

### Meet No More Lines Fellow Kelley Williams-Bolar

*yes. every kid. foundation. is excited to announce the inaugural class of No More Lines Fellows. These fellows will bring their experience and voice to raise awareness about the injustice of families being barred from accessing public schools that work best for their children.*

Hello, my name is Kelley Williams-Bolar. You may have [heard my story](#). Like most parents, I would do anything to give my kids a great education. My local zoned school wasn't good enough for my kids, so I enrolled them in the safer and more affluent school district where my father lived, using his address. Why wouldn't I? I just wanted them to have a great education.



That's when it got crazy. In 2011, I was arrested and jailed for the "crime" of enrolling my kids in a public school. I was sentenced to 10 days in the county jail with an additional 3-year probation and a requirement to report to the county every month until probation was completed. They said I "stole" \$70,000 worth of public education because my daughters did not live permanently at my parents' address. The second charge was tampering with documents. If I were to miss probation check-in or have issues with the law, I would be facing another, much longer sentence in prison.

To add to my struggle with this justice system, they also charged my dad. While they couldn't prosecute him on the same charges as me because he never technically enrolled my daughters, they decided to investigate his life and charged him with stealing healthcare. He signed up for government healthcare because he had a stroke and was unable to work. They sent him to the penitentiary to serve a year living beside murderers and rapists. Tragically, he passed away in prison. The whole experience destroyed my life and sent me into a deep depression.

Why am I telling you this? Because I firmly believe what happened to me was unjust and I want to make sure that no other families have to go through what I did. Families should be able to get their children a good education without being penalized. They should have choices over where their children go to school without receiving felonies that can destroy their lives. As a No More Lines fellow, I will be fighting for exactly that.

Today, I work as a paraprofessional for students with special needs at a high school in Ohio. When I tell my students my story and about my time in prison, they can hardly believe it. It just doesn't make sense that enrolling your children in a public school is a crime.

I've participated in many panels on this issue through the years, and am inspired by the stories I hear from other families. I am honored to serve as a Fellow and represent not only my own story but the story of so many others. I will continue my fight against what I believe is an obsolete system that needs to be revamped for the future of all.