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Melanie Elizabeth Bates, Esquire is the Principal of Melanie Bates Consulting, LLC. MBC is a strategic policy and communications firm with an overall focus on criminal justice reform.

Melanie's legal background developed her expertise in government relations. Previously, Melanie served as the Legislative Director for Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells at the Council for the District of Columbia, Legislative Counsel for the Committee on

the Judiciary and Public Safety at the Council for the District of Columbia, Legal Intern at Legal Aid of North Carolina, and Legal Intern at Neighborhood Legal Services Program.

Melanie has extensive experience in communications, having served as the first-ever Director of Communications at the Future of Privacy Forum, Director of Policy and Communications at the American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia, and Advertising Coordinator at *The Washington Post*.

As a native of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Melanie has dedicated her career to serving the local community. She has a strong passion for criminal justice reform and believes that poverty, lack of education, and other social issues should not feed the pipeline to prison. Melanie serves on the Advisory Board of Free Minds Book Club and Writing Workshop, an organization that uses books, creative writing, and peer support to awaken DC youth incarcerated as adults to their own potential.

Melanie is a dedicated leader. She is a graduate of the New Leaders Council Institute's Washington, DC Chapter, District of Columbia Bar John Payton Leadership Academy, American Bar Association Bar Leadership Institute, and American Bar Association Collaborative Bar Leadership Academy. Melanie was the 2014-2015 President of the Greater Washington Area Chapter of the Women's Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC). Under her leadership, GWAC was awarded "Affiliate Chapter of the Year." Melanie currently serves on the Leadership Council of the American Bar Association Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice.

Melanie earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Hampton University. She earned a Juris Doctor from North Carolina Central University School of Law. Melanie is an alumna of Council on Legal Education Opportunity, Inc., a national organization that was founded in 1968 to advance diversity in the legal profession.

Melanie is a Women's Media Center SheSource Expert. She has been featured in several media outlets including WPGC 95.5 FM, FOX 5 DC, The Nation, Afro-American Newspapers, Rolling Out, D.C.ist, Twin Cities Daily Planet, and Montgomery Community Media.