

LAEL ELIZABETH HIAM CHESTER, J.D.

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Lael Elizabeth Hiam Chester is an attorney who has focused her career on juvenile, criminal and civil rights law and policy. After graduating from Barnard College and Harvard Law School, she was the Albert Martin Sacks Clinical Fellow at the Criminal Justice Institute at Harvard and then joined the Civil Rights Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office. For 12 years, she served as Executive Director of Citizens for Juvenile Justice (CfJJ), a statewide non-profit dedicated to improving the juvenile justice system. Lael led the successful *Justice for Kids Campaign*, ending the practice in Massachusetts of automatically prosecuting and sentencing all 17 year olds as adults, regardless of the severity of the offense. Expertise on other issues includes: school-to-prison pipeline, parent-child privilege, racial disparities and over-use of secure confinement. She has received the Jay D. Blitzman Youth Advocacy Award for her extraordinary commitment to protecting the rights of juveniles (2004), the Women of Justice Award from the Women's Bar Association and Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly (2009), and the Embracing the Legacy award from the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps (2011). Lael is now a Research Fellow at the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management at the Harvard Kennedy School, where she directs research projects on Young Adult Justice (ages 18 – 25).