

Ford's Theatre Student Matinee

# PROGRAM



Photo of Michael Russotto, Elan Zafir, Sean-Maurice Lynch,  
Craig Wallace and Christopher Bloch by Scott Suchman.

[www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org)

# Know Your Rights

## Where do we get our criminal justice laws?

The United States Constitution! The Sixth Amendment gives you seven key rights in a criminal court case:

1. The right to a speedy trial
2. The right to a public trial
3. **The right to an unbiased jury**
4. The right to be told the charges against you
5. The right to confront your accuser and to question witnesses in court
6. The right to your own witnesses to support your story
7. The right to have a lawyer present throughout the case

## Who could be on a jury?

You'll probably notice there **are no women on the jury in the play**. When Reginald Rose wrote *Twelve Angry Men* in **1954**, women and people of color were often deliberately left off jury lists.

Though women and people of color have been legally entitled to sit on some juries since the late 1800s, many state juries remained all white men. How did states do that?

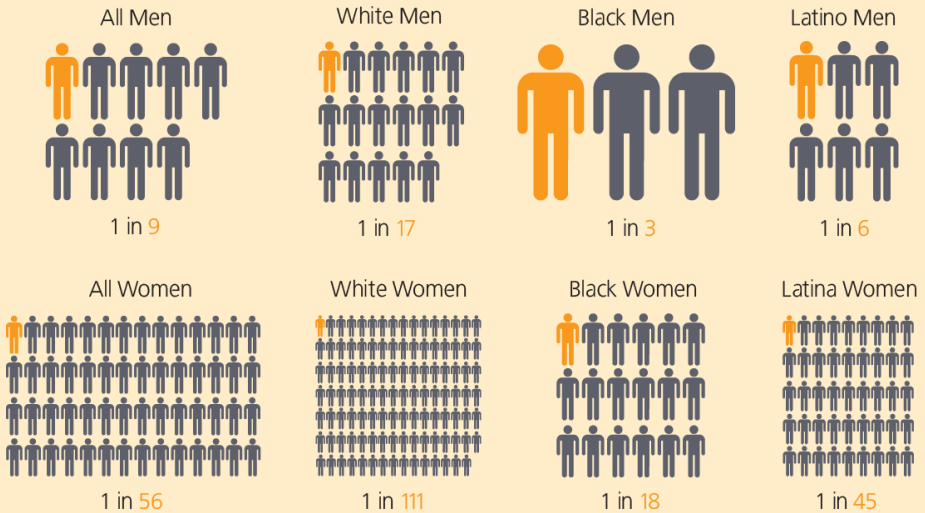
- Some states would allow women to opt out, especially if they were housewives. Society frowned upon women leaving their homes and family responsibilities for jury duty.
  - Different states restrict jury participation more than others. For example, it wasn't until 1968 that Mississippi even allowed women to serve on juries.
  - When choosing jurors, lawyers are allowed to "strike" (remove) a certain number of jurors without reason. That unspoken reason is often race.
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# Are We One Nation?

Though the right to a fair trial applies to *all* Americans, unequal jury representation and other factors can alter the outcome of a trial.

## Does that affect who is put in jail?

### Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment of U.S. Residents Born in 2001



Source: Bonczar, T. (2003). *Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.



## Ask Yourself

- What is the biggest takeaway from this infographic?

## Discuss with a Friend

- Why are some people imprisoned more often than others?
- What factors might contribute to the differences in the infographic?

Share your thoughts with us on Twitter @FordsEdu.

# So You Want to Change the System...

## Short Term – Make a Difference Now

**Vote.** Find out how political candidates feel about the current prison system and what they will do to change it.

**Make your voice heard.** Research social justice action groups like the ACLU's National Prison Project, The Sentencing Project or Standing Up For Racial Justice. Then attend a meeting or rally!

**Read.** Learn as much as you can about the judicial system, including first-hand accounts, newspaper articles and books.

## Long Term – Make Social Justice Your Career

**Social Worker** – help people lead happier, healthier lives as a mental health professional.

**Victim Advocate** – help victims with the emotional, financial, medical and legal issues they face.

**Teacher** – guide the next generation toward a future where everyone is treated equally.

**Police Officer** – bring kindness, compassion and protection to every community.

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