

**Southern Poverty Law Center  
Statement of C.J. Jones**

**Permanent Forum on People of African Descent – Education: Overcoming Systemic Racism and Historic Harm**

Hello, everyone. My name is C.J. I'm nineteen years old. I live in Alabama, in the Southeastern United States. In November 2022, I was a senior year in high school, looking forward to my last high school baseball season and graduation. As a star player on the baseball team, there were colleges interested in recruiting me to play on their teams, which would have been a great way to continue my education. I worked hard to get there. But that chance was taken away from me by a school discipline system that treats Black kids like me unfairly. After I missed the bus, I got an after school ride from some other students. Just for riding in a car with someone who was later charged with having drugs, even though I never had any drugs and was never charged with anything, I was suspended from school for two months, and then told I could only finish the school year by going to alternative school. I wouldn't be allowed to go to my regular classes or play baseball. Alternative school is where kids are sent for being troublemakers or committing crimes, which I never did. My dad, who is here with me, knew this was wrong and refused to go along with it, so I completed high school in a home school program. I have a job and still hope to go to college but it's harder now. What happened to me made me sad and anxious and forced me to fight for my education just because of my race.

**Southern Poverty Law Center  
Statement of Cory Jones, Sr.**

**Permanent Forum on People of African Descent – General Debate**

My name is Cory Jones. I live in Alabama, in the Southern United States. As a parent, I have watched and hoped all would be well when I sent my children off to school. But as my son, who is here with me, will talk about when it's his turn to speak, his education and dreams were stolen from him by a school discipline system that discriminates against students of African descent. He was falsely suspected of something he never did, and there was never any evidence that he did it. The racism in Alabama schools led to decisions being made that turned his life upside down. There should be due process for students, and decisions shouldn't be made without even a chance to give your evidence, but it was never so for my son. The next phase was for them to send my son to alternative school where he couldn't get the education he deserved. I didn't agree to that. Our journey has brought us here. The journey was and is difficult at times but with the Lord's hand on us, my son will be delivered.