. They decided to play law makers and just send me down for, "being a violent felon," which, again, I had

not yet been convicted of. I ended up being gone for a whole 10 months. Regarding the actual legal process, I ended up being sentenced probation, but still had to sit in there until they felt like releasing me, which wasn't until 4 months later. For months I had to wait to be allowed to go home. I was held without due process, and lost out on close to a year of my life due to a corrupted system.

Carmen Garcia: One interviewee, a Puerto Rican woman who we will call Carmen Garcia, had quite a few stories to share about her experiences with the system (especially Cook County) and how her home life affected her decisions in the mistakes she had made in her life. She grew up without a proper support system at home and that resulted in her becoming a product of her environment. She became pregnant at the age of 16, and on one occasion she overheard her family placing bets on how long it would take before she fails at being

a mother. During that time, she was physically, mentally and emotionally abused by the father of her child and had nobody in her life that she was able to go back to for help. She said, "I had no other support, so I seeked it from the streets," and how she didn't feel judged by friends. She wasn't comfortable with her life at home, so the people she surrounded herself with helped her.

Carmen Garcia isn't a bad person, only a product of her environment. She was pregnant and struggling, yet still managed to graduate high school and take care of her children—giving them a life she never had in the end. Most of the time when people act a certain way, it's because of the way they were raised; they don't know any better, they weren't taught any better. That doesn't matter to an ignorant cop, though. They don't know what's going on in someone else's personal life, nor do they really care. They judge based on your neighborhood and your appearance.

At the time of her arrest Carmen was 17 years old. She asserted that she and her group of female friends were detained for racial reasons. She mentioned how they were taken from private property, then wrongly searched.

The next day, she was let out, although, during the process Carmen explained how long they took, as if they were purposefully taking their time and neglecting her. She said she did not feel that in this situation she was treated fairly, and they were not meeting her needs.

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Carmen describes the neighborhood she was in as a close community. Everyone knew each other and children would often come out to play hide and seek. It was a gang-affiliated area, but still a community nonetheless. One that brought comfort. But out of all of that, the “gang-affiliated” aspect of it would scream louder to law enforcement. That’s the only thing they need to hear before deciding for themselves that the place is only for ‘criminals.’

Carmen then told us about another time she had to deal with an officer. This time, she was arrested due to an argument she was involved in during her pregnancy. She got into an altercation with a police officer in the 14th district, which covers Humboldt Park and Logan Square. While she was handcuffed, the officer punched her in the stomach, ending in Carmen having a miscarriage.

Carmen says she was too embarrassed to speak up about it, and once she finally did they turned her away because she “took too long.” It shouldn’t matter how long it takes for a victim to come out about their abuse, what should matter is what happened. Carmen

had her baby taken away from her, while the officer involved faced no repercussions. Carmen has witnessed many different counts of abuse regarding officers, yet she’s the one that’s treated like a criminal? The people that are meant to protect you commit crimes themselves, they just don’t receive any punishment for it. This isn’t protection—that’s just the word the system hides behind when told they are wrong for what they’ve done.

Obed de la Cruz: One of our classmates, who we will call Obed, sat down with us gave some insight on his experiences. Obed grew up in a lower income community in a Mexican-American family and reflected on his childhood being rough. He was neglected and abused as a child but he didn’t want to give further details understandably. The love he got from the neighborhood kids attracted him to the streets at an early age, which would find him in legal trouble around the age of 16. One day while playing video games in his room the police knocked on his mother’s front door. His mother

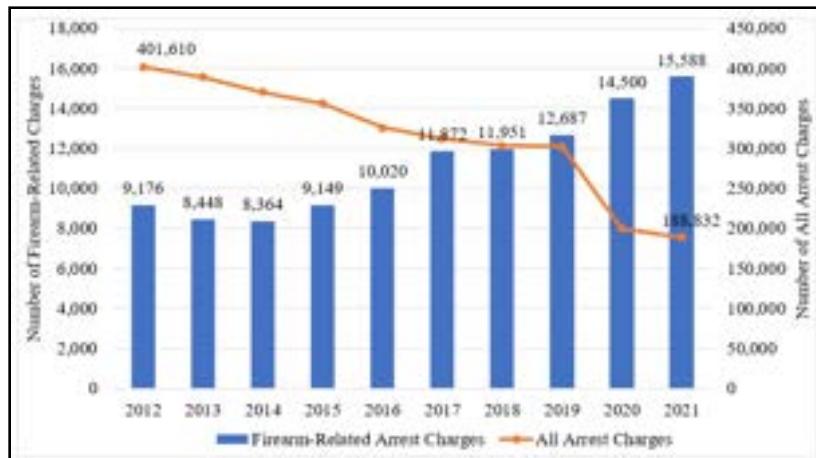
answered and they came to his room and asked him some questions about a firearm found with his fingerprints on it. He owned up to it and they explained his rights and took him to juvenile hall. He reflected on the interaction and said they were respectful. Originally he was sentenced to 6 months but it was later reduced to two months. Obed opened up about one specific negative interaction he had with another youth inmate over a “misunderstanding” that led to a fight. After guards getting involved and them being put in isolation they would eventually on their own doing talk it out and squash the beef and had no more issues the rest of his time left there.

We asked, “What did you look forward to the most when your release date was to come?” Obed grew a big smile and replied “Cains! I couldn’t wait to eat Cains!” and when he got out his first meal was most definitely Cains. Now he’s on track to graduating high school, and going to college. Obed left a final message for the youth willing to listen, “Stay out of the streets, there’s nothing there but problems. There’s not any real love from it, stay in school go to college and become somebody”

ICE in Chicago

Jazzy Rivera

In September of 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was set to arrive in Chicago to conduct deportations, known as “Operation Midway Blitz.” They made their way into Chicago under the order of president Donald



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Trump. And from the beginning people have questioned what ICE is doing and the manner in which they are deporting immigrants. Over the period of months they have been here they deported over 400,000 immigrants nationwide, with roughly 30-40% being detained illegally. An article by the Department of Homeland Security claims their main purpose is "Securing our nation's borders and safeguarding the integrity of our immigration system," but their work is anything but legal.

Marie Snyder, who was interviewed for this article, has been working alongside 26th Ward alderwoman for the Humboldt Park area Jesse Fuentes since 2023. She recorded the recent incident with Jesse and ICE at Humboldt Park Health, where Jesse attempted to stop ICE agents from arresting a man unlawfully. Marie explained that ICE came in looking for a specific person when the hospital personnel informed Jesse of their presence. When they arrived, Jesse asked if they had a judicial warrant, a warrant signed by a federal judge

necessary to enter into a private building, to which they responded with "we do not have to talk to you." The situation soon escalated, leading Marie to start recording, and shortly after Jesse was put in handcuffs.

ICE's arrest of Jesse Fuentes is not the only incident of unneeded violence and excessive force. An article by ProPublica explains that Americans have been dragged, tackled, beaten, tased and shot by immigration agents. There's even been an incident where a woman had the door of her home blown off while Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem watched. There have been other incidents played throughout social media platforms such as the video of the man and his one year old daughter getting pepper sprayed by ICE, with no probable cause. Not to mention the recent TikTok videos made by the official account of the White House, depicting such acts but seemingly treating them as a form of comedy. This can cause people to feel helpless or afraid. Our youth has direct access

to these platforms, seeing these videos, images and stories, can cause us to be even more afraid and grow paranoid.

Not only is ICE causing physical harm to people, but they are also causing emotional distress. A lot of individuals are taken away in front of family and friends, many of which are their own children. Marie herself expressed that the situation with Jesse was traumatic, and described that knowing people are still held up in detention centers, is something that keeps her up at night. In my own family, it has caused paranoia amongst my parents. My mom has pushed me and my brother to keep our documents on us, such as our social security cards as well as our IDs. For a time my mom was scared to leave the house by herself, and would ask me to go with her to run errands.

ICE presence has also impacted my school. In the first weeks of ICE presence, we had a drastic decline in attendance. In an article by the American Immigration Council claims, "when students are too afraid to go to school or are too distracted by the threat of family separation to focus, their education suffers." Some of my peers were staying home too afraid to come to school and taking such a big risk. Albizu Campos also resorted to sending messages home when ICE was near, to warn anyone who was at risk of the presence of ICE. In an article by the American Immigration Council, the second half of the 2024-2025 school year saw families pulling their children out of school due to the fear of ICE. Schools now



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have had to develop emergency plans against ICE, an emergency plan against our own government security. Recently, State Rep. Lillian Jimenez, our representative for Humboldt Park, passed an ordinance that would protect all schools in Illinois. ICE would not be allowed to enter, detain anyone, organize, or set up on school property.

There are steps we can take to feel at least a bit safer. You need to stay calm, and do not resist. The National Immigrant Justice Center advises you to keep your hands where they can see them, tell them if you need to reach into your glove compartment. Do not lie about your status or provide false information. If you are pulled over in traffic and ask if the officer is with ICE or police, immigration officers often falsely identify themselves as “police,” when they are in fact not. Law enforcement agents are allowed to lie to you.

You might also ask if they are from Immigration and Customs

Enforcement or Customs and Border Protection. If they are immigration officers, follow these guidelines about what information to provide: If you are a U.S. citizen or have lawful immigration status: Show your passport, legal permanent resident card, work permit, or other documentation of your status. If you are over the age of 18, you should carry your papers with you at all times. If you are undocumented, you have the right to remain silent and do not have to discuss your immigration or citizenship status with the police, immigration agents, or other officials. Anything you tell an officer can and will be used against you in court.

If an officer knocks on your door, do not open the door. Teach your children not to open the door. Officers must have a warrant signed by a judge to enter your home. ICE administrative “warrants,” which can be identified because they say “Department of Homeland Security” on them, are not signed by judges; they are ICE forms signed

by ICE officers and they do not grant authority to enter a home without consent of the occupant(s). If you are outdoors and think you see immigration officers nearby: Move to a safe indoor space. If you are a U.S. citizen and feel safe to do so, record the activity with your phone or write down any relevant information about what you witness—ALWAYS being careful to not interfere or otherwise obstruct the operation.

The reality of police brutality

Jayda Ramos

Despite how often it occurs, police brutality is often not spoken about or acknowledged because CPD overpowers our voices. Police brutality is a struggle in life today starting at the youngest ages causing trauma or mixed emotions towards CPD making hatred build up and leading to having the instinct of feeling unsafe when they are around or called. This really impacts the whole world because CPD are meant to “serve and protect” us. But if we feel unsafe with them around, is that really their purpose or do they feel overly powerful?

Many youth are discriminated against and judged based on their appearance or where they are at, left not wanting to call CPD and just running away when they pull up because they have a doubt that they’ll believe them or would help. This then leads to a suspicion to conduct a stop but CPD don’t take into consideration that they may be scared or running from danger. Police brutality is very important as

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it not only goes against our rights but also does psychological damage. The end of police brutality will allow us to regain our voices and regain the feeling of safety. As such, these kinds of experiences aren't just something that happens and we move on with our lives, they are experiences we went through and left an impact on us.

A personal experience that I've gone through that left an impact and a feeling of discomfort with police was at a family get-together where an altercation broke out at the park between a member of my family and a stranger who was being a Karen who was bothered because they thought we were making too much noise. Policemen showed up because they happened to pass by. They were suspicious that the altercation had to do with gang violence. As they showed up they approached us assuming we were up to something as they just came up and started shoving their way through, causing the escalation to heat up more, as they shoved one of my baby cousins who's 4 years old. As the altercation continued to heat up, me and one of my parents were trying to calm it down by trying to separate everyone and telling them to calm down and don't make the situation worse for themselves, because the cops were there calling for back up and we had no idea how far this was really gonna go. As I went to try to calm down my family member (the stranger just came and threw a water bottle telling us to take our party somewhere else), one of the cops charged at me putting me in cuffs saying that I

was the cause of the situation and was provoking and stopping the arrest in the altercation. This didn't make no sense at all as I wasn't near the altercation and was actually all the way in the far back corner just talking to my family member telling him to calm down and not make it worse for themselves or nobody around them. As they grabbed me they told me "people like me" should learn to shut up and let the people above me handle it. Since I didn't interfere not once, they had no choice but to let me go.

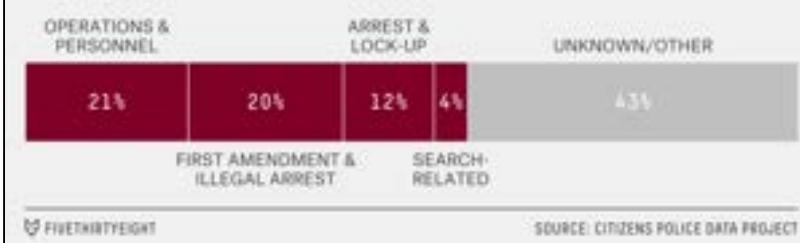
Other members of my family have also experienced police brutality. One family member I interviewed described how he started having bad experiences with the police at the age of 12, and experienced both physical and verbal abuse. One of his stories that they mentioned was when they were living in the Humboldt Park neighborhood, they had a policeman who would constantly stop them or pull them over. By the age of 17 with a baby on the way, he began to get aggravated with the situation. He asked the policemen why he kept stopping him, that he must be so bored with his life that he had nothing better to do but harass people and waste his time. The po-

licemen got angry and pushed him against the fence telling him to "shut the f*** up" and "know his place." That he's "the one who is in control" and "you're just a youn-gin' who don't have a life." My family member got frustrated by the comment made and reminded the policemen that he "don't know him or anything about him he's just a p**** with a badge who don't got nothing better to do with his life but sit there harassing the same people in the neighborhood." When the policemen heard this he took off his badge and told him "since I'm a p****, let's fight." Seeing that he took off his badge the cop went to swing on my family member and the altercation broke through, but the cop ended up pulling out a taser and tasing him and calling for back up saying he had been attacked. As they went to arrest my family member the policemen said "told you, who's the p**** now." My family member got locked up that day. After hearing this situation he mentioned that he hated cops ever since he was a young kid and was discriminated against just because of how he looked getting treated a type of way for no reason exactly.

My personal experiences with

Complaints leveled against Chicago police officers

Category of 28,588 complaints, Jan. 1, 2011 to Dec. 7, 2015



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the police happen more frequently than you might expect. Across the United States in a single year, “large state and local law enforcement agencies—those with 100 or more sworn officers—received more than 26,000 citizen complaints about officer use of force... This total figure resulted in overall rates of 33 complaints per agency and 6.6 complaints per 100 full-time sworn officers. Overall rates were higher among large municipal police departments, with 45 complaints per agency, and 9.5 complaints per 100 full-time sworn officers.” In Chicago between 2011 and 2015, 28,588 complaints were leveled against CPD officers. Many CPD officers are overusing their authority and use of force that are impacting individuals in a negative way of the feeling of being overpowered and getting unfair treatments. Police brutality is a major problem in the world today, starting at the youngest ages and people need to remember that they still have a voice and need to speak up against the law to get the justice and treatment that they deserve.

After going through multiple altercations and stops like those I have described with the police I realized they overuse and abuse their power and care about their title and advantages more than helping the people in need. Not all cops are respectful—never taking people’s feelings and actions into consideration, nor trying to help them and actually taking the time and energy to understand them and their situation that they’ve come across. There are many bad cops who sit

there harassing people, verbally and physically abuse people, locking people up with no cause, just because of how they look or act or where they’re from, or just having the feeling of authority and power. All this really changed my perspective on them to the point where I don’t want them around, and if they are around I feel like they’re useless or not needed or just gonna make it worse, as they like to provoke or disrespect people to get a reaction that leads to them locking them up.

How police abuse traffic stops

Samayah Rodriguez

Did you know police pull over more than 50,000 drivers daily in the U.S? That’s more than 20 million traffic stops a year. Many of those stops lead to searches, stemming from the smell of marijuana. Or rather that’s what the police say. I myself have been the victim of this situation a multitude of times.

In Illinois, it is legal for people 21 and over to consume and possess marijuana. Of course there are specific regulations and limits. You cannot legally possess more than 30 grams of cannabis, 500 milligrams of THC of cannabis infused products, and 5 grams of cannabis concentrate, as a resident. It is illegal to consume any amount of marijuana in a vehicle, but can be transported in an inaccessible, child-restraint, odor-proof, sealed container. These laws might seem reasonable, but they are abused by the police to create a reason to search people’s vehicles for infractions they are unlikely to arrest you

for.

One time, I was in the car with my friends when the police got behind us and pulled us over for what they said was a traffic violation. My friend who was driving gave them the title, her insurance and license, but it just seemed like they were more worried about what was in the car. It was literally just me and three other teenage girls. They made us get out of the car claiming there was a strong smell of weed reeking from the car. I knew that was completely made up since we hadn’t even smoked anything and yes we had some but it was in a container. They searched the car hoping to find any excuse to arrest us but they couldn’t. So they used the small amount of weed they found as probable cause to impound the car and left us in the middle of the street at around 10:30 pm to wait for someone to pick us up. They threw the small bag of weed on the floor and made us step on it, not caring to arrest us for any crimes they supposedly cared about. That night, when I got home, I just remember thinking how police are almost untouchable and could really say anything without any further judgement.

I created a survey to get results on how many students at Albizu Campos are being stopped and searched on the basis of the smell of weed. Out of the 33 students who were surveyed 21 have been stopped by the police. This is a pretty high number, since only 38% of Americans have reported being pulled over by the police in the last 5 years, and we aren’t old enough to

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have driven longer than that. 12 out of the 21 students that were stopped also had their vehicle searched by the police. That's a little more than a third of all students. Now, 11 of those 12 that were searched have reported that the search was due to the smell of weed. That's almost a 100% rate of searches having weed be the justification. I asked students in the survey if they felt like the police profiled them, with just over half saying they believed so. 11 students said they were being profiled based on race, 2 said car model and 6 said just off appearance (clothing/tattoos).

Around 10 years ago lawmakers made restrictions to limit the abuse of power of "stop and frisk," a type of search where the police stop people on the street because they are suspicious, since the practice caught the attention of the nation as a way to stop the kinds of officers who were accountable for a number of high-profile killings. These cases inevitably started with discrimination against the victims, and ended with the atrocious act of taking their life. The commotion of an anger and despair caused by

these officers forced them to reduce the number of stop and frisks. But the decrease of stop and frisks around the mid 2010's led to the increase of traffic stops, in which, the police can stereotype people with the excuse of committing traffic violations. Of course you can find an excuse to pull someone over, but is the reason they use the actual reason they wanted to pull you over? Is there another reason you might've

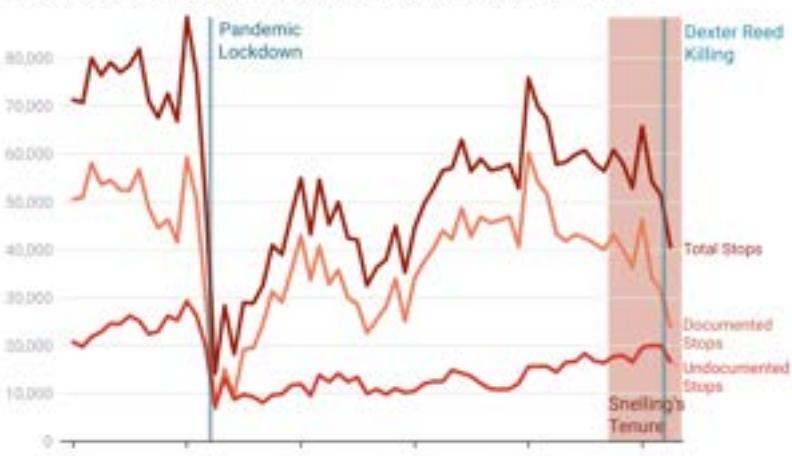
been pulled over? Can you see through the bullshit? Or would you rather just sit there and bear what you know to be fabricated? And if so, why would you?

Not only have the police been using traffic stops as an ulterior motive to unjustly search civilians but they have also been failing to document traffic stops around the city of Chicago. Larry Snelling, the current Chicago police superintendent, since being appointed in 2024 has been doing a negligent job of keeping track of the documented traffic stops. In June of 2024 Snelling reported that traffic stops went down by 87,000 around the same time of last year. But hid the fact that this reduced number is because of the thousands of traffic stops that haven't been reported, accounting for a third of traffic stops in Chicago.

Across the United States, people

Chicago police made 200,000 traffic stops last year they didn't report to state regulators

Even as overall traffic stops have been declining, the number of off-the-books traffic stops has increased under Supt. Larry Snelling. Chicago police have made as many as 20,000 off-the-books stops in recent months, according to an analysis by Bolts and Injustice Watch.



Note: Documented stops are traffic stops reported to the Illinois Traffic Stop Study. Undocumented stops represent the number of traffic stops recorded by the Office of Emergency Management and Communication but not reported to state regulators.

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get in their car and drive places. Should we have to worry about if the police are going to nitpick your vehicle and pull you over for a small traffic violation? Underneath that facade is government-run law-enforcers that have their mind made up of who you are before their first interaction with you. And us as civilians just brush it off as normalcy, but the truth is how many times does this have to happen before something irreversible happens and chaos of a distraught nation erupts. Half of high school students at just my school alone that took my survey have lived this. And these are just teenagers. Now imagine the number of high schoolers in Chicago. From the undocumented traffic reports to the increase of traffic stops to the excuses of an officer that is blinded by discrimination, when will we start to hold these people accountable before the bad act happens?

Child Grooming

Jordaye Ivy-Williams, Chloe Kim, & Brumari Tull-Ramos

Child grooming is a very harmful and serious way of an adult trying to get a minor to trust them, manipulating or harming them usually without the child realizing what might be going on. This can happen both online or in person, making it hard to be aware of and control. Child grooming affects all genders, however male and females might experience it differently because of how comfortable they might feel speaking up. For example boys might be less likely to report an issue, on the other hand

girls are more likely to speak up. The effects of child grooming can cause can last a lifetime and may include trauma, having a hard time trusting individuals, and even cause problems forming relationships in the future.

Child grooming is when an adult tries to trick or lure a kid or teenager into trusting them for the wrong reasons. At first the adult might seem nice, caring, or even fun, but they are actually trying to get the kid alone or force them to do something unsafe. Grooming is always the adult's fault, never the kid's. Grooming starts off with an adult giving a child a lot of attention, they start off by giving small compliments, or even saying weird comments. This can make the kid feel important or even loved but all the adult is doing is trying to gain their trust. There are many well-known cases of child grooming. One of the most well-known cases was a teacher Raymond Bucky at McMartin Preschool in California in the 1980s who was accused of sexually assaulting many preschoolers, but was never convicted. While these high-profile often on young children, the problem is just as wide-spread and less talked about for teenagers, even happening to people in our school. We created a survey to gain information on students' knowledge as well as personal experiences with child grooming.

Based on our survey, grooming affects both teenage boys and girls. There is no real difference between the two genders regarding the emotional damage they experience and

how it ends up affecting them. Instead, the more important difference is the stigma behind both men and women victims. Men are typically viewed as the 'stronger' ones, whereas women should be covered up around men or else they're "asking for it." Both stories are denied, and the victims are made to feel as if they aren't human. Male victims are completely ignored and women are often blamed for their assaults.

Males often don't understand that they were groomed because, for them, it's cool to sleep with an older woman. For some women in their teenage lives when an older man hits up their line they think is good and they see an older man is after them, even if the man is like ten years older. This means that even though these older people know it's wrong, they still do it because they think they would get away without any consequences.

Younger girls without proper parental figures in their life sometimes end up being more drawn to older people, which is common to see in grooming cases. This is most likely because there is an important role missing in their life, and finding an adult to "fill in" that void can give the child a false sense of security. The manipulation tactics these older people use can make them feel secure, loved, and protected. The adult knows how vulnerable and unstable child can be, which makes them an easier victim. The adult takes advantage of the love that is missing from the child's life. They don't say anything until years later when they feel like they held the pain in for so long.

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For boys this is especially a problem because they stay quiet or don't think anything is wrong, and that messes with them mentally and physically. According to our survey, most of the male respondents said girls should date at sixteen but men can begin dating at thirteen. Older males are able to manipulate with their kindness and attention to gain female trust to take advantage of the situation that's going on in their home. Female victims often have some problems going on at home and they use those to get into the female mind and trick them into thinking that being with them giving them pleasure is the right thing to do. They make them think that being with an older guy is good that they are mature for their age that they will buy them expensive stuff and will always be their for them, and that boys their age are nothing. As for social media—Snapchat, Instagram, also games like Roblox—they go into the games, pretending to be teenage boys, even after knowing those girls ages.

Child grooming and the resulting abuse are serious crimes, both online and offline. Perpetrators face severe penalties like arrest and prosecution or mandatory sex offender registration. If they fail to go get on the registry in a few days they will have new felony charges and potential prison time. These laws protect minors from sexual exploitation by older individuals, ensuring that sexual contact with someone under the legal age is treated as serious crime.

Based off the survey results we

got from students, most of the perpetrators they knew about from personal experience had nothing legal done to them which is a big problem. More and more people that are nasty and weird are walking free like they never did anything. The vast majority of sexual abuse incidents (over 90%) are committed by someone the child knows and trust, making them less likely to be reported. As such, there are low prosecution rates, meaning only a fraction of reported cases move forward to prosecution. In the cases that are prosecuted, about half result in a conviction or guilty plea. With all these effects together, the total number of cases of child grooming that result in prison sentences is extremely low, much less than 10%.

When perpetrators face no legal consequences, the impact on the survivor can be lifelong. Long-term effects include depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and dissociative disorders. Negative interactions with the legal system can cause survivors to feel blamed and judged, leading to further trauma and decreased likelihood of seeking future support.

Perpetrators can also experience non-legal consequences. Perpetrators face social rejection once the behavior becomes known; individuals are typically shunned by their community, friends and even family members. They frequently hold positions of trust so it becomes difficult for them to find housing, new employment or social acceptance. The perpetrators reputation is permanently damaged. Public records,

news reports, and community word-of-mouth ensure that their history follows them. Organizations that the perpetrator was involved in face intense scrutiny civil lawsuits for negligent supervision and mandatory reporting requirements. This often leads to investigations and measures to distance the organizations from the individual. It's difficult for them to gain new relationships; the inherent lack of trust and public awareness makes it extremely challenging for perpetrators to establish new personal, romantic, or personal relationships. Perpetrators may experience guilt, shame, and other psychological distress as a result of their actions and the fallout, though some may display a lack of remorse or continue to deny responsibility.

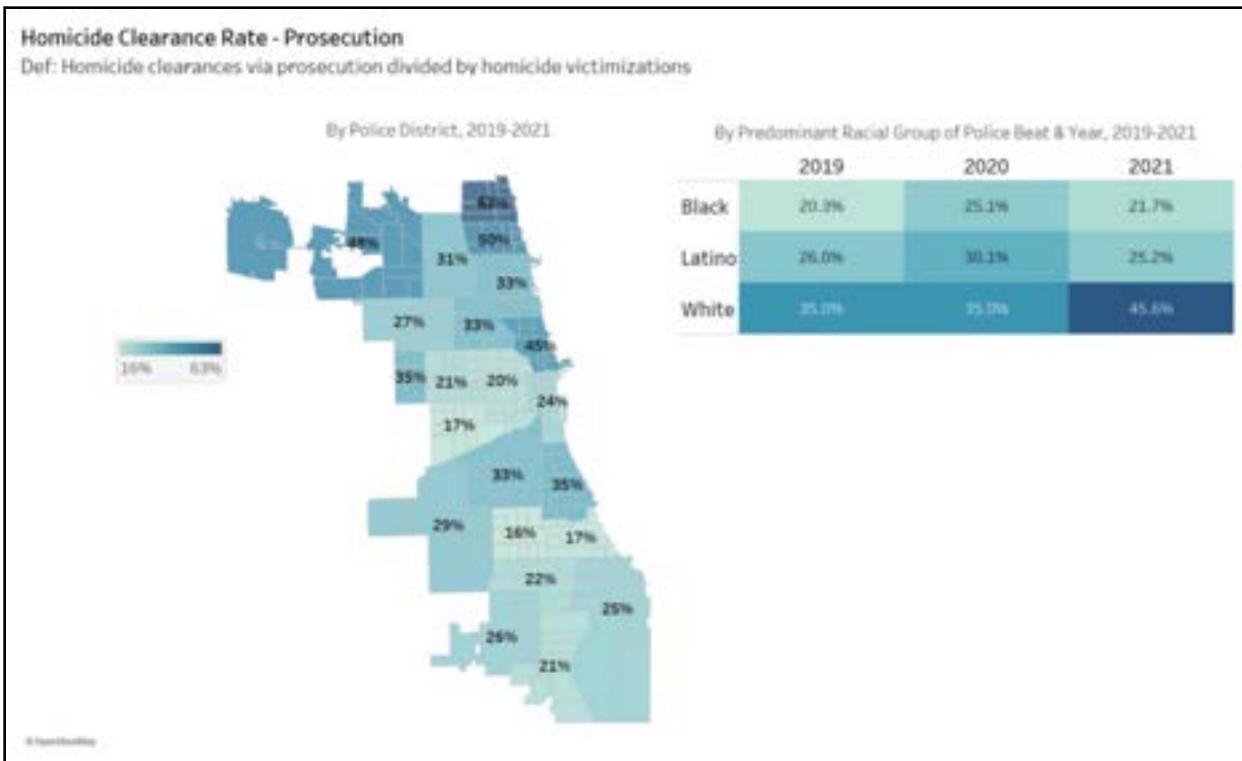
I feel people are genuinely scared to speak up because of the fact that the person may not get punishment and that can result in them getting in danger. Child grooming is a much bigger and more widespread problem than generally perceived by the public. It's an invisible crime. It's physical manipulation that leaves no trace often making it difficult to prove. It becomes a "he said, she said," because of no witnesses.

Do the police do their jobs?

Tysean Thompson

"Chicago Police Department (CPD) reported a homicide clearance rate of approximately 50% for 2021." "Where is my justice? Only 6% of Chicago shootings lead to arrests." "Rise in CPD murder clear-

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ance rate bolstered by dead suspects.” These headlines from the Sun Times and WGN9 show how infrequent it is that police are able to solve murders. Half of the charges did not lead to an so what were the cops doing in 2021 if not arrest the people who did it which is crazy enough. People can just shoot people now with a 94% of getting away which is insane they need more cameras in the neighborhood and police. Death of an offender is maybe the reason, but they don’t even want to do the job. The death clearance rate, the death in cops are all connections why the people don’t want to investigate crimes.

Due to lack of resources like staffing shortages and a prioritization of more serious crimes, CPD is focusing on enhancing public safety through community trust, Neighborhood Safety, Workforce

Development, etc. The CPD budget is \$10.2 billion. That is a lot of money that can be used for better gear for the police to be safer. They need someone higher than the police and with the community like a middle man between both sides, not just on one trying to protect the blues.

In a survey of students and staff at Albizu Campos, I asked how many times did you or your family call the police. The most frequent answer was 1-5 times at 63.2%. The reasons for the call were fire or health emergencies (42.1%) and domestic violence (31.6%). 26.3% said they had to wait more than one hour which is crazy because most say fire/heath and domestic violence it will maybe be too late for them to save someone. Emergency services (police/fire) aim for minutes (under 10-12 for high priority).

Describing whether police failed in any of their responsibilities, 40.91% said “they did not treat me with respect,” “they did not take my complaint seriously,” etc. 40.91% is a lot. Most people disagree who took the survey disagreed that police stop crimes from happening, maybe because they see the police failing when they respond to problems. Most people also disagreed that police solve crimes that have already happened, maybe because some cops don’t care what already happened. These survey results explain what cops are good at and what they are bad at doing like keeping up with investigating.

On social media, we can also see evidence that the police sometimes fail to do their jobs. One headline reads: “The cop ignored murder call to get pizza instead.” A woman was trying to file a police report or potentially a restraining order

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against her ex-boyfriend. He was a state trooper, she said she was especially uncomfortable. The neighbors called 911 because they heard gun shots and screaming. The ex-boyfriend shot her and her new boyfriend and before turning the gun on himself. The police ignored 911 calls that night, leaving the body to be found hours later by the family members. Sergeant Kevin Bollaro was charged with official misconduct after ignoring multiple

911 calls about a shooting to instead visit an ATM and a pizzeria. According to the family's statement, they believe this will be the tip of the iceberg of the many failures by the local police department. Multiple people in the comments say the 911 dispatcher sounded like they were annoyed, he needs to be terminated, etc. By the videos this proof some cops dont care about checking on people calling/investigating calls and the dispatchers

who pick up 911 calls.

I think the police dont investigate calls because they have too much on their plate and are dealing with other things—they are afraid of dying/going alone or hurting someone else, or stress out over the last person they deal with so they let someone else do it and the chances is no one doing it because they busy doing something else or just don't care/let someone else do it when they do easier jobs.

Latino Perspectives

We are not a threat, we are the fabric of this nation. So why does fear turn into hatred?

Ender Martinez & Maikelys Rodriguez

Editorial Note: This article was translated from Spanish.

Many Latinos in the United States suffer from racism or discrimination simply for being from another country, which is unfair, and we will make it clear what our values are and that we are indeed important in this country.

All Latinos who live in the United States have to endure stares, comments, and racist attitudes every day simply for coming from another place. It is not fair that a person is treated differently because of their language, their accent, or their skin color, when we are all here seeking a better life. Often, people forget that behind every Latino there is a story of effort, sacrifice, and a desire to succeed.

We want to make it clear that Latinos have values, culture, and much to contribute to this country. We are hardworking, united, and an important part of society, even if some don't want to acknowledge us. We don't ask for privileges, only respect and equal opportunities. Because being in the United States doesn't take away who we are, and being from another country doesn't make us less important.

Why is racism against Latinos or migrants in the United States so important? What is urgent is to recognize that racism exists and to

talk about why it is so harmful to the entire Latino community. Racism against Latinos is fundamental because it is a structural and daily problem that directly impacts equal opportunities, health, and the dignity of a growing and vital demographic group in the United States.

Racism can affect those who experience it so severely that it can even lead them to attempt suicide. Racist attacks occur in every sphere: schools, workplaces, public transportation, etc. This situation is profoundly unfair, considering the historical and ongoing contributions of Latinos in the United States.

The government subjects Latinos, a group with immense economic value, to unfair treatment, limiting their potential and robbing them of millions of dollars in wages, negatively impacting the growth and justice of the entire nation. The Latino community is the largest minority in the United States, but we are not a single group. We are a giant "mosaic": people from Mexico, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Cuba, Venezuela, and more than 20 other countries. Each brings their own culture, customs, and, most importantly for this article, their own ideas about race and social class.

And the most painful thing is that in a country where we are already discriminated against for being Latino, the Latino community, instead of uniting, self-inflicts harm with internal prejudices. This

perspective, based on skin color and origin, weakens our ability to fight together against external racism and causes our own people to suffer in silence.

While historical racism in the U.S. (primarily directed at Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and other long-established Latino groups) is deeply intertwined with race, colorism, territorial conquest, and cheap labor, discrimination against Venezuelans focuses more on xenophobia motivated by the humanitarian crisis and their identity as refugees and asylum seekers. While Venezuelans suffer the same consequences as other Latinos (job discrimination, microaggressions), the focus of the hostility is predominantly xenophobia stemming from forced migration, amplified by security narratives and political manipulation.

We conducted several interviews to gather the opinions and perspectives of various individuals. The fact is that several people were bothered by the treatment they received in various places. (The names below are not real; they have been chosen to preserve the anonymity of our interviewees.)

Saray: This woman has already suffered from racism, which is very unfair. She experienced a problem at her job because of a group of people who already worked there. They started discriminating against her for not knowing the language they used and for being Latina. Something she expressed a lot was

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feeling bad just because of the opinions of people at her work.

Ángel de Jesús: He commented that he is no longer in favor of racism or discrimination, but that he also doesn't like some of the behaviors of Latinos. As a Latino, he knows that some have inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors for people who are undocumented in the United States. But that doesn't mean we deserve to be treated this way; some of us do deserve respect.

Stefani: She told us that so far she hasn't had a serious incident as such, but that she has always experienced discrimination at work or on public transportation due to her economic situation. However, she believes that this is completely wrong because Latinos haven't come to do harm, but rather to grow economically and create a future for their next generation.

Cristián: He is a student at our school. He told us that he hasn't always been around many Latinos because he didn't feel comfortable with them due to the news on television, and that made him very wary of Latinos, even though he himself was Latino.

Social classes have no color, but their consequences do

Alexander Lopez

Editorial Note: This article was translated from Spanish.

Historically, racism has influenced access to resources and equal opportunities for the US population, as there is an income and resource gap with significant unemployment inequality. There is a

high level of inequality between Black households with high government assistance and many white households with much higher incomes.

Over the years, a preference has existed within our population and between different racial groups. When we talk about jobs and public transportation, these groups have become separated, and we can observe this division in cities like Chicago. For example, if you ride the Red Line, you can see the difference starting at the Jackson station. You no longer see many light-skinned people, and the difference in living conditions is noticeable. Before the Jackson station, you don't see many dark-skinned people.

For Hispanics and Black people to achieve the American dream and reach the levels of wealth that the majority of the white population enjoys, they have to work twice as hard and make twice the effort, because they don't have the same advantages. Above all, they have to overcome what some of us call and consider to be the educational advantages that exist within the white population, whose educational levels are simply a product of their university studies.

Many Hispanics try to achieve the American dream through hard work, study, and effort, but we are immigrants, and we have to understand that when we talk about the differences that exist between different racial groups, we must understand that the average income of Black and Latino people is less than half of White people.

The story of my experience in the United States

Sandra Brito Ramirez

Editorial Note: This article was translated from Spanish, and is intended to continue the story from an article included in the previous issue of Albizu Campos Speaks!, "The journey of South American immigrants."

I entered the United States, on March 12, 2022, alone. I suffered a lot in Mexico to enter this country. When I arrived at the border in Mexico with the United States border, I crossed a river there. To enter the border, I turned myself in to immigration in El Paso, Texas, and they treated me very well and took me to a shelter. They were very kind and sent me to another group home in New York.

When I arrived in New York, they received me very well. I stayed there for about 9 months because I don't have any relatives here in the United States, then they gave me up for adoption to a white American family. They lived in Chicago, Illinois, and came to pick me up by plane from New York. When I arrived with my new family, I felt very happy with the immigration services, because they gave me the opportunity to have a family where they love me for who I am, but then everything changed because of the change in government after the 2024 election.

I went to visit a cousin of mine who is in the state of Ohio on February 5th, 2025, to spend a few days with her because she was my first family here in the United States, but I didn't think that trip would

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lead to so many things. And on March 9, I went to drop off three young men at their jobs, but that day I didn't think it would be the last day I would talk to my cousin.

When I left with my car at the station, I saw a private car arrive and four immigration agents get out. They didn't even ask me if I had papers to be here in the United States. They broke the window and took me out. They took me to jail. For two days they didn't give me food. It was cold with the other people who were there, and the security guards yelled at us. They offered us money to sign our deportation papers from the United States.

It's an abuse of power what they're doing to all of us, and it's also a fraud that they're committing by offering money to get people to sign documents so they'll leave. It's not right. This moment, this year, is very bad for us as Latinos or as migrants. I feel that the immigration agents are disregarding the law and the rights of many people here because many people are afraid to go out or go to work.

Gentrification in Puerto Rico

Armani Rodriguez

I was living in Puerto Rico between 2020 and 2023. It was mostly Puerto Ricans at first but the longer I was there the more white people I seen. I used to go to a restaurant called the Sandwichera. They served Puerto Rican sandwiches and desserts, and there were only Spanish-speaking workers. Then, I went to Chicago for a bit to visit my family and when I

came back to Puerto Rico, I went to go to the Sandwichera because I hadn't went there in a while. When I got there it wasn't even called "Sandwhichera" anymore, it was a random restaurant with white workers and no Spanish-speaking workers. There wasn't even Puerto Rican food anymore.

Me and my family lived in a 4-bedroom house with a big back yard. We had dogs and cats. Our rent was only \$300 a month. We lived near the beach we had cats and dogs who lived in front of us. In 2023, we went to Chicago for a couple months, and when we came back to Puerto Rico and tried to find a new house to live in the rent raised by more than 50%. We couldn't find any house under \$800. We looked for the old dogs and cats that were on the street and they were gone because of the tourist and white people who were complaining about the animals.

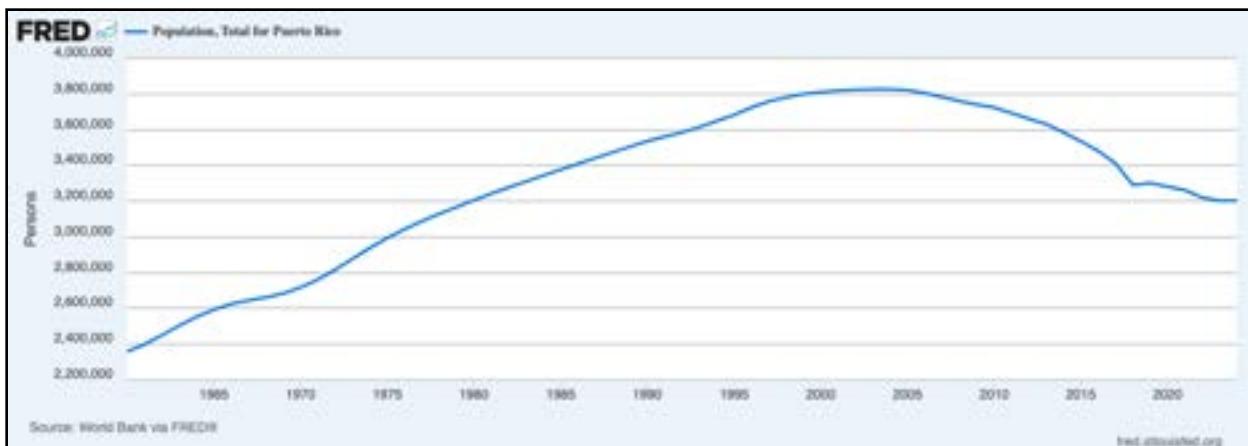
The white people are pushing the Puerto Ricans off the island by raising the rent. Restaurants are

forced to hire English-speaking workers. Because the surge of tourist local traditions are fading and being replaced by tourist rich people are moving to the island to escape paying taxes. The prices are rising while natives' minimum wage stays the same. The streets of San Juan looks like you're somewhere in Vegas. They are filled with for sale signs because the properties were bought by rich people. You can notice the population of native Puerto Ricans is getting lower and lower. If you walk into San Juan, you'll see nothing but tourists just like Hawai'i.

Part of the reason Puerto Rico is so gentrified is because in 2012, the Puerto Rican government made a deal so that if any Americans move to the island they'd have to pay no taxes, which makes no sense because the prices started to rise and more rich people started to move to the island. In 2009, the native Puerto Rican population was 4 million people, which was the peak. In 2010 it went down to 3.7 million



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due to price increasing and wages staying the same or decreasing. In 2020 there were 3.2 million. That's 800k people that left the island in only 10 years. The population should be increasing not decreasing. White people are also bringing their business to the island causing property taxes to rise because of their expensive prices and modern looking business. There are rich people buying whole blocks in Puerto Rico and only renting to white people.

Envision Community Services provides 14 years of restorative justice in Pilsen

Leslie Lozada and Jasmine Rodriguez, QOS Contributors

Envision Community Services, a non-profit organization founded in 2011 in the West Lawn neighborhood, expanded into the Pilsen neighborhood in September 2024. This summer, at a house-music-themed fundraising event, Envision volunteers and staff shared the five services the organization provides to the Pilsen community: workforce development, education initiatives, restorative justice, and public and behavioral health.

Envision Office in Pilsen

Envision focuses on empowering at-risk communities in neighborhoods such as Gage Park, Garfield Ridge and Archer Heights. The non-profit's decision to expand to Pilsen was due to many Envision staff members. This included the CEO of Envision, Roberto Montejano, who lived and grew up in the Pilsen neighborhood.

"I'm not going anywhere. People are moving out. I'm moving in," Montejano said in response to the ongoing gentrification that has been present in Pilsen.

"We have a love for this community," Jenny Avitia, the senior manager at Envision, said.

Avitia, who has been working for Envision for five years, explained that they have launched a street outreach program called "Save Our Streets." This "SOS" program aims to help youth aged 14 to 24 years old in the Pilsen community.

"The goal of the program is to be able to help them with any housing needs that they have, educational, financial, any type of barriers that they're currently confronting that

is keeping them from reaching their goals," Avitia said.

Envision hopes to create some success stories within Pilsen's youth by providing and supporting youth with scholarships that can help them with college expenses. Every year, Envision aims to provide six to 10 scholarship opportunities.

"Right now our biggest goal really is to get as many people in through our doors," Avitia said about the Pilsen office.

The Envision office is located at the Lacuna Lofts, 2150 S. Canalport Ave., 4th Floor, Suite 4 A-10, Chicago, IL.

From Gang Member to CEO

Montejano, the founder and CEO of Envision, shared their journey about how they started in non-profit work.

Montejano was one of seven children born to immigrant parents who moved to the United States from Mexico. They arrived without knowing anyone. In that isolation, Montejano's mother was in a domestic violence situation with her husband. While she worked two jobs, he did not work at all.

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Several booths at the Envision “We are House Music” Community Festival, which was created to help fundraise different projects with the non-profit. During the Festival, there were also local DJs for both days and food vendors.
Photos taken by Leslie Lozada.

“I’m the dark one. They call me El Niño in the house. They think I broke up their family,” Montejano explained in regard to why Montejano uses gender-neutral pronouns.

At eight years old, Montejano’s father was killed in 1984, which led Montejano to join a rebel gang in Little Village.

“They told me we love you. We’ll

share your pain. We’ll die for you. At eight years old, what am I supposed to say?” Montejano said.

Montejano experienced being shot and going to prison as a juvenile throughout childhood. At the age of 17, Montejano marked the last and final time in prison, as Montejano was charged as an adult.

Montejano credited Marilu

Gonzalez, a member of Neighbors Against Gang Violence, as a mother figure who visited Montejano in prison and regularly brought along their pregnant girlfriend. Gonzalez encouraged Montejano to submit book reports. In prison, Montejano obtained a GED.

After Montejano’s release from prison, Gonzalez offered to pay for the removal of gang-related tattoos on their face and knuckles, which allowed Montejano to pursue a career. “I did 29 years of working with non-profits, helping out individuals come out of prison. Doing re-entry. Transitioning out of gangs,” Montejano said.

Montejano worked up the career ladder to several director positions, including in workforce development, education, ex-offender sites and expansion sites. Montejano discovered that the non-profit sector often involves a one-sided approach to work.

“People say they want to do better for our community, but they were profiting off of my story. Off of the work that I was doing,” Montejano explained this as the reason behind starting their non-profit organization—Envision in West Lawn.

After conducting a needs assessment, Envision began providing services and resources in the West Lawn community. It was founded on a volunteer model, supported by grants, partnerships and sponsorships, to aim to help increase awareness and solutions available for the community’s youth.

Summer Working for Envision

Edgar, one of Envision’s clients,

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explained how he became a case manager after joining Envision. Similar to CEO Montejano, Edgar grew up in Little Village and went to school in Pilsen.

"I also felt victim to a lot of the deficiencies we have in our community," Edgar said. He joined a street organization and dropped out of high school during his sophomore year.

In prison, Edgar was tired of being stuck there. He joined an at-risk youth program similar to Envision and obtained his GED.

Now, Edgar teaches Latin American history at Herbert High School. During the summer, Edgar works on street intervention work with youth as a full-time employee for Envision.

"It allows for much more of a personal connection. And to be honest, it allows me to get more results instead of me having to deal with 170 students," Edgar explained in regard to the work he does with one-on-one interactions at Envision.

Throughout the summer, Envision created more community events, including four back-to-school drives that involved giving away free school supplies to youths returning to classes.

"Envision's never here to say we are the solution to any problem. We are part of the solution to many problems," Montejano said.

There's more to us than Spain

Angelina Soto

I found out about the Taínos when I was 12 or 13, when people were talking about Rosalia being a

colonizer and culture vulture. Rosalia is a popular Spanish singer from Spain, who became popular by using Latin American and Caribbean culture in her music. She pretended to be Latina when she is from Spain and Spanish people are not Latina or Latino, which means to be from Latin American.

Latin Americans are not just descended from Spanish people, but also indigenous people. Puerto Ricans are descended from Taínos. Because, at the time, I was a little confused about who the Taínos were, I did some googling and searching on TikTok, and asked my family what they knew. I found out Taínos originally come from Venezuela then migrated from Venezuela to Puerto Rico and all over the Caribbean for better resources. But after Columbus arrived in the Americas in 1492, Spain colonized Latin America and the Caribbean and the indigenous people who lived there. They killed most of the population because of land and resources. Since then,

Latin America suffered from colonization by Spain and the United States.

On the other hand, Rosalia is a Spaniard from Spain. She did a lot of controversial stuff like taking opportunities from actual people who come from Latin America or who have Latin American roots. She made music from Latin American culture and claimed it as her own, even putting on a fake Caribbean accent in her songs. At first, it didn't bother me, but then I researched on why was everybody calling her a colonizer to find out the Spanish colonized all of Latin America and the Caribbean and there was indigenous people who lived in the Americas first. The Taínos were first tribe the Spanish came across.

It's important to know history. It's important to know your culture, your background, your roots, not being told false information and fake history—like that we as Puerto Ricans are just descended from Spanish people. It's impor-



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tant to know the truth. The reason why I care is because we are told lies, fake information and false history. I gave a survey out to 17 people and I found out that not many people know about the Tainos. Of the ten Puerto Ricans who took the survey, only 5 of the 10 people acknowledged they were descended from Tainos. Three people don't know what tribe they came from, but did know they are descendants of indigenous people. It's important, especially at a "Puerto Rican" high school, to make sure we are learning that we are descended from indigenous people and not just Spaniards.

Boricua feminism and the fight for decolonization

Deborah Perez, QOS Contributor

Puerto Rican feminism is deeply shaped by the island's long history of colonization that began in 1898 and persists to this day. It acknowledges the ways that colonial powers have influenced sexual, gender, marital, and economic relations on the island.

This article will refer to Puerto Rican feminists as Boricua feminists. These women embrace Borikén, Puerto Rico's Indigenous name, and organize around overlapping forms of oppression. While Puerto Rican women have endured the same sexist oppression faced by women in the United States, they also face the compounded constraints of a colonized political status. This status imposes foreign identities and political binaries in contrast to their own cultural understandings of self and community.

Decolonization is not just a call to action in Boricua feminist theory. "Decolonizing is not metaphorical, but rather an embodied persistence and pressing-on, an imagining and enacting of decolonization in circadian rhythms", according to Indigenous and Unangañ scholars Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. Through this framework, decolonization becomes about a way of life worth preserving and fighting for.

Through their lived experiences, Boricua feminists are producing alternative epistemologies that de-center dominant patriarchal, imperial, and nationalist frameworks and reimagine the very definitions of woman, feminist, nationalist, etc. In doing this, they call on women everywhere to recognize colonialism and feminism as inseparable struggles, demanding that the fight against gender oppression also confront the enduring realities of empire.

History

To understand the present-day goals of Boricua feminism, we need to look at its history. In the article, Puerto Rico: Feminism and Feminist Studies, Alice E. Colón Warren explains that the important foundation tracing the origins of feminist organizing on the island goes back to the late 1970s. Boricua feminist thought developed in response to the island's specific social and political conditions and its ongoing lack of political sovereignty. Puerto Rican women at this time were experiencing the economic effects of U.S control over the job market as well as the threat to

women's birth control rights. These early feminist movements were shaped by the fight for women's rights, labor rights, and access to education. As colonial rule continued in Puerto Rico, Boricua feminism began shifting to include the oppression brought on by colonialism.

Boricua feminism, known today, places race, class, and colonialism at the center of its activism. In the article, "Decolonization is Imminent: Notes on Boricua Feminism," Heather Montes-Ireland describes Boricua feminism as not only a political stance but also a cultural practice rooted in affirming Puerto Rican identity, language, and traditions even in the face of U.S. cultural dominance. Through this lens, Boricua feminists confront gender based forms of oppression while also challenging the political status that leaves Puerto Rico without full political sovereignty.

Montes-Ireland claims that "these women are writing from overlapping subordinate positions, as women and as colonial subjects, where they experience a double dose of silencing and double invisibility." This feminist approach aligns with bell hooks' definition of "feminism as a movement to end sexist oppression that directs our attention to systems of domination and the inter-relatedness of sex, race, and class oppression." Whereas mainstream feminism presents itself as women versus men, Boricua feminist activism calls for women's rights with demands for liberation.

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Strategies & Feminist Frameworks

Global solidarity also plays an important role in Boricua feminism by linking Puerto Rican struggles for decolonization and gender justice to movements against settler colonialism and state violence.

The North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) highlights the similarities between Puerto Rican and Palestinian struggles against settler colonialism and the militarization, displacement, and state violence in "The Faces of Feminist Resistance, from Palestine to Puerto Rico". For this reason, women have played key roles in both Palestinian and Puerto Rican liberation movements.

Palestinian women like Shadia Abu Ghazaleh, who believed education was essential for freedom, or Fatima Muhammad Ali Bar-nawi, the first Palestinian woman imprisoned for taking part in a paramilitary action. Similarly, in Puerto Rico, the article highlights Dominga de la Cruz Becerril, who survived the 1937 Ponce Massacre, and Blanca Canales Torresola, who led the 1950 Jayuya Uprising against U.S. rule, spending 17 years in prison for her role.

These women, from different parts of the world, are united by the same goal: to free their people from Israeli and U.S. colonial control. This global perspective places Puerto Rican feminist activism within a broader movement that resists not only gender-based struggles but also the crumbling effects of empire.

In their fight for justice and liberation, Boricua feminists have also joined international campaigns opposing U.S. imperialism and have expressed solidarity with Queer rights movements and racial movements like Black Lives Matter. This indicates their understanding that the struggles for justice are all interconnected.

Local organizing also takes place on the island in the form of grassroots mutual aid, community workshops, and street protests. For example, feminist collectives such as "Colectiva Feminista en Construcción" organize themselves to "denounce the ways in which the State sustains and feeds these systems of oppression." They have organized mass demonstrations to pressure the government to declare a state of emergency over gender violence. They also prioritize strate-

gies for collective care, ensuring that communities are not only resisting oppression but also building their own systems of support.

Challenges Facing the Movement

While some describe Boricua feminism as resilient, it still faces challenges. One of them continues to be the ongoing colonial relationship with the United States. The centrality of decolonization in



Above: Blanca Canales Torresola
Below: Fatima Muhammad Ali Bar-nawi

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Lolita Lebron



Leila Khaled

Boricua feminism positions the issues as a political one versus a feminist one, thus creating setbacks that do not recognize the multitude of intersecting forms of oppression of being a woman in a colonized nation. Because of this, Warren insists that Boricua feminists have to constantly assert their place within feminist discourse, challenging U.S.-based feminist spaces that may fail to address imperialism or anti-colonial struggles.

Another major challenge for Boricua feminists is the way their activism is often criminalized, with dominant labels that recognize anti-colonial resistance as “terrorism” or “violence.” The NACLA (2023) reports how feminist movements actively reject these labels,

instead redirecting them to describe the oppressive actions of colonizers.

We can see examples of this in Lolita Lebrón’s 1954 armed protest in the U.S. Capitol, which was widely condemned as terrorism, even though it was a political act demanding Puerto Rican independence. Similarly, for Palestinian feminist Leila Khaled, whose participation in armed resistance in Palestine was condemned internationally, although the systemic violence of Israeli occupation remained largely unacknowledged.

Both of these cases show how colonial powers control the narratives that discredit the fight for liberation. By reframing these narratives, Boricua feminists continue

to resist being silenced by those holding imperial power.

Interconnected Liberation

Boricua feminism represents a deeply intersectional and decolonial approach to social justice from a feminist perspective. Through this approach, Boricua feminists address gender oppression, colonial domination, and economic inequality.

By centering the lived experiences of Puerto Rican women, it challenges the limitations of mainstream feminism and insists that liberation cannot be achieved without confronting imperial power structures. Boricua feminists understand that gender justice cannot be separated from the fight against colonialism, economic exploitation, or state violence.

By blending grassroots community care with global alliances, they model a form of feminism that is both intersectional and unapologetically political in a way that honors culture and place. Their work challenges mainstream feminism to broaden its scope and reminds us that the struggle for liberation is always interconnected.

The Way We See It

Adulthood Struggles

Leandra Martinez

Sometimes, caring for others, even when we feel hesitant, is very important. Even adults struggle, despite that we sometimes think of them as having everything together. Clementine (which is not her actual name) was 35 years old. She was Puerto Rican and a Christian. She had a husband and five kids. She is one of the souls going through hard times right now. She had one of the purest hearts I had seen in a while, and my encounter with her changed my life. I will tell you how.

It was November 1st. I was walking my friend home after hanging out. We were singing beside a mailbox and we were content. Across from us, a woman stared at us. She called us over to her. I greeted her with a smile while my friend stayed weary. She had a beer in hand so I could see why she would be skeptical. She asked us to sing and of course, being the kind of person to sing whenever I have the opportunity, I sang my heart out. I noticed she had a really high spirited attitude, so I told her to keep her spirits up.

I bid my friend goodbye and I started to head home. Then I saw she started to follow me. She apologized, swearing to me that she wasn't "being a creep." I assured her that she was fine and at my invitation she walked by my side. I didn't really hesitate. As a woman myself I trust in other women, and

I tend to let my heart lead more than anything else. With her I felt that she wasn't a threat at all.

She asked if I was interested in singing. I said I had much preferred pursuing my dream of drumming instead. She seemed surprised, continuing on about singing in front of large crowds and such.

This was about the time that I noticed that her frame was thinner than average, and her clothes hung loose. Her looks made me a little worried. She told me that she used to be a singer and noting the alcohol in her breath, I asked her what happened to her.

She went silent for a while, and eventually started telling me about her life. It all started when she was 15 years old. She didn't have her parents by her side at all and she was met a guy. At 15 years old she got pregnant. She told me the difficulties of raising a child as a teenager, how she was so young, how she was just a baby as well. I saw the depth of her situation before she had even told me everything. I didn't want to get away, thinking that maybe she didn't get the opportunity often to tell her story.

When her middle daughter turned 16 years old, she ran away, convincing both her oldest and the youngest sibling to follow behind her. "Why would they do that?" I asked. She told me, her voice cracking, "I don't know." I held her hands and I pulled her into a hug, telling her that I loved her in full honesty. I believe anything can change a person's life, even a

stranger telling you they love you.

This woman was breaking down in front of me and I didn't want her to her feel like what had happened to her was her fault, considering that at such a young age, most teenagers would have gotten an abortion, but not this woman. She didn't give up.

She told me I might have seen her children on the news when they ran away. The police were trying to find them. Then came her sons. One of them was in his 20s, he had moved out when he had gotten the chance. He had a daughter, but he didn't let her see her grandbaby anymore.

By this point she was in tears, she couldn't stop choking. She held her beer tight, slamming it onto her thigh upon finishing each sentence. We stood there on the corner and I told her that she did her best, that she gave it her all and kept trying despite the obstacles. That she should know she didn't deserve what she had gotten. She kept on crying as I tightened my embrace, feeling helpless to make her feel better.

She told me her husband of 16 years was abusive and at one point in time while she was holding her grandbaby, he struck her, nearly ending the infant's life. At a loss for words, I thought, who could be so heartless as to let their anger get that bad? Not only to try and end just any infant's life, but his own son's. This was not an experience I could have imagined happening to someone. By this point, she said she had gotten tired. She ran away from

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her husband. She wanted to give up. I told her not to, she replied that she had lost everything. She and her husband were married for 16 years, and she was losing him, her children, friends, her trusted ones.

She wanted to call a homeless shelter. She was so tired, and I could see it. I told her she could use my phone. She called 311 while she asked me why she gave everyone her all and they only gave her their left overs. They didn't pick up. And as I stood in the cold, she called 311 again, but they didn't answer. She then called her husband which led to a series of cuss words and shouting. Her husband hangs up and she sits on the concrete, slamming her beer onto the ground and spraying it everywhere. She screamed and threw it to the grass where it continued to spray. I wasn't scared. I just watched, wondering how I could help. She cried into her knees until I held her. She grabbed my hand and asked me why this was happening to her. She cried into my hands, questioning God and asking him why it had to be her, that she had given everything to other people and nothing was given the same to her. I almost felt what she was feeling. I felt frustrated along with

this woman. She made me touch her face in which I felt a large lump and her body shaking, her husband had hit her, just a week ago, and I sat with her, listening and talking to her, telling her everything was gonna be okay, trying to bring her hope and spirit back, knowing I didn't know myself if everything would end up okay.

Then I let her call her husband again to ask for her stuff, but he hung up, accusing her of being drunk. She called again and made me tell him that she wasn't drunk. I lied for her, not wanting to get her into deeper trouble.

Once he had hung up, she called her best friend. It was relieving to know she had one. I noticed that he spoke to her with kindness, understanding, and patience, it made me smile. She asked him to pick her up at the gas station near Mather High School. I told her that I used to go there. She told me that she and her best friend went there as well. I asked her while we made our way to the gas station why she wouldn't live with her best friend. She told me that he has a daughter of his own, and that she didn't want to be a burden.

There was silence for a while,

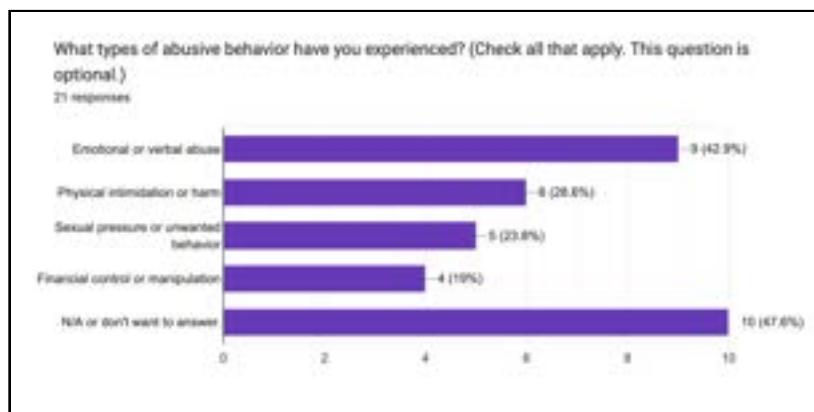
then I told her we should go to church. Minutes in, she spoke loudly and she was happy, but I'm sure it was because she was getting more drunk. Nonetheless, I loved seeing her happy. It seemed like it was an eternity seeing her cry. I walked her to the gas station. I walked away, but she followed. I hugged her and I walked her back to the gas station. We talked for a little bit more and then I headed home. I knew she could've followed me home because of her drunken state, but I wasn't worried.

This experience really showed me the sheer power that empathy has, how it can make you feel, and how it can make others feel. Just allowing yourself to briefly trust someone who you might otherwise be afraid of can give you something to think about for the rest of your life. But it also taught me that I really needed to appreciate so much more in life, despite challenges. That someone has it worse. But it's okay to grieve, just to never forget what we can do to help it.

Child abuse and its impact

Ashley Padilla & Edwin Flores

Child abuse is a huge problem that gets slipped under the rug despite affecting million of children across the world. Child abuse could happen within a parent, care giver, family members or family friend, or even a stranger. It can happen physically, emotionally, or in a number of other harmful ways. All forms of abuse can cause long-lasting effects on adolescent health, including mental health, and development. For example, there is the well-



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known case of Gabriel Hernandez, who was severely abused by his mother and stepdad which cost his life. They found Gabriel bruised and beaten, his skull cracked, three ribs broken, BB pellets embedded in his bruised and burned skin, and two of his teeth knocked out. He was immediately taken to a hospital, but tragically died two days later. The case gained a lot of attention especially because teachers and staff reported to Child Protective Services about his wellbeing multiple times, yet the system still failed him and did not take any action. Another example is the case of the Menendez brothers, whose killed their parents out of fear and in self-defense after a lifetime of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

We often hear about these kinds of stories in the media, but what about with people we know? To study this problem and whether it exists at our own high school, we made a survey for students. We got plenty of results on how many students went through some sort of

abuse, and if it still affects them 'till this day. 75% of how many students that did the survey went through some sort of abuse, and 60% if it was from somebody they trusted.

Unfortunately, parents and a trusted adults don't always believe their child, which doesn't ever make sense to me, but it does happen. Most of our classmates said they did tell an adult and a few did say they took action quite a few didn't or report that were not believed. Parents push it under the rug even more when the offender is denying the accusations, with research showing that 15% of cases are to go down like that.

Child abuse is happening around us a lot more than we think it is. According to the National Children's Alliance, 1 billion children globally are estimated to experience sexual violence, not just girls but even boys. 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys in the U.S. are estimated to experience child sexual abuse, 550,000 children are known to U.S. authorities to be abused. It's

also mentioned that in 2022, an estimated 1,990 children died from abuse and neglect in the United States, and it is also said nearly half of all U.S. children experience at least one type one type of childhood trauma. That takes a toll on children, their caregiver, and their community.

Testimony of domestic violence

Jael Roman-Santos

Domestic violence is a big problem because millions of people are affected every year and victims suffer from PTSD. The causes of domestic violence could be jealousy or anger management or it could run in the family until the cycle is broken. Here is my account of the domestic abuse I witnessed in my own family.

Okay so this was back in 2016, my dad accused my mom of cheating. When I got home from school, I saw my brothers and my sister were outside, and I saw my cousin trying to hold my dad back because he was choking my mom. We called the cops and they took him away. Two days later he came back to apologize to my mom for doing that.

In 2022 around a week before Christmas my dad and my mom were arguing about something while I was in school. I was just going about my day until my mom called me telling me that she was going to pick me up early and I was like, "ok cool." When she picked me up, that's when she told me that my dad was talking nonsense again, saying she was cheating.

When Christmas came, we went

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with my three sisters and my two older brothers and my cousin to my older sister and my brother-in-law's house and we spent Christmas time over with her. We waited until 10 to open the presents. After that, me and my family went home. I went to the kitchen and I saw my dad crying for some reason and I asked him if he was okay and he said yeah and I was like "cool imma go back to the room." One hour passed by and my dad started arguing with my mom but it got to a point where he started slamming shit and me, my brother, my cousin, and sister got involved to break it up. But then the cops came and took him away. Later on we got kicked out of the house because my dad wasn't paying rent for six months so my family and I moved in with my sister.

In January of 2025 my dad convinced my mom to move in with him again, so we left my sister and we moved in with my dad. My dad started arguing with my mom and things got bad and this time me and my brother got involved. At first, I thought it was just a simple argument but they were just yelling at each other like how they always do. When they were arguing I was in my room with my brother, my cousin and my other brother was in the kitchen with my dad and my mom. We all then heard something fall and that's when my brother told us that my dad was on top of my mom. We all ran to the kitchen to see what my brother was talking about to see my dad on top of my mom and she was trying to get up but my dad wouldn't let her until I

held my dad back. As soon as my mom got up she smacked him in the face and walked away from him so she could get some distance. But my dad shook me off and started chasing my mom around the house, so then I went after him. I was trying hold him back but then he kicked me in the stomach. My mom hit him in the face with a pan and my dad just shook it off and chased my mom to the bathroom. My dad was trying to lock himself in the bathroom with my mom and I was trying to hold the bathroom door so he gave up. I was telling my dad to get the fuck out the house and my dad said "I'm not going anywhere." I told him again trying to get close to him but my mom was holding me back and telling me to ignore him. My dad was talking so much shit to the point I was getting ready to fight him. I pulled up my pants and my dad saw that and was telling me "let's do it" and I told him "what's up then." My brother and my mom were holding me back because I was trying to get at him. My brother was telling me to relax and my cousin called my older sister to cool thing down. They took me to my room so I could try to relax. My cousin ordered pizza and when the pizza came I went to go get a slice. My dad started talking shit again and my sister was telling me to ignore him and to go to my room and I did. Later the cops and took him away and ever since that day I never spoke to my dad again.

Every time I think about this, I feel upset because I was manipulated. My brother and my sisters were manipulated too. My dad was

always gaslighting us, trying to get us to think that things were okay but he just kept doing the same thing, trying to start things for no reason just to find a reason to argue and fight with my mom.

My past educational experiences

Juan Santiago

I went to a few schools before I came to Albizu Campos. Clemente was pretty bad, they lacked teachers very often, there was some type of drama everyday. If it wasn't a fight, someone was always arguing or just doing stuff they have no business doing at school.

Then I went to Pathways. My cousin had graduated from there with my girlfriend and my other friend. My teacher was screwing around and she wasn't really helping me for real. All of her students didn't pass that year. None of her students graduate ever, so it's like she was the only teacher there that wasn't bringing out students that were graduating. She was the only one that wasn't meeting their quota and wasn't doing anything. So it was like, the entire time I'm just like sitting there doing my work, which mind you, is all just like the Aventas we have at Albizu Campos. They were literally teaching us nothing and they're just telling us to look up the answers to the work. It made me feel like I was doing the work for no reason. It started becoming a problem because I would have so much work done in all those classes that I literally had no other classes to do, but then when I had no work left they

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would get mad at me. So it's like, I'm talking to my friend cuz he doesn't have no work and I don't have no work, but then they're seeing us talking and they're separating us for no reason, so it's like I'm just getting practically bullied by my teachers because I have my work done.

The campus of Albizu Campos

Brianna Hernandez

Albizu Campos Highschool has three buildings where the students have to walk outside just to get to class. I believe we deserve one single big building. I love the three buildings but having them can be some real trouble at times. This school has been around for more than 10 years so why not just upgrade the buildings.

We have to worry about things that can happen while transitioning. For example, ICE. We have many Latino students who I know don't feel safe to the point there were days where they have to miss school just to ensure their safety. Because of them missing, it also messes up how they do in school.

Another reason is gangbanging.

Many of our students are in that life and I know for a fact most of them get scared because they have to walk damn near a block to get to class and they never know if someone is out there to beat them up or do even worse. I've seen with my own eyes a kid from my school get chased down twice. Our staff really can't do much about it because of how many opportunities those people have to get to students. They really can't do much to monitor students. They constantly have to check students for stuff they might have. That wouldn't be as much of a problem if there was only one building. Albizu Campos students aren't allowed to have phones and I know it's like that for other schools, but they do it differently where they are allowed to have their phones during passing periods, but Albizu Campos students don't. If there was ever an emergency, how would the students call their parents to let them know that they're in danger?

One student told me, "I don't feel safe especially outside because there's many drug addicts that are outside their school, and I even saw one of them trying to sell stuff to

one of the people that go here." Honestly I was very shocked hearing that. Yes I was aware of the people that were outside but I never knew they tried to sell stuff to one of the students. That is a very big problem and another reason we should have one building. I know this one time while I was going to my 4th period class there was this girl that was sitting on this bench in front of the school, talking very crazy. She had such an attitude. After I got away from there my friend told me that the girl that was sitting was once talking down on our school cursing at students saying "f*** Albizu Campos" and many other things. I think that's a very big problem because the students here are not really scared of stuff like that and they could get into an altercation with that girl and it can become a big problem. Those people are always out there and the school can't do anything about it its not like they can kick them from the corner so if anything the students just have to endure the smack talking.

How voting should be talked about in schools

Ashton Christman

When I was in 3rd grade, my teacher was speaking about voting and trying to convince us younger kids to vote for who she wanted. She had us do an assignment where she handed out a small piece of paper to all of us and she put a voting box across the room and had us put our name on the paper and who we voted for. Everyone walked up one by one and all the other kids voted



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for who she wanted but I was the only kid who voted for a different person and she got mad at me. She loudly said I was wrong and tried to say why the person I voted for was wrong and how she was right because she was a teacher, and I shouldn't vote for what I put cause what I put was bad. And I was scared because she spoke loudly and I didn't know what to say.

She could still be doing this 'til today and could be "brain washing" our younger generation day by day and ruin their mindset. On any topic, if a trusted adult (teacher) tells you ur wrong you're gonna feel like you have to believe them and go closer to there side cause you're supposed to listen as you're told.

In my middle school they was all democrats and I wasn't so I would get looked at funny. This made me feel like voting is scary because if you vote for someone that another person didn't vote for, the teacher will be mad. There are supposed be limits of what teachers can speak about that's not school related.

Our class heard my teacher talk about politics for the whole election. No one should take all that frustration out to kids about something like that. Teachers also abuse there power because they know there words have more meaning because of there job as a "smart person." Teachers (or anyone) should never abuse their power over people. If teachers wanna bring up voting or debates, they can just have a in-class debate of random stuff such as (what's better, NFL or NBA, etc.) Even showing videos of voting and what the presidents that

are in the elections are saying is bad because someone in the class is gonna say something out loud, or have a small question about it that can shift another person's opinion.

I think schools should ban teachers speaking there opinion to kids under the age of 17. Only speak about it to seniors. And stop doing projects about voting and stop making us listen/understand what's going on when it's the election every 4 years. This isn't necessarily illegal but it should be because it's a bad thing to put on kids' minds. Especially in this generation where anything we see or hear we assume is right and we go with everything we see on our phone and listen to it and ride for it without knowing background information on it.

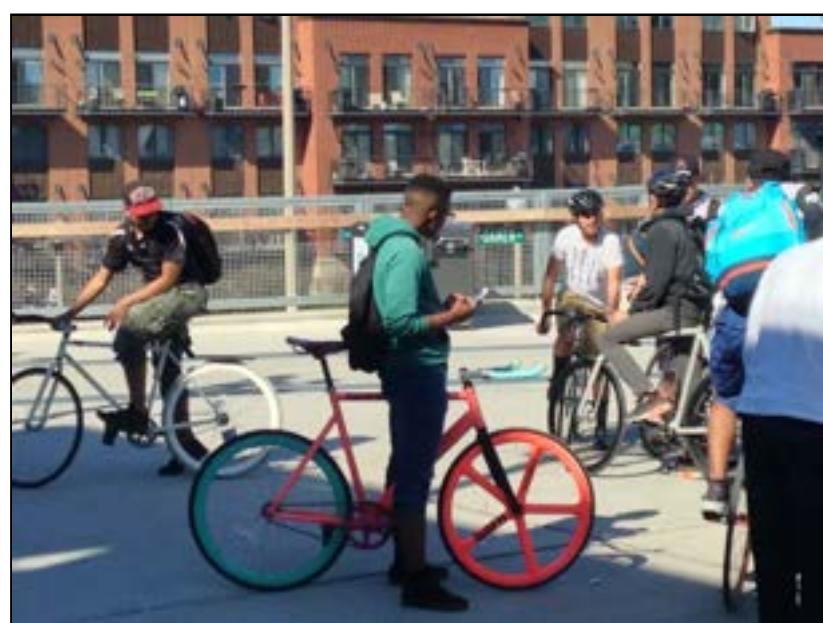
I made a class survey about voting and asking students about there opinion on teachers bringing such topics up and most didn't care as much, but there where some other kids who did seem bothered about teachers talking down to students

about politics.

Biking in Chicago

Luis Angel Rodriguez

In this article, I will be talking about my experience riding my fixed-gear bike in Chicago. First off, I'm gonna start by explaining what a fixed-gear bike is: a bicycle where the rear cog is bolted to the hub, so that you cannot coast. It's a constant pedaling where you're pretty much bound to your bike and it's difficult to stop unless you have brakes, which not all fixed-gear bikes have. But where's the fun in using brakes? Well, I don't like using brakes. I learned how to stop on the fixed gear bike by foot jamming on your back tire, which is one of the best ways to stop, or back pedaling. I prefer skidding, where I push up on my left pedal and push my right pedal down with all my force to skid. I like whip skidding, which is where you skid and move your back wheel to the side, which makes a sound when it rubs on the



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concrete, which I find cool and fun.

Riding with a group of friends is even more fun, where you can record your ride and ride together. I like riding kinda dangerously, where I take every opportunity I can to not stop, like if there's a red light and I see a possible way for me to cut through the cars, I'm gonna take the risk just so I don't stop pedaling. When I'm with my friends, they take even more risks than me when they ride. We are always near-death situations, risking our lives every time. Sometimes I wonder to myself if the risk is worth it? And I say for me it is because I like the thrill I get from it, just cutting up cars in traffic, trying

to maneuver around cars that are moving in downtown is fun.

Some places are great for riding bikes in Chicago, such as the woods, where there is a long bike trail, and the view when you get deeper into the woods is really nice, such as the Botanic Garden, which is way up north at the end of the trail. Other places would be the lake shore bike trail, which is really nice because of the fresh air and view. The 606 is a really nice place to bike and meet other fixie riders at Damen, where there are a lot of people hanging out with their bikes. There's also Riis Park, which is a great place to do bike races because of the track.

Places where I like to fix my bike are Ciclo Urbano Bike Shop, part of West Town Bikes. They are really helpful, and on Fridays, they have an open shop where you can go to the back of their shop and fix your bike up yourself. There's also the bike shop Verns and Sonys, which is a great place to fix your bike and ask for help. Some of the workshop workers like fixed gear bikes, but they always recommend putting brakes on the front wheel—at least one brake for safety, since fixed gear bikes are pretty dangerous. It's also nice talking to old heads that ride bikes because you can get some tips, or they can tell you some nice places to visit on a bike.

Wear Your Crown Freely!

Yemilee Monjes-Lempa, QOS Contributor

Black woman, your crown is beautiful and powerful.

Silence the voices that call your *pelo malo* and wear your crown freely.

Black woman, wear your crown proudly! If only you knew the power it carries;

It carries the freedom of our ancestors who braided maps into their hair, guiding them to liberation.

It carries the power of freedom, the strength of resilience, and the generations that rise from the power of your crown!

See the curls, the waves, their softness whispering their wildness,

the wildness of being, of existing.

Existing without hesitation, without asking for permission.

Black woman, wear your crown proudly! If only you knew the power it carries;

It carries the power of connection and bonding with our mothers and grandmothers, who braided our hair to sleep and led us into our deepest dreams.

It carries the power of love that unites our community together in celebration, the strength of resilience, and the generations that rise from the power of your crown!

Black women, your crown is beautiful and powerful.

Silence the voices that told you *ese pelo es desordenado* and wear your crown freely. See their volume, their *ondas* that rise;

rise for the good, rise for freedom, and shout their wildness.

Highlights



Top: Students and staff represent for the Puerto Rican Parade.

Above: Students go to a Cubs game!

Left: Students tend to the greenhouse garden for One Summer Chicago.

Below: Students meet Samuel Teer, author of the book *Brownstone*.



Highlights



Above: Students giving back to the community with the Boys and Girls Club.

Below: Students visit DePaul's exhibit on the Chicago Young Lords.



Highlights



Left: Students make art for One Summer Chicago.

Below and Left: Students celebrate Grinchmas

Below and Right: Students present at the Chicago Youth Service Corps Showcase.



A STEP BACK IN TIME

To the left pictured is Rafael Cancel Miranda, or “Don Rafa,” in 1979 at the original location of our school, which was then called “Rafael Cancel Miranda High School” and located in the basement of the First Congregational Church of Chicago on Hamlin and Potomac. This was the church of José Alberto “Viejo” Torres, one of our school’s founders, whose mural appears on pg. 30 and you can find all kinds of memorabilia of his by the exit to the alley from the main building. Don Rafa was one of four Puerto Rican *independentistas*, including Lolita Lebron (see pg. 23) who, in 1954, attacked the US Congress in order to demand the immediate independence of Puerto Rico from the United States, all of whom were subsequently imprisoned. Students at our school in the ‘70s were fierce advocates for their release from prison, which was ultimately won one year before this photo was taken in 1978.

To Don Rafa’s left is Evelyn Cruz, a former student. Two years prior, her brother, Rafael Cruz, had been shot and killed by the police while his back was turned, leading to the 1977 Humboldt Park Riots.

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