

POLICY OF THE YEAR NOMINEE:

Suspending Suspension:
An Inclusive Disciplinary
Framework to Support
Student Learning



FOR EDUCATION 2015

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Who We Are

The Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network, the nation's largest student policy organization, engages young people in a unique form of civic participation that empowers them as leaders and promotes their ideas for change. Through coordination with political actors and community leaders, Network members design and implement solutions to the pressing issues facing their towns, counties, and states. Now boasting 120 chapters in 38 states with thousands of members, we're building a network of young people who are filling the ideas gap in communities across the country. In doing so, we're preparing a new generation of thinkers and policymakers to burst forth onto the nation's political stage.

What You're Holding

Now in its seventh year, the 10 Ideas series promotes the most promising student-generated ideas from across our network. This journal, which includes submissions from schools located from California to Georgia to New York, stands as a testament to the depth and breadth of our network of innovators.

Our 10 Ideas memos are selected for publication because they are smart, rigorously researched, and, most importantly, feasible. We want to see these ideas become a reality.

How You Can Join

As you explore these ideas, we encourage you to take special note of the "Next Steps" sections. Here, our authors have outlined how their ideas can move from the pages of this journal to implementation. We invite you to join our authors in the process. Contact us on our website or by tweeting with us @VivaRoosevelt using the hashtag #solve2015.

Thank you for reading and supporting student generated ideas. Together we will design the future of our communities, from towns to countries and all that lies in-between.

WELCOME!

Dear Readers,

Young people on college campuses are often asked to make phone calls, knock on doors, and campaign for existing agendas, but they're rarely asked about their own policy ideas. Since 2004, we have been working to change that norm. At its core, the Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network seeks to defy the public's expectations of young people in politics today.

Over the past 10 years, we have built an engaged, community-driven network of students who are committed to using policy to transform their cities and states now and build the foundation for a sustainable future. We believe that broader participation in the policy process will not only improve representation but produce more creative ideas with the potential for real impact.

In this year's 10 Ideas journal, we present some of most promising and innovative ideas from students in our network. With chapters on 120 campuses in 38 states, from Los Angeles, California, to Conway, Arkansas, to New York City, we have the potential to effect policy ideas that transcend the parameters of our current national debate. Our student authors push for practical, community-focused solutions, from using pavement to improve sanitation in Louisville, Kentucky, to creating community benefit agreements for

publicly funded stadiums in Lansing, Michigan, to building workforce development programs for agricultural literacy in Athens, Georgia.

Policy matters most when we take it beyond the page and bring it to the communities and institutions that can turn it into reality. Many of the students in this year's publication have committed to pressing for impact. They're connecting with decision-makers in city halls and state capitols, armed with the power of their own ideas.

The breadth and depth of our network is reflected in the diversity of the proposals featured in this journal. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much we did. The next generation of innovative minds and passionate advocates is here, and it's changing this country one idea at a time.

Sincerely,

Joelle Gamble
National Director
Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Margaret Sturtevant

author of Suspending Suspension: An Inclusive Disciplinary Framework to Support Student Learning

Nominee for Policy Of The Year

A jury of Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network members, staff, and alumni select one piece from each journal to nominate for the honor of Policy of the Year. We base our nominees off of the quality of idea, rigor of research and potential for implementation. The cover design of this journal portrays this year's nominee in visual form.

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Sensible School Start Times: An Inexpensive Policy for Achievement and Health

Nathaniel Bechhofer, George Mason University

Later school start times for students attending Fairfax County middle and high schools would enhance both academic performance and student health at costs lower than other policies with benefits of a similar magnitude.

Roughly half of U.S. middle schools start at or before 8:00 a.m., and fewer than 25 percent start at 8:30 a.m. or later; Fairfax County, Virginia high schools currently all start before 7:30 a.m. A 2006 National Sleep Foundation poll found that 59 percent of middle school students and 87 percent of U.S. high school students were

getting less than the recommended 8.5–9.5 hours of sleep on school nights, with an average of less than 7 hours for high school seniors.² Currently, economically disadvantaged students in Fairfax County high schools have significantly lower pass rates for statewide English assessments. The pass rate for English reading exams is 85 percent for disadvantaged students, compared to 94 percent for all students.³

Federal action for later start times was attempted in 1999 via the "Zs to As Act." In August 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy proposal urging middle schools and high schools to begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m.⁴ Although Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) approved a recommendation for starting high schools later (between 8 and 8:10

KEY FACTS

- Later start times provide achievement gains for the disadvantaged that are approximately twice as high as those they provide for middleclass students.8
- Start time delays have been shown to shift student bedtimes earlier, yielding benefits of significantly increased sleep.⁹
- Teens' biological clocks are shifted later, yet they must wake up early to attend school on time.

a.m.) beginning in the 2015–16 school year, this start time remains damaging to students' health and accomplishments.

FCPS should adopt recent recommendations by the AAP so that high schools begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. These guidelines should apply for students beginning high school in 2016, with all students covered by 2020. Simultaneously, student achievement metrics should be tracked to assess the Fairfax experience as a pilot program to scale up implementation in other school districts.

ANALYSIS

Typical estimates of the cost of transition find that it would cost roughly \$150 per student to provide the transportation necessary to start at 9:15 a.m.⁵ Aggregated over the 13 years a student is in the K–12 system, the total increase in transportation costs because of the increased number of required buses (as using buses multiple times a day would be less practical) would be \$1,950

TALKING POINTS

- School districts that have implemented later start times have lower rates of depression, higher rates of self-reported motivation,¹⁰ and higher attendance.¹¹
- Moving start times later has been shown to improve teenagers' mental and physical health, academic achievement, and motivation.
- The estimated benefit/cost ratio for starting school an hour later is 9:1, and that only counts the benefits of higher earnings from increased academic achievement.

over the student's school career. Moving start times one hour later for students would increase student achievement by roughly 0.175 standard deviations on average, with even larger benefits for disadvantaged students.⁶ This increased achievement translates to about \$17,500 in increased future earnings per student.⁷

Next Steps

Later start times should begin where implementation costs are lowest, and measures of student achievement should be gathered to assess the effects of later start times on accomplishment. To enhance potential gains, individual schools should be permitted to make start times as late as 9:15 a.m. The data gathered should then be used to help other school districts make more informed decisions about their start times for middle school and high school, with the possibility of statewide action.

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Discouraging Discriminatory College Admissions: The Case for Reporting Need-Sensitivity

Liam Grace-Flood, Wheaton College

To help applicants navigate the deceptive world of college admissions, the U.S. Department of Education College Scorecards should publish data on need-sensitive admissions.¹

Since 1975, the cost of college has tripled.² Because college is a much greater financial investment than ever before, prospective students and their families rely on college ranking sites to make sense of an otherwise confusing, yet crucial decision. In fact, colleges' performance on ranking sites is one of the biggest determinants of both the number and quality of their applicants. Because of this, colleges have a strong incentive to accept students who can afford to pay more so that the schools can invest the money from the students' tuition to improve their rankings.

While some colleges can afford to employ need-blind admissions and meet their students' "full demonstrated need," most cannot; they are left to either discriminate in their admissions so they can fully pay for their students or admit students regardless of their ability to pay. The latter practice empowers students to decide whether or not the cost of college is a worthy investment, as opposed to the former, more common policy of denying admissions to students perceived as unable to pay.

KEY FACTS

- Only 11 percent of U.S. students in the bottom income quartile earn Bachelor's degrees (versus 79 percent in the top income quartile),⁵ and the enrollment rate for low-income, academically qualified students fell from 54 percent to 40 percent from 1992 to 2004.⁶
- From 1992 to 2011, the typical amount of cumulative debt for students who borrowed doubled.
- Being on U.S. News' top 25 list leads to a college's number of applications rising between six and ten percent in the next year.⁷

Many colleges work hard to ensure equal access to education for particular minorities to support racial diversity metrics, but the greatest disparity in access to education remains between the rich and poor. Therefore, outreach to low-income students will be more effective than current campus policies attempting to increase racial diversity.

DOE scorecards should show colleges' need-sensitivity in order to help potential applicants see past the artificial inflation of financial aid metrics that some colleges have fostered. Such need-sensitive admissions will help them choose the best college for their particular financial situation. As it becomes clear how colleges really handle financial aid and students apply accordingly, colleges will have an incentive to transition away from discriminatory admissions practices.

TALKING POINTS

- The greatest inequality in who is able to attend college is not based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or religious faith, but on financial status.
- Many colleges employ discriminatory need-aware admissions, turning away lower-income students in favor of those they know will be able to pay, which artificially inflates the metrics representing how well they serve their students' financial needs.

ANALYSIS

College admissions and financial aid are two of the most intricately intertwined and complicated systems affecting America's youth. The DOE's scorecard site makes average cost, graduation rate, loan default rate, and median borrowing data available, and plans to expand those statistics in the future to include earnings of graduates.³ Including whether a college is need-sensitive will put those metrics into context, empowering low-income prospective students to apply to colleges that are more likely to serve their specific needs.

The DOE scorecards use data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, which already has the infrastructure in place to survey colleges. The cost of adding one binary question and publishing it alongside current metrics would be negligible.⁴

Other potential policies to encourage need-blind admissions, like federal mandates or tying federal aid money to performance, are much more expensive and overlook the fact that some colleges cannot afford to be need-blind. Rankings reform is the best place to start, since it is a soft but effective way of reforming college practices by better informing prospective students.

Next Steps

Including a single, effectively free, binary statistic in the still flexible and evolving DOE scorecard system should be easy. Hopefully this publication, coupled with specific outreach to the DOE College Affordability and Transparency Center, will be enough to convince them that this statistic's inclusion is valuable. Once published on one ranking site, the others, like *U.S. News, Forbes*, or the *Princeton Review*, will eagerly follow suit to keep pace.

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Increasing Awareness at Cornell: Diversity Courses as a Graduation Requirement

Stephanie Hahm, Cornell University

Cornell University should require undergraduates to take courses exploring ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender diversity. This requirement will engage students with conversations about diversity and prepare them for a multicultural society.

According to a survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities in 2000, 62 percent of colleges had a diversity course requirement in place or were in the implementation process.1 Fifteen vears later, this number has increased as schools have realized the importance of diversity education. Research and several testimonials. have shown the positive impact of this requirement. Assistant Professor Betsv Palmer from the University of Alabama found that "students are gaining content knowledge, developing more tolerant attitudes, and experiencing self-exploration as a result of their experiences in diversity-focused courses."² This finding echoes several other

KEY FACTS

- Only one of the seven colleges at Cornell has a diversity requirement.
- 62 percent of colleges and universities already implement a diversity course requirement.
- Diversity courses promote moral reasoning among students.

observations from other schools with similar requirements.

Currently, Cornell's seven colleges each have their own unique requirements. Because of this, there is a discrepancy between which courses students must take to earn degrees. Only one college has a diversity requirement. Cornell's principles include classical and contemporary inquiry, "thinking otherwise," student access, and public engagement. These values articulate the university's commitment to diversity, and its diversity requirement should be updated to reflect these ideals.³

All seven colleges should adopt the common goal of teaching students about relevant issues in U.S. society through a new two-course diversity requirement.

To avoid overwhelming students with requirements additional and prevent implementation costs, each college should graduation rearrange substitute its or requirements to accommodate this two-part diversity course series. Approved courses for this diversity requirement should span a range of topics. Any class that informs students about social, political, or economic diversity will work well. For example, Introductory Sociology, a required class for pre-med students, could count toward this new requirement.

TALKING POINTS

- Two diversity courses should be required for all Cornell undergraduates.
- Diversity courses challenge students to look at perspectives different from their own, promoting unity and respect among students.
- General education curricula can greatly improve intergroup relationships and campus climates.

ANALYSIS

Recently, Cornell's student body has reported microaggressions, racial attacks, social class conflicts, and other demographically based issues. Through resource centers and other programming, students have made efforts to educate their classmates about diversity awareness. However, these efforts are limited because of their decentralized structure. Without full backing from the institution through integration into an academic requirement, the aforementioned issues will persist.

Researchers have found that there were "statistically significant increases in student comfort levels, awareness of diversity, and understanding of diversity terms between the start of [a] Human Diversity course and the completion." Completing a course on diversity issues allows for intergroup dialogue and contributes to student awareness and conflict management.

UCLA Chancellor Gene Block stated, "There is value to an explicit class that deals with the multiple cultures in the United States... and

the conflicts."⁵ An increasing number of colleges and universities nationwide understand the importance of these classes and the power they have to shape student perspectives.

Cornell University should require two (instead of one) diversity courses because research shows that taking one diversity course does not improve understanding or appreciation of issues relating to diversity. Students who take two diversity courses learn to appreciate the similarities and differences among people much more.⁶

Next Steps

Key partners (including academic programs, resource centers, student organizations, and the Student Assembly) should collaborate to gauge interest in moving this idea forward. They could then create legislation detailing the specific course implementation plan, which would then be communicated to the student body through marketing initiatives (effective use of social media and club meetings, etc.). After gaining the necessary support, this coalition could present the legislation to the Student Assembly and, once it is passed, mobilize a group of students to contact the deans of each college to implement said legislation.

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Cognitive Enhancement Through Multilingualism: Empowering Students Through Elementary Dual-Language Immersion

Joshua Kemp, City College of New York

New York State should incentivize early foreign language instruction through a statewide dual-language immersion education program so that elementary students may receive the benefits multilingualism provides.

During FY 2008–09, only 11 states mandated foreign language study during grades K-12. By comparison, over 22 leading nations require the study of one to three foreign languages over the same time period.¹ This disparity is exemplified in New York State (NYS), where students are only required to study another language for two years during grades K–9.² This correlates with its status as 39th in U.S. high school state graduation rates.³

As the enrollment of U.S. students in foreign language courses falls, American performance in mathematics, reading, and science on globalized tests, such as the Program for International Student Assessment, lags behind the rest of the world. The economic impact of these poor performances over the past 15 years is estimated to have decreased U.S. GDP by as much as 5 percent.² Furthermore, students in countries where foreign language study is mandatory consistently score better in their native languages than students in the U.S.⁴

Utah addressed this in 2008 by establishing its own statewide elementary dual-language immersion (DLI) program.⁵ Utah's program dedicates half of the school day to

KEY FACTS

- The number of U.S. elementary schools offering foreign language instruction in 2008 was down to one-quarter from one-third 11 years earlier.¹⁸
- In 2012, the U.S. ranked 27th in math and 20th in science out of 34 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries.¹⁹
- Although enrollment in foreign language classes in America rose to 18.5 percent between 2004 and 2008,²⁰ the percentage of European students learning a foreign language from 2005–2010 rose to 79.2 percent.²¹

instruction in English. This allows for double the number of students to participate for each target language teacher and requires fewer language teachers overall than competing programs.⁶ Evaluative Utah reports concluded that DLI students are more likely to read on grade level and achieve English-language and mathematical proficiency, and are less likely to be truant.

NYS should promote early foreign language education by incentivizing school districts to implement elementary DLI programs. Participating schools would still offer English-only programs for uninterested families and would be provided with DLI curricula, professional development programs, and assistance in recruiting and training immersion teachers. DLI students would be obligated to learn the same content as non-DLI students and meet the same standardized testing requirements.

ANALYSIS

Studies link language learning to prepubescent brain development known as the critical period of language acquisition.⁷ Early bilinguals typically have more control in executive function tasks,⁸ a higher cognitive reserve at older ages,⁹ enhanced memory,¹⁰ faster reading comprehension,¹¹ higher math scores,¹² and easier acquisition of a third language.¹³

A NYS incentive-based elementary DLI program is fiscally feasible, costing only \$100 per student per year.14 Utah began its first year by allocating \$270,000, but demand was so high Utah now allocates \$2 million annually - only 0.05 percent of its FY 2014 Public Education budget.¹⁵ NYS could allocate more than 0.05 percent of its School Aid budget to address predicted demand. This funding would stem from NYS School Aid money already allocated for the reimbursement of bilingual education expenses, supplemented by federal education funding. 16 Utah's precedent means that NYS could apply for Language Flagship and STARTALK funding.17

TALKING POINTS

- Many schools are cutting funding to foreign language programs due to recession-based budget cuts and the No Child Left Behind Act's emphasis on math, science, and English.²²
- A DLI program would address a fundamental disparity in the NYS education system by providing early foreign language education during the critical period for language acquisition before puberty.²³

Next Steps

An advocacy team composed of representatives such as Utah's DLI program's Gregg Roberts, NYS foreign language teachers, union representatives, and a pediatric neurologist invested in this policy must first present the proposal to schools to galvanize interest and support statewide. The proposal would be presented to Governor Cuomo's office. Cuomo's previous efforts in evaluating the efficacy of New York's educational system through the NY Education Reform Commission perfectly align with the benefits of a statewide DLI program. Cuomo would present the proposal to the NYS Department of Education in order to allocate FY 2015 School Aid toward a pilot DLI program.

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Alleviating Public School Finance Inequities: Funding According to Student Characteristics

Christine Kil, University of Georgia

Georgia should implement student-based budgeting based on student characteristics to ensure equitable, fully funded education.

Funding the U.S. public school system based on local property taxes fuels disparities in school resources between affluent and lowincome communities, as the ability to raise local revenue and funding varies greatly between districts. The current property tax system to determine school funding, paired with Georgia's recent legislative failure to fully fund the required district-based amounts according to the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula, has resulted in a shortage of resources for all 180 school districts especially those that are low-income. The QBE formula was originally designed to be equitable and student-based, but the amount of funding it recommends for Georgia has not been fully met or adjusted for inflation since 2009.

This underfunding makes it difficult for school districts to finance their educational services. Since 2009, the majority of Georgia's school districts have not been able to fulfill the entire 180-day calendar. Underfunding has led to layoffs of nearly 9,000 teachers and the restriction of art and music classes. Georgia is currently ranked fourth in the

KEY FACTS

- In McDaniel v. Thomas (1981), the Georgia Supreme Court decided that the state constitution does not necessitate equitable school funding.8
- Tighter budgets translate into fewer assistant principals, nurses, and counselors. The lack of adult figures in schools —especially in impoverished areas—leads to challenging disciplinary issues.9
- Georgia counties currently receive an average of 40.73 percent of school funding from local revenue, 51.09 percent from state revenue, and 8.18 percent from federal funding.¹⁰

nation among schools with the lowest high school graduation rates. In 2013, the state's average for high school graduation rates was 71.5 percent, while the graduation rate for low-income students was 63.4 percent.¹

The Georgia Legislature should supplement the state budget using higher taxes and switch to student-based budgeting (SBB). Schools using SBB receive an equal base amount per pupil, with different bases adjusted to each grade level. This will then be supplemented for students with needs who require special services, determined by factors like socioeconomic background and disability status.² Instead of calculating funding needs based on hiring and resource costs (which is the state's current system), this plan would directly fund students' needs.³

ANALYSIS

Georgia's State Education Finance Study Commission has already put forward SBB

proposals in its recommendations to the governor since 2012. A fully funded SBB formula ensures equitable allocations across affluent and low-income school districts. Full financial support enables schools to restore extra-curricular classes, update technology, and provide more personnel, such as school psychologists and nurses. If the 2014–15 budget is distributed equitably by the legislature, each district should receive an average of \$439 more per pupil.⁴

The most measurable link between investment in education and economic growth is high school graduation rates. In 2010, approximately 61,000 Georgia seniors dropped out. If 30,000 of these dropouts had graduated, the state would have seen increases of approximately \$242 million in earnings, \$475 million in home sales, \$350 million in gross state product, \$18 million in state tax

TALKING POINTS

- Local revenue supplements and more robust funding will ensure that a community's educational investments break the cycle of income inequality.
- •• Communities that hone the quality of their educational services and increase the social mobility of their residents through education become more attractive to businesses.
- The student-based budgeting funding system is transparent and ensures funding equity for students.

revenue, and the potential to support 2,650 new jobs.⁵ Investment in education will provide communities with highly capable workers equipped with skills honed from quality high schools and colleges. Secure sources of employment will lead to increases in tax revenue, stimulating a healthy cycle of high state revenue and full funding for education.

Next Steps

Policymakers appointed by the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) should start by deciding the base allocation for each grade level, and determine the allocations for each student need category. They can use the QBE formula's 19 weights as a starting point, which prioritizes high-need students. The DOE and the governor's budget team can consider "small district grants" for schools enrolling low numbers of students to balance operating expenses.⁶ The state should then impose higher taxes on luxury items, with each dollar gained used to fund education. Once the system is successfully switched, policymakers and experts can combine or revise specific categories and weights based on student characteristics.⁷

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Closing the Achievement Gap: Elementary Second Language Education in Philadelphia Schools

Laura Pontari, University of Georgia

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) should create a partnership between Philadelphia public universities and the School District of Philadelphia to provide second language education for elementary school students.

The School District of Philadelphia (SDP) is the eighth largest school district in America, with close to 200,000 students.¹ The SDP serves a Latino population that grew 46 percent in the past 10 years and now represents 12.3 percent of the city's total population.² Moreover, 44 percent of Philadelphia's Latino population lives in poverty, a rate almost 18 percent higher than the city average.³

Despite the new educational needs of Philadelphia's changing demographic, the SDP is severely underfinanced, and would need to increase its budget by \$770 million to meet the statewide standard for adequate education.⁴ To address its diverse population with sensitivity to district financial constraints, the SDP should use elementary second language education to improve the quality of education its

KEY FACTS

- Latino students are at a disproportionately high risk of dropping out in the SDP.¹⁵
- Second language knowledge improves standardized test scores such as the SATs, as well as state-issued standardized tests.¹⁶
- The theory of the critical period of language acquisition states that between childhood and puberty a person can acquire language to a level most similar to that of a native speaker.¹⁷

students receive. Second language education has been shown to improve standardized test scores and overall graduation rates by improving students' overall brain function.⁵

The PDE should facilitate a partnership between the SDP and local public universities in Philadelphia to offer qualified college students as assistant teachers for second language education programs in SDP. To address the needs of the rapidly increasing Latino population, the program would provide second language instruction in Spanish to elementary students from kindergarten through third grade. This program would give college students in local education programs practical experience and expose elementary students to Spanish vocabulary and basic grammar, creating a foundation for later fluency.

ANALYSIS

This policy would directly affect Latino students, who are at the highest risk of dropping out in the SDP.6 While all students benefit from second language show that children education, studies from minority backgrounds demonstrate the greatest proportionate increase achievement.7 Moreover, bilingual education provides students with improved problemsolving skills that better prepare them for standardized testing.8 The implementation of an elementary bilingual education program in nearby Englewood, New Jersey was associated with a 15 percent increase in proficient student standardized test scores.9

TALKING POINTS

- Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language in the U.S., with numbers of Spanish speakers on the rise.¹⁸
- Bilingual education programs have seen significant success across the country, most notably in the New Jersey public school system.¹⁹
- A partnership between local universities and the SDP offers university students practical teaching experience while providing a program that would otherwise not be feasible under the current SDP budget.²⁰

This program provides greater opportunity for Latino parental involvement and inclusion through an accessible and culturally relevant curriculum.¹⁰ Research shows that parental involvement is linked to a child's academic success, and this program reduces some of the unique barriers to engagement Latino parents face with their children's education.¹¹

Furthermore, a partnership between the SDP and local universities establishes a mutually beneficial relationship. Qualified university students interested in education can gain relevant, practical work experience by providing SDP elementary schools with the necessary human capital to implement a program that would otherwise not be feasible under current budget constraints.¹²

Next Steps

college would be responsible for developing a curriculum Spanish and a required background check. Temple University Temple's location in North Philadelphia, one of the SDP's

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Project-Based Learning in Philadelphia

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The Philadelphia School District should switch from a traditional, test-based learning model to a project-based learning model to better educate students.

Struggling to provide an adequate education to its students, the Philadelphia School District (PSD) has required state corrective action (e.g. school dissolution. takeovers, and funding restrictions) for 10 consecutive years.1 Federal funding has diminished, state funding has decreased, and pension and health care costs have risen.2 The PSD faces an annual budget deficit and steadily rising student-to-teacher ratios. Despite gubernatorial promises to increase state funding by as much as 50 percent, overall funding is not expected to reach federal stimulus package levels due to political opposition.3 Furthermore, the PSD employs test-based learning methods for student evaluation, which are no longer appropriate for the PSD. One PSD school, the Science Leadership Academy (SLA), uses a project-based learning (PBL) model and recently made the U.S. News & World Report's "Best High Schools" list.4

KEY FACTS

- PBL programs boost test scores for many cultural and demographic groups within the U.S.
- More than 80 percent of SLA students are proficient or advanced in reading and mathematics.¹⁶ Less than half of Pennsylvanian students passed state tests in those areas.¹⁷
- Students and teachers report higher satisfaction levels with PBL programs when compared with traditional learning programs.¹⁸

Rather than relying on tests to assess acquired knowledge, PBL should assess students through the use of targeted projects that facilitate learning new concepts and information. Projects should expose students to a wide range of disciplinary frameworks, meet state education goals, and provide real world skills. Projects should include both group and individual components to maintain individual accountability.⁵ Ensuring individual accountability is a key

component of PBL. Examples of projects include "Census at School," which develops statistical analysis skills; "Crossing the Border into...," which teaches marketing and communication skills; and "El Misterio de los Mayas," which examines the rise and fall of civilizations.⁶

ANALYSIS

Perennial low scores without significant improvement in the PSD have resulted in penalties ranging from funding cuts to school dissolution. Rather than constantly restructuring schools, the PSD should seek test score gains by switching to PBL.

TALKING POINTS

- PBL fosters critical thinking and selfdirected learning skills, not just testtaking abilities.¹⁹
- The SLA has proven that PBL can be successful in public schools, providing the PSD with a foundational model for a curriculum shift.

In Iowa, for example, a switch to PBL in Iow-performing areas boosted school test scores in reading by between 15 percent and 90 percent.⁷ A Boston public school, which served predominantly minority students, placed eleventh in mathematics and seventeenth in reading out of seventy-six public schools over a six-year period after a similar switch.⁸ Results in Maine suggest that score increases are lasting and that results are not exclusive to mathematics and science.⁹ PBL participants had greater self-confidence in skills outside the classroom such as self-directed learning, problem solving, and research.¹⁰ PBL participants also reported higher levels of learning and teaching satisfaction.¹¹

Next Steps

The School Reform Commission (SRC) of Philadelphia should problems, structured group work, multi-faceted assessments, funding for implementation, the SRC should apply for grants

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Promoting Success for English Learners: Dual-Language Immersion in Georgia

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Georgia should subsidize the implementation of magnet dual-language immersion programs in public schools to support the academic achievement of English learners.

In the last two decades, Georgia experienced unprecedented growth in immigration rates. The resultant enrollment rate of English learners (ELs) in Georgia public schools has increased by 400 percent, with nearly 90,000 new ELs enrolling annually.¹ ELs are severely academically disadvantaged because Georgia schools do not adequately support their English acquisition needs.² For example, high school ELs have lower Endof-Course-Test passing rates in all 10 tested subjects compared to their non-EL peers.³ Additionally, only 44 percent of Georgia's ELs graduate high school in four years — a rate 26 percent below the state average.⁴

Georgia currently utilizes a "pull-out" model, in which EL students are removed from traditional academic courses for a class period to be instructed in English.⁵ This places an undue burden on ELs who

KEY FACTS

- Only 44 percent of Georgia's ELs graduate high school in four years, a rate 26 percent below the state average.²¹
- 75 percent of high school ELs test below grade level in reading, compared to 25 percent of native English speakers.²²
- ELs in Georgia have lower End-of-Course-Test passing rates in all 10 tested subjects compared to their native Englishspeaking peers.²³

face the pressure of learning English while simultaneously fulfilling complex high school graduation requirements.⁶ Because they lack English proficiency, ELs often cannot enroll in courses they need to graduate.⁷ This is discouraging and furthers the tendency of English learners to become high school dropouts.⁸

To improve English proficiency rates and educational outcomes of ELs, Georgia should subsidize the implementation of dual-language immersion magnet programs in public schools.

These magnet programs would span from elementary to high school, focusing on attracting both EL and native English-speaking applicants. To provide this diverse student body with a strong foundation in both English and Spanish, elementary schools should utilize a 50/50 immersion model, in which students are instructed for half the day in Spanish and half the day in English.⁹ In middle and high school, specific academic subject areas should be offered in Spanish, with Advanced Placement courses in Spanish language and literature being offered as well.¹⁰

ANALYSIS

Empirical evidence demonstrates that dual-language immersion is more effective at educating ELs than the traditional "pull-out" method.¹¹ Two decades of research from 23 school districts in 15 states (throughout urban, suburban, and rural settings) shows that the benefits of dual-language immersion can be generalized across various contexts.¹² For example, only four years after two Maine school districts implemented dual-language immersion programs, former ELs who previously achieved at the 31st percentile reached the 72nd.¹³ Research suggests that

TALKING POINTS

- Empirical evidence from 15 states demonstrates that dual-language immersion is a more effective model of EL English education than the traditional "pull-out" model.²⁴
- The length of time spent in a duallanguage immersion program positively correlates with overall student academic performance for ELs as well as native English speakers.²⁵
- After startup costs, research shows that maintaining a duallanguage immersion program does not cost more than maintaining its traditional counterpart.²⁶

this success is largely because ELs are taught in both English and their native language, and are less likely to fall behind in school if their English proficiency is lacking.¹⁴

After the initial investments in purchasing resources (like non-English textbooks and the hiring of dual-language certified teachers), studies show that it does not cost more for a school to maintain a dual-language immersion program than to maintain its traditional counterpart. The benefits of dual-language immersion largely outweigh the costs, since English learners face better academic outcomes and both ELs and native English speakers become bilingually literate. 16

Next Steps

The Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) announced six elementary schools starting in the 2013-2014 school year.¹⁷ The GADOE needs to support the large-scale creation of these

continues, the program will expand every year until grade 12.

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Suspending Suspension: An Inclusive Disciplinary Framework to Support Student Learning

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To address the negative consequences of suspension, New London Public Schools should replace exclusionary disciplinary policies with an inclusive disciplinary framework.

Nationally, over 3 million children received in- or out-of-school suspensions in the 2009-2010 academic year. In Connecticut, the New London Public School (NLPS) district has the fifth highest suspension and expulsion rates for middle school and thirteenth for high school.² Incidents of suspension are associated with higher school dropout rates and an increased percentage of students in the school-to-prison pipeline.3 Such practices disproportionately affect males. and Latino students, and those who have disabilities.4 To address the negative effects of suspension and its disparate use on select groups of students, the NLPS should use its funding from the Federal Project Prevent Grant to eliminate current exclusionary methods in favor of inclusive disciplinary practices.

The NLPS should: (1) develop a peer council in consultation with teachers and school administrators to develop individualized plans for students' return to the classroom after non-violent school policy violations; (2) mandate that teachers receive inclusive classroom management training, while (3)

KEY FACTS

- In the 2009–2010, over 3 million students nationwide lost instructional time due to suspension.¹²
- 60–65 percent of suspensions in NLPS were due to nonviolent school policy violations.¹³
- In 2010, 17 percent of Black students were suspended, as compared to only 5 percent of white students, and special education students were suspended twice as often as their peers without special education needs.¹⁴
- The School-Wide Information System (SWIS) allows educators to review all disciplinary data for a district, compare schools, and monitor individual students. The software is available through a nonprofit organization for only \$500 a year.¹⁵

requiring that special education students face a manifestation hearing to determine if student misbehavior was disability-related in all suspension or expulsion cases; (4) shorten the maximum length of suspension from 10 to five days; and (5) adopt a School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to identify school discipline trends and develop more effective disciplinary strategies.

ANALYSIS

While inclusive disciplinary practices are successfully used in many Connecticut public schools, no district applies these five policies together; thus, they fail to systematically address factors contributing to suspension.⁵ Applying these policies comprehensively tackles suspension at the classroom, school, and district levels and will better support the 2,900 NLPS students.

TALKING POINTS

- Suspension hurts both a student's development and learning.¹⁶
- By definition, school policy violations are non-violent infractions and should be treated as teachable moments, not reasons for suspension.
- Some Connecticut schools have used inclusive strategies with success, but none have used all of the components of this framework.¹⁷

At the classroom level, teacher referrals are one of the leading factors associated with high rates of suspension.⁶ Alternatively, using inclusive management practices to develop teacher-student relationships are associated with improved learning outcomes and more instructional time for at-risk students.7 At the school level, 60-65 percent of NLPS's suspensions are for minor school policy violations (defined as disrespect, tardiness, and dress code violations).8 Peer mediation brings students back into the classroom, turning punitive policies into teachable moments. Additionally, manifestation hearings address disproportionate suspension rates for special education students and accommodate each student's individualized education plan. Lastly, adjusting district-level policies to reduce the maximum length of suspension mitigates the negative impact of time away from school.9 To measure and respond to these policy changes at the classroom, school, and district levels, SWIS should be used to monitor disciplinary trends. 10 All associated costs can be financed through the district's Project Prevent Grant for school climate.11

Next Steps

to the New London Board of Education. Pending approval by the board, a district committee would be responsible for creating leaders. Finally, NLPS could serve as a pilot to determine the discipline at the classroom, school, and district levels.

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Reviving Our Roots: Reconnecting Teens to Agriculture

Elizabeth Wilkes, University of Georgia

The American farmer is growing older, the American agricultural system is unsustainable, and the American teenager is not interested in farming. High schools at the rural—urban interface should implement farmer development programs to address these nationwide issues while strengthening communities.

The Green Revolution of the 1940s–1960s focused U.S. agriculture on increasing yields by any means and technology necessary. Its legacy has encouraged farms to increasingly industrialize and consolidate, and it starkly disconnects farmers from consumers. Consolidation of farms means fewer large farms account for the majority of agricultural acreage, both a cause and consequence of fewer new farmers.¹

America's largely urban youth grow up with no cultural attachment to farming, are agriculturally illiterate, and maintain misconceptions about agriculture.² This coincides with the urbanization of America, as 80.7 percent of the U.S. population currently lives in urbanized areas.³

The Rural-Urban Interface (RUI) is a confluence of ideas, people, and spaces, making it economically and geographically significant. Schools at the RUI should utilize it to restore intergenerational relationships, encourage teens to economically pursue agriculture, and foster potential for more sustainable forms of agriculture.

KEY FACTS

- The average age of the American farmer is currently 58 years old and continues to rise, and a quarter of today's farmers will retire by 2030.¹¹
- People are abandoning rural areas for expanding metropolitan areas: 113 non-metro counties (accounting for roughly 5.9 million people) switched to metro between 2000 and 2010 in the United States.¹²
- Farms at the RUI can generate livelihoods and income for a variety of regional stakeholders.¹³ Proximity to dense population centers presents market potential.¹⁴

High schools in the Atlanta Rural-Urban Interface should implement young farmer programs, providing development educational and apprenticeship opportunities. Students would learn about local agriculture, develop skills to grow food, and sell produce at local markets. Interactions with and lessons from local farmers and businesspeople will enhance students' business savvy and farming knowledge while providing academic credit. Students will see how farming is interconnected, relating to practicable science, sustainability. environmental community building, and much more.

ANALYSIS

Studies suggest that developing policy to support agriculture at the RUI is warranted, and the "metropolitan farmer" is an increasing reality.⁴ A survey conducted by

TALKING POINTS

- Development programs would address agricultural illiteracy and provide students with the skills to join an evolving agricultural sector.
- Building sustainable regional food systems that exhibit environmental, social, health, and economic benefits can only begin with a new generation of farmers.

local partnerships as the two most important factors that lead young farmers to join and continue the farming profession.⁵

The USDA recognizes the need to invest in new farmers. The Food,

the National Young Farmer's Coalition identified apprenticeships and

Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 designated loans specifically for beginning farmers, and the 2014 Farm Bill will directly invest \$444 million to beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers over a 10-year period.⁶ These policies provide funding but fail to highlight the viability of farming as a career option for young people.

The USDA must recognize that farmers are motivated by social and cultural values, not singularly economic motivations.⁷ Such values are rooted in human relationships, which this policy fosters across geographical, generational, and economic gaps.

Historically, farms have passed down through families. Yet, concurrent push-pull forces of rural flight and urbanization leave farmers without heirs, which in turn decreases farmers' emphasis on productivity. Interactions between first generation and multi-generation farmers would facilitate connections for future succession plans and transfer of knowledge that might otherwise be lost.

A model Young Urban Farmer development program in Athens, GA demonstrates this potential; its students consistently start their own businesses, work for partnering nonprofits, and choose to pursue agriculture and nutrition-related disciplines in college.

Next Steps

This idea would be directed to the Atlanta Local Food Initiative policy could become its future priority.

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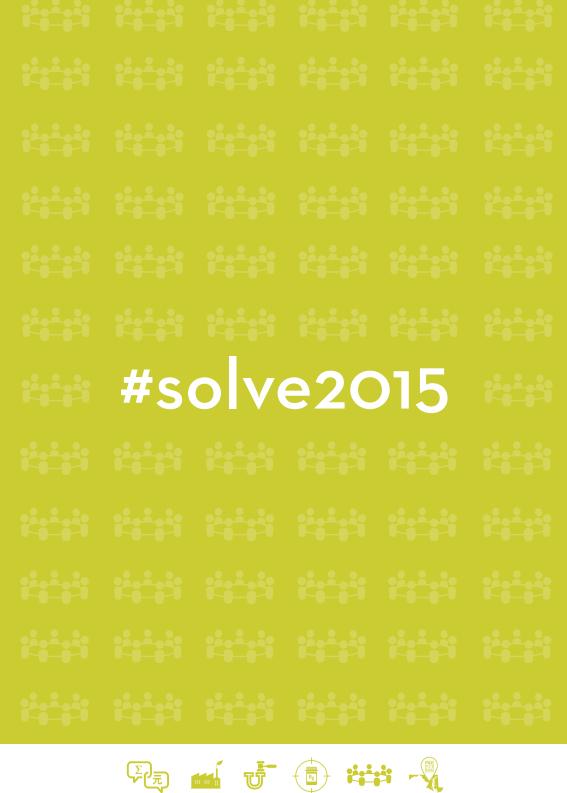
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POLICY OF THE YEAR NOMINEE:

No Impact Workforce:
Implementing
Environmental
Training Programs



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Who We Are

The Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network, the nation's largest student policy organization, engages young people in a unique form of civic participation that empowers them as leaders and promotes their ideas for change. Through coordination with political actors and community leaders, Network members design and implement solutions to the pressing issues facing their towns, counties, and states. Now boasting 120 chapters in 38 states with thousands of members, we're building a network of young people who are filling the ideas gap in communities across the country. In doing so, we're preparing a new generation of thinkers and policymakers to burst forth onto the nation's political stage.

What You're Holding

Now in its seventh year, the 10 Ideas series promotes the most promising student-generated ideas from across our network. This journal, which includes submissions from schools located from California to Georgia to New York, stands as a testament to the depth and breadth of our network of innovators.

Our 10 Ideas memos are selected for publication because they are smart, rigorously researched, and, most importantly, feasible. We want to see these ideas become a reality.

How You Can Join

As you explore these ideas, we encourage you to take special note of the "Next Steps" sections. Here, our authors have outlined how their ideas can move from the pages of this journal to implementation. We invite you to join our authors in the process. Contact us on our website or by tweeting with us @VivaRoosevelt using the hashtag #solve2015.

Thank you for reading and supporting student generated ideas. Together we will design the future of our communities, from towns to countries and all that lies in-between.

WELCOME!

Dear Readers,

Young people on college campuses are often asked to make phone calls, knock on doors, and campaign for existing agendas, but they're rarely asked about their own policy ideas. Since 2004, we have been working to change that norm. At its core, the Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network seeks to defy the public's expectations of young people in politics today.

Over the past 10 years, we have built an engaged, community-driven network of students who are committed to using policy to transform their cities and states now and build the foundation for a sustainable future. We believe that broader participation in the policy process will not only improve representation but produce more creative ideas with the potential for real impact.

In this year's 10 Ideas journal, we present some of most promising and innovative ideas from students in our network. With chapters on 120 campuses in 38 states, from Los Angeles, California, to Conway, Arkansas, to New York City, we have the potential to effect policy ideas that transcend the parameters of our current national debate. Our student authors push for practical, community-focused solutions, from using pavement to improve sanitation in Louisville, Kentucky, to creating community benefit agreements for

publicly funded stadiums in Lansing, Michigan, to building workforce development programs for agricultural literacy in Athens, Georgia.

Policy matters most when we take it beyond the page and bring it to the communities and institutions that can turn it into reality. Many of the students in this year's publication have committed to pressing for impact. They're connecting with decision-makers in city halls and state capitols, armed with the power of their own ideas.

The breadth and depth of our network is reflected in the diversity of the proposals featured in this journal. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much we did. The next generation of innovative minds and passionate advocates is here, and it's changing this country one idea at a time.

Sincerely,

Joelle Gamble
National Director
Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Caroline Coccoli and Victoria Nelson

authors of No Impact Workforce: Implementing Environmental Training Programs

Nominee for Policy Of The Year

A jury of Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network members, staff, and alumni select one piece from each journal to nominate for the honor of Policy of the Year. We base our nominees off of the quality of idea, rigor of research and potential for implementation. The cover design of this journal portrays this year's nominee in visual form.

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Closing Orphaned Wells: Preventing Spills When Oil Companies Go Bankrupt

Liam Berigan, Cornell University

By asking oil well operators to pay an annual financial security fee for each of their oil wells and refunding these payments when wells are plugged, Louisiana state regulators can ensure that wells are safely closed if their operators go bankrupt.

Oil drilling has massive upfront costs and generates revenue gradually and variably for several decades after wells are completed. Slow investment return means many small oil companies that drill

in the United States are heavily in debt and often go bankrupt.¹ When drillers declare bankruptcy, their wells become "orphans," whose plugging becomes the responsibility of state governments. Orphaned wells waiting to be plugged are often responsible for dangerous chemical leaks,² and can pose safety hazards to boats.³ In addition, unplugged oil wells will continue to emit methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, for as long as they remain open.⁴ Together, these risks pose a significant hazard to Louisiana's unique coastal and inland ecosystems.

There are more than 2,800 orphaned wells that are under the purview of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), many of which have been left open for decades. According to a report released by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor last May, there is insufficient funding for plugging these wells.⁵ The number of orphaned oil

- More than
 2,800 wells have
 been orphaned in
 Louisiana and remain
 unplugged.9
- Due to limited funding, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources was only able to plug 95 of these wells last year, while many more were orphaned.¹⁰
- Government watchdog groups estimate that the financial security requirements in Louisiana cover only one-seventh of the actual cost of plugging an onshore oil well.¹¹

wells in Louisiana will only continue to grow, making this problem harder to solve as the years go by.

Oil well operators should pay an annual fee to support financial security accounts for their wells that are currently used for production. If the well is properly plugged at the end of its use, then the operator who plugged the well would receive a reimbursement commensurate with the total amount paid for financial security over the well's lifetime. If the operator goes bankrupt, however, this money would be used to fund the well's closure.

ANALYSIS

Although Louisiana does ask well operators to pay some financial security before they drill a well, current fees only reflect a fraction of the actual cost of plugging a well.⁶ Although

the Louisiana Legislative Auditor suggests raising the upfront financial security to cover these costs, this solution may drive small oil operators to borrow more money and drive themselves further into debt.

Regulators should raise the financial security requirements for wells, but instead of asking that this money is paid upfront, oil companies should pay their financial security using a "pay as you go" method, where the oil company pays financial security as the well produces. This would allow oil companies to pay for the financial security cost using profits from the producing well, and avoid having to take out additional loans to pay for the increased financial security.

The oil industry would likely be willing to negotiate with state regulators. Several industry groups, including the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association and the Petroleum Association of Wyoming, have stated their willingness to pay larger fees and

TALKING POINTS

- Orphaned oil wells leak methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, and can potentially cause hazardous oil leaks.
- This policy would be a more politically feasible way to fulfill the recommendations of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor.
- This strategy is already being used by companies such as Powder River Energy, who put aside a few cents per gallon of oil they produce to use to plug their wells.

bonds to protect wells from being orphaned.^{7,8} This solution would allow the Louisiana DNR to plug any new wells that are orphaned in the state, while keeping the costs on industry low enough that the solution would be politically viable.

Next Steps

Stakeholders should begin to lobby for this policy by gathering support from industry groups that want to make the drilling process more environmentally safe. Local environmental groups, such as the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, could help by lobbying for politicians to pass this legislation.

Although Louisiana is one of the states with the worst orphaned well problems, it is not the only one. States like Ohio, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania could use similar legislation to plug their hundreds of orphaned oil wells, and slightly improve the environmental safety of oil and gas drilling.

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Seed Banking for Urban Farming in Washington, D.C.

Daniel Blumin and Jacob Burman, George Washington University

By providing locally sourced seeds to support urban agriculture, the D.C. municipal government can reduce carbon emissions from food transportation and processing while **KEY FACTS** addressing food desert problems

Urban agriculture is an important solution to addressing the environmental impacts of food deserts in urban communities. Food deserts impact D.C. residents afflicted by poor health and living in low-income wards (specifically wards 4, 7, and 8).1 Residents of these wards often sustain their families with processed foods from corner stores. The federal government has attempted to tackle this issue by providing funding through the Healthy Food Financing Initiative program, which provides \$500 million in tax credits to eliminate food deserts, as well as increasing funding to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.² However, the inaccessibility of fresh produce markets, especially those that accept food stamps, has led to inefficiency in both policies.3 Congress and local governments have accepted USDA reports on the dangers of carbon emissions and food deserts but have not responded effectively.4 This policy seeks to reduce carbon emissions from food transportation and processing, mitigate food deserts in low-income communities, and improve

affecting low-income communities.

- Million Trees LA is a Los Angeles-wide initiative launched in 2006 to plant fruit trees in urban neighborhoods to reduce carbon output and provide access to healthy food. As of 2013, it has planted 407,000 trees with beneficial community impact.9
- Aggregate transportation in the food industry accounts for 17 percent of all carbon emissions in the U.S. food sector; plant-based foods, however, have relatively low production emissions.10
- D.C. has a food store for every 1,589 residents, but in wards 7 and 8, the ratio is one for every 2,585 residents. Of the 30 D.C. farmers markets, only three exist east of the Anacostia River.11

community health through urban agriculture initiatives.

The D.C. municipal government should identify produce that can be locally and sustainably grown. The identified plants' seeds should be available to the community to encourage urban agriculture in underserved neighborhoods. These seeds should be distributed community from anchors including schools and community centers. To acquire these seeds, the city government should create a seed bank in partnership with existing community gardens as well as seek private partnerships to encourage continuing urban agriculture development in low-income wards of D.C.

ANALYSIS

This policy seeks to support the development of urban agriculture in low-income communities in D.C. in two ways. First, this policy would address urban agriculture start-up and maintenance costs. Urban farms often incur costs of up to \$10,000 for purchasing seed, fertilizer, and more. While these costs can be mitigated by tax benefits such as donating food to local shelters (which

TALKING POINTS

- D.C. incurs an elevated carbon footprint due to high dependence on and transport of processed foods. Low-income wards are subject to a lack of fresh produce; therefore, they buy processed products.¹²
- There has been precedent for similar programs such as Los Angeles's Million Trees Campaign, which led to increases in overall community health.
- A seed bank operating in conjunction with local anchor institutions would allow for residents of low-income wards to grow their own healthy produce at low cost.

gives farmers a 50 percent produce value tax-break), they first require a yield of excess produce for benefits to be realized.⁶ Providing seeds increases publicity for urban farming and addresses many issues that disproportionately affect low-income wards.⁷ Secondly, by identifying specific local produce that can be sustainably grown, the government can encourage efficiency in urban agriculture. Leafy green vegetables are an example of produce that requires minimal amounts of water to be grown while providing nutritious and cheap options for low-income families.⁸

Next Steps

There are three steps D.C. needs to take to move forward on encouraging urban agriculture. First is to pass the D.C. Urban Farming and Food Security Act, which is under consideration by the D.C. City Council. This act would establish a definition for urban farming and provide tax relief for donated produce and landowners who lease their properties for urban farming. Second, the city needs to identify urban agriculture locations to better work with urban farmers on sustainable initiatives and community education. Third, the city needs to work with local farmers to identify resource-efficient plants. Once determined, the city should collaborate with farmers and agriculture companies to begin to establish a collection of these seeds to encourage the overall growth of urban agriculture in D.C.

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Invest in the Future, Not Fossil Fuels

Elizabeth Chi, Cornell University

Fossil fuel combustion is the primary culprit in driving global climate change. Cornell University, a pioneer institution in renewable energy research and application, should stop investing in fossil fuels.

Claiming financial stability as its primary concern, the Cornell University Assembly, a governing body of university students, faculty, and employees, voted against fossil fuel divestment, which calls for removing Cornell's remaining fossil fuel investments from its endowment's portfolio. Cornell has already divested from coal and committed to carbon neutrality by 2035, but that is not enough.^{1,7}

Oil and gas combustion releases carbon compounds into the atmosphere, causing broad climate changes. Continuing to invest in fossil fuels contributes to extreme weather, sea level rise, and polar ice and glacial thawing; it condones the resulting pest and disease proliferation and new mass extinction, profiting at the expense of global economies, health, and food security.

Moreover, even the Rockefeller Brothers Fund is divesting \$56 billion from fossil fuels. According to Stephen Heinz, its president, "if [John D. Rockefeller] were alive today, as an astute businessman looking out to the future, he would be moving out of fossil fuels and investing in clean, renewable energy."2 Sustainable investments are unlikely to jeopardize Cornell's \$5 billion endowment³ and will be profitable in the long run. Cornell also has an obligation to use its endowment for the benefit of its students. Since investing in fossil fuels supports an unsustainable future, asking the university to sell those stocks by 2035 is not only reasonable but also necessary.

- Cornell plans to reach carbon neutrality by 2035.⁷
- Contrary to the U.S. Senate Resolution on the Schatz Amendment to the Keystone Pipeline, fossil fuel combustion is largely responsible for the unprecedented rapid rise in atmospheric CO².9
- Oil and gas supplies are predicted to run out in 53 and 55 years, respectively. 10,111

Investing in fossil fuels contradicts Cornell's vision and commitment to sustainability, ⁴ and numerous colleges have already committed to complete fossil fuel divestment. Stanford drew media attention to the divestment movement by divesting from coal. Cornell could lead the charge to a clean energy future by becoming the first globally acclaimed university to sever ties with oil, gas, and coal.

Cornell University should divest from any remaining public stocks in major fossil fuel companies by 2025, and the less liquid private stocks by 2035. Alternative investments include rapidly growing Sustainable, Responsible, and Impact investing (SRI).⁵

ANALYSIS

Historically, Cornell has actively responded to student pressure to abstain from unethical investments. It divested from businesses benefitting from apartheid in South Africa, which helped lead to federal legislation to end apartheid. It divested from oil companies

TALKING POINTS

- Progressive, intellectual institutions send conflicting messages to the world by investing in fossil fuels.
- SRIs could replace fossil fuel investments.
- Divestment by 2035 is a reasonable compromise.
- If an institution of Cornell's prestige divests from fossil fuels, others may follow suit.
- Divestment is being used as a tool for social change worldwide, and the movement is starting to gain momentum.

in Sudan in opposition to humanitarian crimes.⁶ More recently, it divested from coal and committed to reaching carbon neutrality by 2035.^{1,7}

Selling fossil fuel stocks could minimally decrease endowment returns,⁷ but Cornell can replace them with SRI, which includes mutual funds, venture capital, hedge funds, capital funds, and community investing institutions that "[consider] environmental, social and corporate governance criteria to generate long-term competitive [profits] and positive societal impact." SRI increased from \$3.74 trillion in 2012 to \$6.57 trillion in 2014 in the United States.⁵

Cornell's coal divestment was easy because it was immediately financially favorable. However, if Cornell has divested from companies

benefitting from exploitation in South Africa and Sudan for moral reasons, it can divest from fossil fuels too. Selling its remaining fossil fuel stocks and shifting to SRI would allow Cornell to support its students with a moral endowment.

Some contend that fossil fuel companies can facilitate a clean energy future, but the Forum for the Future recently ended decadelong corporate sustainability partnerships with Shell and BP since both corporations appeared "entirely unmoved" by climate research. 8 Those earning the largest profit margins from exploitation are, unsurprisingly, unlikely to oppose or change those patterns. Divestment, not engagement, is our best hope of securing our energy future.

Next Steps

Students and faculty must continue mobilizing support to pressure the Assembly to vote for divestment while researching its financial implications. Undergraduate, Graduate, and Faculty Senate members should work with consultants and the investment office to make necessary adjustments to Cornell's portfolio. In the meantime, Cornellians should organize their student body to push for these partnerships among all campus clubs and organizations.

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No Impact Workforce: Implementing Environmental Training Programs

Caroline Coccoli and Victoria Nelson, Northwestern University

Since Illinois landfills will reach capacity in 21 years, the state should require government employees to complete a training program focused on reduction of everyday waste.¹

In 2013, Illinois accepted 287 million tons of garbage to its landfills. These landfills decrease land value and availability.² The City of Chicago spent \$3.5 million on landfilling recyclables (i.e. paper, plastic, aluminum cans) in 2010, accounting for roughly half of the city's landfill waste.³ Individual waste reduction is the most efficient solution, as it is a method of prevention as opposed to mitigation.

Both Illinois and the EPA support purchasing of sustainable workplace products.⁴ However, 60 percent of federal executives thought current sustainability initiatives like these were inadequate and that better employee education would lead to a more sustainable workplace.⁵ The U.S. Postal Service is one of the few agencies that offers sustainability training.

Illinois requires employees to complete ethics training, but it does not address environmental responsibility. Poor understanding of how to reduce individual waste — for example, single-use disposables — can hinder the success of existing sustainability programs.

The State of Illinois should require a sustainability component in workforce training, which addresses how to reduce the use of paper and plastic. Departments should require an hour-long training session

- Paper and plastic make up 36 percent of landfilled material in Illinois.¹²
- In 2007, the Illinois per capita waste generation rate was 19 percent higher than the national average.¹³
- Illinois landfills will reach capacity in 21 years. 14
- An office building of 7,000 workers can reduce green house gas emissions by 570 metric tons of carbon equivalent by recycling, instead of landfilling, all of its paper waste for one year.¹⁵

at least once a year. Training coordinators should establish an annual competition to reduce individual waste. This activity could be based on the Northwestern Roosevelt chapter's No Impact Challenge, in which individuals compete to minimize the number of disposable items used over the course of one week.

ANALYSIS

Requiring employees to complete sustainability training would reduce landfilled waste and lower tipping fees. In 1997, Bell Atlantic established an employee waste reduction team, eliminating 2.9 million pounds of waste and saving over \$6 million.⁷

This educational program will have additional positive outcomes that a mandate would not. Taxpayer dollars finance the salaries of 130,206 full-time state employees.8 Thus, these individuals are informal civic representatives of the state, whose actions can increase public awareness of sustainable initiatives. Walker Research found that 78 percent of Americans disapprove of businesses with irresponsible environmental

TALKING POINTS

- Reducing is the most cost-effective way to decrease landfill waste, since landfill maintenance is paid for in part by state and municipal taxes.
- Sixty percent of federal agency sustainability executives think current sustainability initiatives are inadequate and better employee training would lead to more sustainable actions in the workplace.¹⁶
- Establishing a "No Impact Workforce" will lighten landfill loads, save IL governments money, and encourage citizens to adopt more sustainable practices.

practices.⁹ Companies with robust training showed a 47 percent increase in market value compared to those with weaker programs.¹⁰ Therefore, sustainability training could improve the public image of state and municipal governments, just as it can a private company.

A workforce activity like the No Impact Challenge could also increase employee productivity. Group competitions can motivate employees and encourage ownership of organizational outcomes.¹¹ Employee education is the best solution for waste reduction because it is holistic, reducing landfill waste, saving state money, and improving employee productivity.

Next Steps

The first step is to contact the Inspector General, who sets hours and determines the frequency of training necessary for each type of employee. The state should model the proposed employee training on existing programs. The Inspector General should select one department as a test case and work with in-house administrators to structure training and analyze baseline standards for waste generation.

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Paving the Way: Permeable Pavement as a Sanitation Solution

Stephanie Dooper, The University of Louisville

The overflow of excess water from the combined sewage system in the Louisville metro area is polluting the Ohio River. The Louisville Metro government should require all new surface projects in the downtown area to be constructed of at least 20 percent permeable pavement.

City sanitary sewers carry wastewater to a central treatment center. The Louisville, Kentucky sewers, created in the 1800s, transport both wastewater and excess rainfall to the same treatment center. The increase in urban development causes more rainwater to enter the metro sewer system, which drastically increases the amount

of water that needs to be treated. When overflow occurs, most often during heavy rains, there is not enough capacity to treat the excess water and the mixture of wastewater and rainfall is dumped into the Ohio River.² Untreated wastewater is filled with bacteria and pollutants that are detrimental to human and animal health as well as the health of the environment. Additionally, this overflow of wastewater causes severe flooding in the surrounding area and adversely affects the neighboring cities that are downstream from the Louisville and Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD).

The MSD of Louisville suggests treating the overflow water issue by either constructing a separate storm and sanitary sewer (an extremely disruptive and expensive endeavor), exploring ways to treat the overflow water before it is dumped into the

- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) send untreated water to the Ohio River during heavy rainfall.⁷
- Rain and snow are able to immediately flow through the pores and crevasses in pervious pavement, unlike conventional concrete.8
- Permeable pavement can filter as much as 70 to 80 percent of annual rainfall, help reduce stormwater runoff, and provide groundwater recharge.⁹

river, or finding ways to store the overflow water and release it into the sewer lines later. While these are viable solutions, it is evident that they have not yet been implemented and finding ways to prevent the problem would be a better option.³

The Louisville Metro government should require new contracts in downtown areas, including parking lots and walkways, to be made of at least 20 percent permeable pavement. This will significantly reduce the amount of rainwater being treated in combined treatment centers and the amount of untreated water entering the Ohio River because permeable pavement allows rainwater to be absorbed into the soil.

ANALYSIS

The benefits of requiring 20 percent of all newly constructed downtown areas to be built with permeable pavement include

stormwater runoff reduction, better stormwater treatment, and fewer pollutants, such as bacteria and pathogens.⁴ Incorporating permeable pavements in urban development plans not only limits excess rainwater being transported through the sewage lines but also reduces flooding and allows plants to naturally filter out pollutants. Permeable pavements conserve water, reduce urban heat, and often use recycled materials.⁵ While permeable pavement is more expensive than traditional concrete surfaces, it would be more financially conservative and economically sound than the proposed solutions that MSD has suggested for the water treatment center. By allocating part of the annual \$30 million used to confront stormwater overflow, MSD could subsidize the construction of permeable pavements to provide both an immediate and long-term solution.⁶ Although future renovations to the MSD are still necessary, permeable pavements provide a quick

TALKING POINTS

- During heavy rainfalls, wastewater and rainwater are mixed and dumped into the Ohio River.
- Over 3 million people use the Ohio River as a source of drinking water; the bacteria and pathogens dumped into it are detrimental to their health.¹⁰
- Permeable pavement reduces the amount of rainfall overflow, naturally rids the water of pollutants, and reduces the urban heat island effect.¹¹

and permanent remedy and will continue to reduce the amount of water necessary for treatment.

Next Steps

The Louisville Metro Office of Sustainability should take immediate action by discussing this policy with construction agencies in the Louisville area. The Project Coordinator for the Office of Sustainability should then ensure that any guidelines resulting from this partnership are met.

In addition, the Office of Sustainability should allocate a portion of the funds currently in use for renovating the Metropolitan Sewer District — a project that will take years to implement — to fund this initiative.

The success of permeable pavements shouldn't remain in Louisville. The Office of Sustainability should advocate for the necessity of permeable pavement in other areas of the Louisville community and push for statewide action.

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Rooftop Gardens: An Energy Saver for Businesses and Outdoor Haven for Communities

Kirstie Hostetter, University of Georgia

Local governments in the U.S. should provide urban property owners with tax credits in exchange for constructing rooftop gardens, which reduce building energy consumption and provide a green space for urban garden initiatives.

Chicago, Austin, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, New York City, Philadelphia, and Portland reward building owners financially for constructing "green roofs." Cities have a vested interest in promoting rooftop gardens, and thus are willing to pay to encourage their construction. Green roofs can reduce stormwater runoff by 60

to 100 percent, alleviating the strain on cities' stormwater management systems. For example, if 20 percent of eligible buildings in Washington, D.C. had a green roof, they would add over 71 million liters to the city's stormwater storage capacity. Rooftop gardens also lower ambient air temperatures by 30°C compared to conventional roofs, reducing the urban heat island effect that causes cities to be much hotter than surrounding rural areas.²

Building owners have an incentive to employ rooftop gardens because of the potential for energy cost savings. The lower ambient air temperatures alone result in energy savings of up to 15 percent with additional savings from the gardens' insulation capabilities. Green roofs also last 2–3 times longer than traditional roofs. A study estimated that Chicago could save

- Rooftop gardens can reduce stormwater runoff by 60 to 100 percent, reducing pressure on urban infrastructure and capturing pollutants that would otherwise drain into nearby rivers.⁵
- Green roofs help control temperatures both inside of and around buildings, resulting in energy savings of 15 percent.⁶
- Green roofs last
 2-3 times longer than traditional roofs, saving property owners the time and cost of roof replacement.⁷

as much as \$100 million annually if the entire city implemented green roof technology.³

Green roofs also provide urban habitats for birds and mitigate air pollution by filtering out particulate matter and gaseous pollutants in the air.⁴

Cities should incentivize urban building owners to pair with community garden initiatives and create rooftop garden partnerships. Building owners who construct a rooftop garden and sign a written document agreeing to donate their rooftop space to a local community garden program should be eligible for a property tax credit in proportion to the cost of construction. With this partnership, the

TALKING POINTS

- The most important way to begin lowering emissions is energy efficiency.
- Property tax credits for urban rooftop gardens make green roofs cost-feasible.
- Rooftop gardens provide green escapes for an aesthetic contrast to increasingly dense urban environments.

building owner pays for the initial construction costs of the rooftop garden with help from the government, and then the community garden program takes over the maintenance of the rooftop.

ANALYSIS

Even with the existing incentives in major cities across the U.S., green roofs are not very common in urban areas where they are especially needed. This policy is innovative because it increases building owners' willingness to invest in a rooftop garden project by creating two distinct financial incentives. First, it directly subsidizes the cost of the rooftop garden through the property tax credit. Second, through the community garden partnership, it removes the burden of garden upkeep. While building owners not in this program would have to hire professionals to maintain a green roof, those participating in the partnership program transfer maintenance responsibility to community garden projects that already have the needed knowledge and resources. These benefits are in addition to the energy cost savings that green roofs provide and the extended roof lifespans.

The community gardens have an incentive to enter into these partnerships because they provide space for their programs to expand in urban areas where space is valuable. These rooftop gardens can serve as unique settings for nutrition and sustainability education, providing gardening lessons for a population that might have limited access to open green spaces otherwise.

Overall, rooftop gardens provide economic benefits for building owners, governments, and community gardens as well as health and environmental benefits for the urban area as a whole.

Next Steps

The first priority should be to contact legislative groups and relevant industry groups, such as chambers of commerce, real estate developers, and small business alliances, to build support for the property tax credit among the stakeholders making the largest investment.

Then, in the urban areas most favorable to the policy, community gardens should lobby to pass this act and find businesses that are willing to take part in the initiative.

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Linking Federal Crop Insurance to Sustainable Agriculture Practices

Emma Johnston, Cornell University

Crop rotation and the planting of cover crops can mitigate nitrogen pollution from the overuse of synthetic fertilizers. Given the widespread implementation of the Federal Crop Insurance Program, the program should be linked to these cost-effective practices to ensure their adoption and to decrease environmental damage caused by excess nitrogen inputs, beginning with corn and soybean crops.

The Federal Crop Insurance Program provides subsidized insurance for farmers to protect against losses due to natural disasters. In 2013, more than 290 million acres of farmland were protected through the program, including the majority of corn and soybeans, the two largest agricultural exports in the U.S.¹ Last year, \$117 billion worth of crops were insured, costing taxpayers \$90 million. The government subsidizes 38-80 percent of the cost of insurance premiums.²

Crop insurance has been shown to increase the use of chemical pesticides by farmers and lead to increased soil erosion.^{3,4} Farmers purchasing federal insurance for corn applied significantly more nitrogen per acre and spent more on herbicides and insecticides.³

KEY FACTS

- 84 percent of corn and soybeans are insured through federal policy.²
- Corn accounts for 40 percent of U.S. fertilizer consumption.⁷
- Legume-based nitrogen systems could almost halve the fossil fuel demand of agricultural landscapes.⁵

Insured farmers, subject to moral hazard, engage in riskier production methods because insurance shields them from the complete risk of farming on unproductive land.³

Overuse of chemical fertilizers has been a major contributor to the doubling of the amount of biologically active nitrogen in the biosphere. In the U.S., agriculture is the single largest source of nitrogen compounds, with the use of nitrogen fertilizer increasing from 2.7 to 12.8 million tons from 1960 to 2011. Half of all applied fertilizer in the U.S. is lost from agricultural landscapes.⁵ Nitrogen leached from soils enters waterways, creating dead zones, killing

species, and contaminating drinking water.⁶ Meanwhile, the amount of corn and soybeans grown in continuous monocultures and two-year rotations has increased significantly in recent years, most likely due to federal policy encouraging the rapid production of biofuels.⁷ Continual growth of the same crop on a single plot of land or growing crops in two-year rotations ensures a steady food supply for pests that prefer a particular crop, meaning more pesticides are needed to keep them at bay.⁶

Farmers growing corn should only be offered federal subsidies if corn is grown in a rotation of at least three years with soybeans and nitrogen-fixing legumes. Additionally, farmers should be required to replace at least 50 percent of bare fallows with cover crops during winter months. Farmers who comply with this policy will not face a decrease in premium subsidies.

TALKING POINTS

- Voluntary programs to encourage sustainable agriculture practices have not been widely adopted.¹⁴
- Targeting corn, the largest U.S. crop, will bring environmental compliance to soybeans, the second largest crop, since they are grown in a two-year rotation.
- Crop rotation with legumes leads to higher yields, decreasing the need for expensive and fossil fuel-intense chemical fertilizers.³

ANALYSIS

In the U.S., corn requires the most nitrogen per acre and accounts for approximately 40 percent of fertilizer consumption. While corn is usually grown in two-year rotation with soybeans, both crops demonstrate higher yields when grown in three-year rotations with legumes, plants that contain nitrogen-producing bacteria in their roots. These diverse crop rotations require 80 percent fewer nitrogen inputs and half the energy inputs of conventional two-year rotations. Crop rotation leads to decreased fertilizer costs for farmers and increased yields while improving soil quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and decreasing the presence of invasive crop diseases and agricultural pests. 8,9,10,11,12

Legumes such as clover and hairy vetch grow as prolific cover crops during winter months when fields are usually left bare, adding 50–200 pounds of nitrogen to each acre of soil per year and decreasing the need for fertilizers to agricultural systems by half.^{5,11} Compared to bare soil, cover crops reduce contamination of drinking water 40–70 percent, mitigating externalities imposed on public health.⁵

Next Steps

The Agriculture Committees in the Senate and House and the House Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management should investigate amending the Federal Crop Insurance Program so that all corn is required to be planted in three-year rotation with soybeans and legumes and all corn-soybean systems be planted with cover crops. These subcommittees should hold public hearings in the states with the highest production of corn and soybeans on how to mandate these policies at the regional level. The policy can later become an initiative of the National Resources Conservation Service, which carries out conservation compliance on agricultural landscapes.¹³

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Taking out the NYC Trash: Incentivizing Sustainable Waste Management

Julia Malits, Cornell University

With its inefficient waste management system, New York City (NYC) suffers from high levels of municipal solid waste (MSW) generation, affecting its own and neighboring states. The city should implement a system that creates financial incentives for proper recycling and composting practices and discourages non-reusable waste generation among its residents.

The United States is the leading contributor of global waste, producing a quarter of the world's waste deposit,1 even though it constitutes less than 5 percent of the world population. Some of the largest waste generators in the U.S. are large cities, such as NYC, Chicago, and Detroit. NYC, in particular, generates 14 million tons of waste annually² yet has minimal physical space for its waste disposal due to its dense population. As a result, NYC annually spends \$300 million to discard its partially recyclable MSW in landfills located primarily in Ohio, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The transportation of this waste results in an equally alarming production of greenhouses gases. NYC residents only further exacerbate the negative ramifications of improper waste disposal, as they recycle at significantly lower rates than commercial centers, such

- Each year, NYC generates 14 million tons of waste that is primarily sent to landfills in nearby states. However, approximately 40 percent of the waste NYC residents generate is recyclable and 28 percent is compostable.²
- Residential recycling rates are significantly lower than those of commercial centers, partially because residents are not charged for waste disposal while commercial centers are charged. This suggests that introducing a price on waste disposal would increase residential recycling rates.
- NYC annually spends \$300 million on hauling waste to landfills. In the process, this generates 679,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases, comparable to adding more than 133,000 vehicles to the roads.²

as restaurants. This may partially be due to the fact that commercial centers are charged for their waste, while residents are not. Currently, NYC is forced to spend \$2.2 billion to handle the MSW generated in residences across the five boroughs.

NYC should enact policy that allows for free recycling and composting disposal within residential buildings, while charging a fixed rate for each standard-size bag of MSW generated by its residents. Specifically, NYC should charge a rate of \$20 per six tax-free garbage tags that residents could purchase, improve its free recycling pick-up services, and introduce comparative composting.

ANALYSIS

These policies have proven effective in reducing unsustainable practices around the country. By adopting a policy that incentivizes sustainable waste management, NYC could significantly decrease the amount of landfilling and thereby cut its own costs.

In Ithaca, NY,3 for example, residents regularly sort their waste and recyclables.

By separating these items and applying a fee on each bag of non-recyclable waste, residents are encouraged to recycle more. Similarly, in NYC, all 8.4 million residents could follow suit. Further, there currently are 35 "Green Markets" in NYC that accept compost, but no pick-up services exist. Introducing composting pick-up service would have the potential to remove a maximum of 600,000 tons of food waste that is normally deposited as landfill-bound waste.⁴

TALKING POINTS

- NYC has the capacity to be a recognized leader in reducing the overwhelming amount of waste that the U.S. contributes to the world.
- Diverting reusable materials from landfills to centers that execute recycling programs would have an enormously positive financial and environmental impact in NYC.
- In light of the serious concern for rising greenhouse gas emissions, introducing policies that would reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills needs to be a high priority for NYC policymakers.

Together, these policies have the potential to reduce the \$300 million NYC spends on MSW management and have an environmental impact equivalent to taking 133,000 cars off the road in a given year.²

Next Steps

The City Council should adopt a bill that mandates residents to pay for their MSW while improving free recycling and composting services. NYC should create a budget for printing and distributing tags and marketing the new services to residents, and increase the availability of trucks to pick up recyclable and compostable materials. These actions should be introduced gradually to provide residents an opportunity to adjust.

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Preventing Hunting Tragedies: Making Vermont's Roads and Trails Off-Limits

Alex Newhouse, Middlebury College

With most public land and hiking trails open to hunters, and roads minimally protected, Vermont's hikers and travelers are at risk from stray shots. To ensure the safety of non-hunters, the state should extend a no-hunting buffer of 300 feet from roads and Vermont's most popular hiking trails.

Hunting is engrained in Vermont's culture. As such, the state has long given hunters the freedom to hunt nearly anywhere. Public and private land is almost entirely open to hunting, and many private organizations have made their land readily available to hunters.² But whereas many states have enacted legislation to protect highways, roads, and trails, hunting in Vermont is allowed only 25 feet away from well-traveled roads.³ Hunting is also allowed and encouraged along popular hiking paths such as the Long Trail and Vermont's

portion of the Appalachian Trail. As a result, Vermont hiking guides warn hikers to take all necessary precautions on trips during hunting seasons.⁴

Hunting accidents have decreased over the last few years due to increasingly strict hunter education laws,⁵ but the risk still remains present within the state. Between 2004 and 2011, Vermont's tourism increased ten percent, an increase of over one million visitors per year.⁶ Considering this, and that there has been a corresponding rise in the number of people hiking on the Appalachian and Long Trails each year,⁷ the state should take preventive action to offset this danger.

The state of Vermont should enact legislation that creates a buffer zone of 300 feet around

- Hunting is currently permitted on popular hiking trails in Vermont, and only 25 feet from major highways.¹¹
- Shotguns and rifles generally have effective ranges over 25 feet.¹²
- 13.9 million visitors
 often uninformed
 about the risk of
 hunting accidents —
 came to Vermont in
 2011, and this number
 is increasing every
 year.¹³

popular hiking trails and all classified public roads. The new "no-hunt zones" should be enforced by Vermont game wardens. Designated hunting trails, unmarked trails, and Wildlife Management Areas maintained by the state should be exempt from this policy.

ANALYSIS

This extension buffers of the would immediately increase hiker safety along Vermont's trails as well as travelers along roads, as it would place the travelers out of effective range of most shotguns. The accepted maximum effective range of most shotguns shooting buckshot is 120-240 feet, depending on the composition of the shotgun. Guns shooting slugs have a longer range, up to 300 feet, but the 300 foot buffer will place hikers out of the lethal range of most of those as well.8 Although the possibility exists that a hunter might be unaware of the new regulations, Vermont statutes make it clear that hunters must be familiar with new laws upon application for licenses.

TALKING POINTS

- Creating a buffer zone of 300 feet along hiking trails and roads would put hikers out of range of most shotguns.
- Prohibiting loud, disruptive hunting in extreme proximity to trails and reducing the need to warn hikers of the risk of hunting accidents would encourage tourism.
- Hunting lands would be untouched in Wildlife Management Areas and not meaningfully impacted elsewhere.
- The safety of hikers outweighs the desires of hunters to hunt from trails and roads.

Some hunting communities may oppose this legislation and argue that trails and roads provide the best access to good hunting grounds. However, it is of the utmost importance to protect people from unforeseen and unknown, but avoidable, danger. With millions of visitors each year, it is important to make Vermont welcoming and safe.⁹

Finally, the state of Vermont still contains huge swaths of backcountry land open to hunting. Extending a buffer around the entirety of the extremely popular 272-mile Long Trail would only reduce the 1250 square miles of available hunting land by at most 30 square miles. Creating buffers around roads and the most popular trails would reduce the total amount of hunting land insignificantly.

Next Steps

The Vermont state legislature should start by investigating which trails are most important to protect and then create an amendment to Statute 4705 of Title 10, Chapter 113: Game to create these buffer zones. Further action will be necessary to fund increased game warden policing around new buffer zones and to determine which hiking trails will be protected. The government should focus on what will protect hikers while also not overly restricting the operations of hunters.

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Closing the Loophole: Protecting the Midwest With Hydraulic Fracturing Regulation

Steven O'Neill, University of Michigan

In the American Midwest, hydraulic fracturing is an important enterprise with countless stakeholders. The "Halliburton Loophole" exemption clause hinders proper regulation that would promote the benefits of fracking while protecting communities that the Clean Water Act was intended to protect.

Fracking increases the energy supply and reduces energy prices. However, unregulated, it threatens public health and the environment by risking drinking water contamination and earthquakes.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 contains a provision known as the "Halliburton Loophole," which makes fracking exempt from the Clean

Water Act's safe practice requirements and allows companies to wrongfully inject wastewater underground. The Great Lakes Compact contains a similar exemption clause. This has blocked the regulation of fracking in the region and puts the environment and public health at acute risk.

The Great Lakes Compact, an agreement between Midwest states, seeks to properly manage the use of the Great Lakes' water supply. It requires annual reports on water levels, compositions, and uses⁹ to ensure there is enough clean water for the Midwest.

The Halliburton Loophole should be closed and a three-pronged regulation approach

KEY FACTS

- A 4-million-gallon fracking operation uses between 80 and 330 tons of chemicals, including carcinogens and toxins like lead and uranium.¹
- Water treatment facilities in Pennsylvania are unequipped to treat many flowback contaminants.²
- Despite EPA protections, wastewater from fracking was injected into clean aquifers in California.²

instituted. An oversight committee of industry professionals and environmental scientists should determine the environmental impact of each Midwest well. The industry should be held to legal standards to limit contamination, pollution, and subsurface damage. All findings and environmental reports should be made public in order to create transparency that will hold violators accountable and assist with future policy options.

ANALYSIS

The 940 million barrels of oil⁴ in the Utica Shale² have created 200,000 Ohio jobs in the natural gas industry and helped Ohio contribute 4.7 percent to U.S. energy production in 2012.⁴ Oil and natural gas outputs will increase economic activity by \$10 billion per year and tax revenue by \$500 million.⁵ These industries provide livelihoods for many Midwesterners and overly constrictive limitations would damage local economies.

TALKING POINTS

- The Clean Water Act makes fracking exempt from regulation.
- Each well uses about 5 million gallons of water, which is reintroduced to the water supply or disposed in leak-susceptible underground sites.
- Fracking is widely practiced in the Midwest, which contains 84 percent of North America's water supply.⁶
- The Utica Shale contains 940 million barrels of oil, suggesting that fracking will continue to grow in the region.

Many fracking enterprises use up to 5 million gallons of Great Lakes water per well.¹ The volume of water used and its reintroduction into the Great Lakes demands regulation for fracking.

The United States Geological Survey found that seismic activity increase was correlated with injecting fracking wastewater in disposal wells and that unregulated fracking practiced on a larger scale over a longer timeframe will cause more devastating earthquakes. This injection was likely the cause of large earthquakes in Colorado and Oklahoma in 2011.⁷

Next Steps

The Halliburton Loophole should not apply to the Great Lakes Compact because of the tremendous stakes in the Midwest fracking industry and the threat to a major water supply. Federal and state legislative action will be required for regulation. Fracking should be subject to oversight, limitations, and transparency. The industry will remain profitable and environmental damages should be limited. Enduring ground-level student and community organizing as well as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversight will further the cause.

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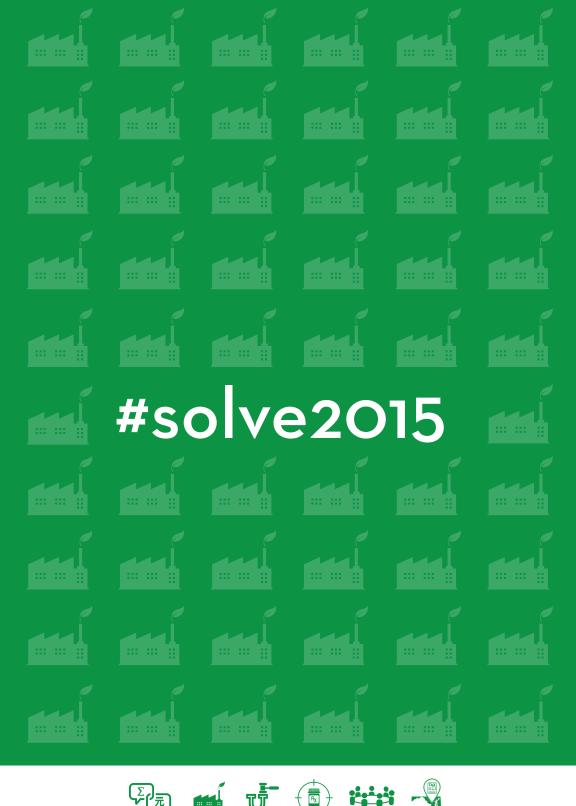
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POLICY OF THE YEAR NOMINEE:

Modernizing Maryland's
Tax System: Authorizing
the Use of Pre-Populated
Personal Tax Returns



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Who We Are

The Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network, the nation's largest student policy organization, engages young people in a unique form of civic participation that empowers them as leaders and promotes their ideas for change. Through coordination with political actors and community leaders, Network members design and implement solutions to the pressing issues facing their towns, counties, and states. Now boasting 120 chapters in 38 states with thousands of members, we're building a network of young people who are filling the ideas gap in communities across the country. In doing so, we're preparing a new generation of thinkers and policymakers to burst forth onto the nation's political stage.

What You're Holding

Now in its seventh year, the 10 Ideas series promotes the most promising student-generated ideas from across our network. This journal, which includes submissions from schools located from California to Georgia to New York, stands as a testament to the depth and breadth of our network of innovators.

Our 10 Ideas memos are selected for publication because they are smart, rigorously researched, and, most importantly, feasible. We want to see these ideas become a reality.

How You Can Join

As you explore these ideas, we encourage you to take special note of the "Next Steps" sections. Here, our authors have outlined how their ideas can move from the pages of this journal to implementation. We invite you to join our authors in the process. Contact us on our website or by tweeting with us @VivaRoosevelt using the hashtag #solve2015.

Thank you for reading and supporting student generated ideas. Together we will design the future of our communities, from towns to countries and all that lies in-between.

WELCOME!

Dear Readers,

Young people on college campuses are often asked to make phone calls, knock on doors, and campaign for existing agendas, but they're rarely asked about their own policy ideas. Since 2004, we have been working to change that norm. At its core, the Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network seeks to defy the public's expectations of young people in politics today.

Over the past 10 years, we have built an engaged, community-driven network of students who are committed to using policy to transform their cities and states now and build the foundation for a sustainable future. We believe that broader participation in the policy process will not only improve representation but produce more creative ideas with the potential for real impact.

In this year's 10 Ideas journal, we present some of most promising and innovative ideas from students in our network. With chapters on 120 campuses in 38 states, from Los Angeles, California, to Conway, Arkansas, to New York City, we have the potential to effect policy ideas that transcend the parameters of our current national debate. Our student authors push for practical, community-focused solutions, from using pavement to improve sanitation in Louisville, Kentucky, to creating community benefit agreements for

publicly funded stadiums in Lansing, Michigan, to building workforce development programs for agricultural literacy in Athens, Georgia.

Policy matters most when we take it beyond the page and bring it to the communities and institutions that can turn it into reality. Many of the students in this year's publication have committed to pressing for impact. They're connecting with decision-makers in city halls and state capitols, armed with the power of their own ideas.

The breadth and depth of our network is reflected in the diversity of the proposals featured in this journal. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much we did. The next generation of innovative minds and passionate advocates is here, and it's changing this country one idea at a time.

Sincerely,

Joelle Gamble
National Director
Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Brianna Starosciak and David Meni

authors of Modernizing Maryland's Tax System: Authorizing the Use of Pre-Populated Personal Tax Returns

Nominee for Policy Of The Year

A jury of Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network members, staff, and alumni select one piece from each journal to nominate for the honor of Policy of the Year. We base our nominees off of the quality of idea, rigor of research and potential for implementation. The cover design of this journal portrays this year's nominee in visual form.

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Recreating a Supplier Diversity Position at the University of Michigan to Foster Economic Inclusion

Trevor Dolan, Steven O'Neill, Dominic Russel, Alec Ramsay-Smith, and Ashley White, University of Michigan

The University of Michigan should reinstate the position of Supplier Diversity and Social Responsibility Leader to assist developing minority-and women-owned businesses throughout the state. This position would mitigate the unequal treatment these business face in the marketplace and drive inclusive economic growth.

Women- and minority-owned businesses (WBEs and MBEs) comprise 50 percent of all U.S. businesses but only receive 7.3 percent of business transactions. This disparity is primarily due to a lack of access to capital: women and minority entrepreneurs are subject to lower rates of loan approval and higher interest rates, on average. African and Hispanic Americans have significantly less wealth than white Americans but rely more on their own money to start businesses.

The University of Michigan purchases more than \$1 billion of goods and services each year. MBEs and WBEs experience greater difficulty soliciting business with the university,⁴ but since 2002 there has been no employee that solely assists small, disadvantaged businesses.⁵ The last full-time supplier diversity leader increased diversity

KEY FACTS

- By creating trackable goals and collaborating with local institutions, the University of Pennsylvania has increased diversity purchasing from \$41,441,311 to \$105,763,912 over the past decade.¹⁹
- Targeted spending at small, diverse businesses can have a multiplier effect on the economy: Penn estimates it generates about 200 jobs and \$6 million in local area wages with its program.²⁰
- In 2002, the last year Michigan had a full-time supplier diversity leader, the University was named corporation of the year by the Michigan Minority Business Development Council.²¹

spending in each of his last five years, fostering \$40 million in yearly diverse spending.⁶

Michigan State University,7 the Universities of California,8,9 the

University of Florida, 10 and Pennsylvania State University¹¹ represent a small sample of similar large public research universities that employ individuals to assist diverse suppliers.

The University of Michigan should reinstate the position of Supplier Diversity Leader. This employee would work with purchasers (including federally monitored Principal awareness Investigators) to raise provide resources to maximize diversity purchasing. Additionally, he or she would find opportunities to work with diverse suppliers, as well as train and assist them in engaging with the university and registration as a disadvantaged business. These roles would support the university's socially responsible procurement goals¹² and federal government contract reporting. 13

ANALYSIS

Due to their difficulties obtaining capital, disproportionately MBEs are businesses: they employ eight individuals on average, whereas the average white firm employs 21.14 Supporting these small businesses would lead to job creation and create a positive multiplier effect on local economies. 15 Moreover, increased diverse purchasing can reduce local wealth gaps, which can also spur economic growth. 16

TALKING POINTS

- Women- and minority-owned businesses are less likely to have access to capital due to historic disadvantages, 20th century governmental policies, and current bank practices.²²
- The University of Michigan should retake its place as a leader in supplier diversity and social responsibility to revitalize the local economy.
- Employing a supplier diversity manager will streamline regulatory compliance and reporting and more efficiently connect purchasers to diverse suppliers.

This employee will streamline the diverse purchasing process and develop a pool of diverse business relationships. This will cut administrative costs on federal contract reporting and university goals.

While this employee's position would cost \$60,000-\$90,000 a year, the economic benefits for the state and university make this proposal feasible. As a large public institution, the university has a role to play "in serving the public good" by "doing things that make a difference to people [and] to economies." This employee's role and visibility will ensure that the purchasing department supports these goals.

Next Steps

Support for this proposal must come from administrative leaders at the university. With the 2014 Being Black at UofM campaign, students have increasingly called for greater action on campus diversity. 18 While this proposal does not directly address equitable enrollment, it does address the underlying wealth disparities that drive racial underrepresentation.

By working with the diversity purchasing team at Michigan State University and others around the country, the University of Michigan can create a detailed job description. Additionally, a strong partnership with organizations such as the Michigan Minority Development Council will allow the new Supplier Diversity and Social Responsibility Leader to locate and cooperate with diverse businesses.

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Way Anchor: Supporting Michigan Businesses Through Local Procurement

Julius Golberg-Lewis, Ruby Kirby, and Michael Spaeth, University of Michigan

The University of Michigan should work to better support its community by directing university-wide purchasing toward businesses within the state and local area.

The University of Michigan is an institution that has enough economic power to significantly influence the economy and an obligation to use that power to create local jobs and wealth in its community, which is still suffering from the recession of 2008.1 Many universities, such as the University of Pennsylvania,² Wayne State University,³ and Michigan State University,4 have initiated local purchasing programs. Michigan State University was the first university to partner with the Pure Michigan Business Connect (PMBC) to commit 50 percent of its purchases to Michigan-owned businesses. 5 The PMBC and the Detroit to Detroit (D2D) purchasing programs, both developed by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, aim to connect buyers with local suppliers and equip these companies with skills to be able to respond to the demands of local contracts.6 Even closer to the university, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners passed a local purchasing plan based on extensive research on 22 municipal purchasing policies across the country.7

KEY FACTS

- For every \$100 spent locally, \$52 is recirculated or reinvested within the community.¹²
- The Pure Michigan
 Business Connect and
 the Detroit to Detroit
 (D2D) purchasing
 program will create
 7,700 jobs, lower
 purchasing costs
 by 25 percent in
 Detroit, and increase
 environmental
 sustainability.¹³
- The University of Pennsylvania spent \$109.2 million in goods and services from local suppliers in FY2013 and has created 87,000 new state jobs since 1990 as partners with the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center.¹⁴

The University of Michigan should pledge to purchase 50 percent of its goods and services at a local or state level

as partners with the PMBC. This policy will include a clear definition of local and state businesses and use discounts to incentivize each department and school within the university to purchase locally.

ANALYSIS

The University of Michigan is one of the oldest and largest public universities in the United States. It is the quintessential anchor institution — a large source of capital, resources, and employment, spending, which is permanently tied to its community. mission is focused on developing community academically, the Michigan economically, and socially.8 Between its multiple campuses and hospital system, the university has operating expenses of \$3.5 billion.9 While some of its purchasing is already done through local sources, the lack of an explicit policy means that the Michigan

TALKING POINTS

- The University of Michigan does not currently track its state and local purchasing. Furthermore, it has no mandate or institutional incentive to purchase from local Michigan businesses.
- The University of Michigan should direct its purchases towards businesses within the state and local area to provide economic stimulus for the state and local economy.

economy could benefit from hundreds of millions of dollars of additional purchasing power. At a municipal level (and given the scale, the university is comparable), \$100 in local purchasing recirculates an average of \$52 into the local economy, almost double the amount from a non-local purchase.¹⁰

The University of Michigan is located 45 minutes away from Detroit/ Wayne County, which has an unemployment rate of 9.2 percent. The university has an operating budget of \$1.3 billion, which represents payroll and purchasing from its numerous departments and colleges, an incredible source of potential community investment. Since the university is an anchor institution, it has the ability to pump money into a local economy that has been decimated by the loss of the manufacturing industry.

Next Steps

To get a better picture of what the University of Michigan currently purchases, there must be a consistent definition of "local," such as a business headquartered in Michigan or one with significant employment in Michigan. Through discussion with the administration, money could be set aside to subsidize local purchases. This would allow the departments within the university to have more flexibility in their purchasing. Finally, the chapter must reach out to local businesses to not only garner their support but also identify purchasing sources.

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Community Benefits Agreements for Publicly Funded Stadiums in Michigan

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To ensure that the people of Michigan benefit from government investment in sports stadiums, the Michigan Legislature should adopt a measure that requires a Community Benefits Agreement for any land transfer or subsidization.

It has become standard practice for American sports franchises to demand public funding and other benefits when constructing new stadiums, often using their exit power as leverage.¹ One of the latest examples of this practice is the recently approved Detroit Red Wings arena deal. Against the backdrop of the city's bankruptcy proceedings, the Detroit City Council gave 39 parcels of public land worth \$2.9 million to the team to build a new arena and surrounding developments for just \$1. The State of Michigan agreed to contribute 58 percent of all funding, and no property taxes will be levied on the stadium site.²

Defenders of such plans argue that the benefits of these projects justify public investment. Yet studies consistently show that the actual economic effects of stadium projects are either nonexistent or negative.^{3,4} Additionally, teams—including the Red

KEY FACTS

- The total cost of public subsidies for major league sports facilities amounted to an estimated \$259 million per facility in 2010.¹¹
- During its bankruptcy proceedings, the City of Detroit transferred land valued at \$2.9 million to the Detroit Red Wings for a token payment of \$1.12
- In a Los Angeles CBA contract, developers agreed to a goal that at least 70 percent of permanent jobs from the Staples Center pay a living wage or be covered by a collective bargaining agreement.¹³

Wings—often refuse to make a binding commitment to either deliver these benefits or observe certain labor practices to support the local community.⁵

In 2001, a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) was struck between the developers of the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District, including the Staples Center, and community organizations. The developers agreed to demands such as preferential hiring for local residents, community development, and living wage requirements.⁶ As a result of this policy, the community surrounding the Staples Center has seen an increase in park development, low-income housing units, and job training programs.7 This is a powerful precedent that, if adopted in the state of Michigan, could solve many of the problems surrounding publicly funded stadiums, especially the new Red Wings stadium in Detroit.

ANALYSIS

To ensure local benefits from publicly financed entertainment developments, the State of Michigan should require that developers negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement with local and state officials,

TALKING POINTS

- Professional sports teams demand significant concessions from cities and states when seeking new stadiums and arenas.
- The projected public benefits of stadium and arena projects are frequently highly exaggerated, and teams are rarely held to the promises they make during negotiations.
- Community Benefits Agreements help guarantee that entities receiving significant public funding make it a priority to provide tangible economic benefits to the public.

as well as local community groups and residents. The specific elements of the agreement may include hiring benchmarks, environmental standards, or the creation of affordable housing. The model for negotiating Community Benefits Agreements used during the development of the Staples Center demonstrates the power of collective community action in holding developers accountable. Opponents of this policy may claim that a CBA requirement will deter desperately needed investment. However, since all parties affected by stadium development share in crafting these agreements, CBAs are both flexible and responsive to public demand.

Next Steps

In many cases, sports franchises will consider stadium sites across a metropolitan area or region, seeking to receive a more favorable deal without alienating fans by threatening to move to an entirely new market. To prevent communities from abandoning CBAs in order to "win" the team's stadium site, a state policy must require the agreements.

While a law passed through the legislature would suffice, a ballot initiative offers a promising path to requiring CBAs. Michigan has a relatively simple ballot initiative process, and public opinion would likely favor this policy. Polls frequently show residents in cities considering financing stadiums strongly disapprove of this use of funds.9

Another option would be to require the Michigan Strategic Fund to create CBAs for its projects. The MSF is a group of appointed officials – currently all business leaders – who finance economic development projects, including the Red Wings arena, with public money. With Governor Snyder's recent executive order to increase the MSF's powers, there is precedent and opportunity to guickly and broadly require the MSF to use CBAs through an additional executive order.10

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Reducing Taxes to Create Tighter Community and Save Small Businesses

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To better advertise local business to new residents during gentrification, the government should reduce the sales tax by 2 percent for qualifying local businesses.

Gentrification is a controversial subject. Some see it as progress; however, longtime residents and local businesses are often forced out of their communities due to skyrocketing housing prices and higher costs of living. Local businesses find that their prime customer demographic is being pushed out. In the past decade, nearly 40,000 black residents have moved out of the District of Columbia.¹ This is mainly attributed to an intense rise in property costs, which have risen almost 6 percent in the past year alone.²

Gentrification makes an area wealthier not by creating more wealthy people but by relocating those without wealth to make room for the more affluent. This creates an opportunity for large

national chain businesses to flourish in this new environment, in which loyal long-term customers are replaced by new customers who are more familiar with big businesses. Preservation Nation contributor Joshua Bloom states, "In commercial districts that serve a local market, chains may be desired by some residents for their convenience or because chains represent known quantities."

To combat the takeover of large chains, the government should be working to protect small businesses. Unfortunately, the District of Columbia's leadership often overlooks small businesses and works much harder to accommodate big business. For example,

KEY FACTS

- For every \$100 spent at a local business, \$68 is returned to the local community, whereas shopping at a chain only returns \$43.12
- Skyrocketing rents and property taxes have pushed 40,000 black residents out of the District of Columbia in the past decade.¹³

the small business owners near the Georgia Ave Walmart claim the city allowed the newly arrived Walmart to take their parking spaces, often making it difficult for customers to get to their stores.⁴

The DC Chief Financial Officer should reduce the sales tax rate by 2 percent for all DC businesses that fall within the guidelines of the U.S Small Business Administration.⁵ These businesses would also be allowed to advertise their status to customers by putting signs up in their stores, posting it on their websites, and word of mouth.

ANALYSIS

For every \$100 spent at a local business, \$68 is returned to the local community, whereas shopping at a chain only returns \$43.6 Thus, to incentivize keeping wealth within the community, taxes should be reduced for qualifying businesses. Businesses must first meet the small business requirements set by the U.S. Small Business Administration.⁷

If customers spend more money at small businesses, they not only help the small businesses but bring more money back into the community. The tax reduction will also give new residents a reason to establish connections with local stores. The connections will help to bring more business to the local stores and keep residents from being limited to large chains.

Small Business Saturday is a holiday launched in 2010 by American Express that promotes a day of shopping small.⁸ In 2013, Small Business Saturday caused more than \$5.7 billion to be spent at small businesses on that day alone.⁹ In 2012, a business owner from lowa saw a 30 percent increase in sales.¹⁰ Small businesses help to employ members of the community, and according to the National

TALKING POINTS

- Some see gentrification as progress; however, longtime residents and local businesses are often forced out of their communities due to skyrocketing housing prices and higher costs of living.
- Supporting current businesses and allowing business owners and employees to stay in the community can combat the negative effects of gentrification.

Federation of Independent Business, "over 90 percent of small-business owners contribute each year to their communities through volunteering, in-kind contributions, and/or direct cash donations." Small Business Saturday creates an incentive for people to shop small for one day; however, we need to create an incentive for the other 364 days of the year.

Next Steps

The first step is to survey local businesses through e-mails and in-person meetings. The goal is to find out their questions, concerns, and ideas about the future. Then the case must be made to the DC Office of the Chief Financial Officer that the city would benefit from this 2 percent decrease in tax.

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Subsidizing Electric Cars to Resolve Economic Inefficiencies

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New York State suffers from the negative consequences of consumer preferences for gasoline-operated vehicles. To address this economic inefficiency, the New York State government should subsidize electric cars in order to promote sustainable economic development.

Gasoline-dependent vehicles are costly to society. With the new surge in domestic oil production, gasoline prices have become more volatile. As of January 2015, gas prices are at an eight-year low.1 Low oil prices may promote gasoline-fueled vehicular travel, which will result in more traffic congestion and pollution. Despite the severe economic implications associated with vehicular pollution, state governments have not done enough to address the issue. It is imperative that state governments take advantage of this opportunity to stress the importance of transitioning to a more sustainable source of energy.

KEY FACTS

- A 2007 study of 439 U.S. urban areas found that traffic congestion cost \$87.2 billion in wasted time and fuel.⁷
- Fueling a vehicle with gasoline in New York currently costs \$2.91 per gallon. Using electricity would cost \$1.91 per gallon.8
- Tesla aims to release a vehicle by 2017 at a more competitive price of \$35,000.9

ANALYSIS

An unstable energy source breeds an unstable economy; electric cars can potentially alleviate these issues. New York State's economy would benefit by subsidizing electric cars due to their fuel efficiency and reduced costs.² Electric cars have been proven to be more efficient than cars that require gasoline, converting 59–62 percent of the electrical energy from the grid to power at the wheels, whereas conventional gasoline vehicles convert about 17–21 percent.³ Electric vehicles would also reduce fueling costs. Fueling a vehicle with

gasoline in New York currently costs \$2.91 per gallon, while using electricity would cost \$1.91 per gallon.⁴ With all of the benefits provided by electric cars, the United States has the ability to innovate global markets and spur new forms of untapped economic development.

The state government should subsidize electric car manufacturers, passing the savings on to consumers. Likewise, New York should tax vehicles that pollute the environment in order to fund the subsidization of electric cars. The tax will be based on each car model's projected marginal damage to the environment.

Electric cars are approaching more affordable levels, rivaling vehicles that run on fossil fuels. For example, Tesla will release a vehicle by 2017 at a competitive price of \$35,000.5 With continued government support, prices will continue to fall and more people will shift to electric vehicles.

TALKING POINTS

- Electric cars are more efficient than gasoline-powered cars. The United States has the ability to innovate global markets and spur new forms of economic development by greatly increasing the incidence of electric vehicular travel.
- New York State should tax vehicles that pollute the environment in order to fund the subsidization of electric cars. It is less costly to intervene immediately in order to prevent the future effects of vehicular pollution.

Next Steps

The New York State government should sponsor additional research on pollution and traffic congestion to better understand their economic implications. Furthermore, the cost of electric cars should be subsidized in the form of tax breaks, making the purchase and maintenance of these vehicles tax-deductible. Electric car manufacturers should inform the state legislature of the benefits of electric vehicles and lobby to secure tax subsidies. The development of charging stations should also be subsidized, as a lack of this resource has stunted electric car purchases.⁶

Additionally, New York should support electric car companies in establishing a physical foothold in the state. A physical dealership increases purchasing opportunities and provides greater access for product inquiries.

A coalition including electric car manufactures, such as Tesla Motors, and the New York State legislature should be created. State Senator James L. Seward, Chairman of the Energy Committee, should be included in ongoing discussions because of his direct involvement in the early stages of passing energy legislation. Manufactures should spend the first month consolidating information, creating presentations, and raising awareness through ad campaigns to address the inefficiencies of gasoline-operated cars and benefits of electric cars. The next two months can be spent publicizing the issue, informing elected officials, lobbying, and participating in hearings. The final months should be spent garnering interest from potential buyers. Public forums can also be held to discuss the benefits of electric vehicles and persuade consumers to purchase these vehicles.

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Let Working Families Work: Addressing Inequality in Childcare Aid

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As soaring childcare costs prevent working families from providing sufficient care for their children, federal policies for child care assistance must be reformed to better benefit their target recipients: low-income families.

Childcare has rapidly grown as a major concern for working parents due to skyrocketing costs as well as the increased number of women in the workforce. While less than 30 percent of women with children under the age of five held any form of employment in the 1960s, today the majority of mothers are employed. At the same time, however, the annual cost of childcare for one child under the age of five has risen to an all-time high of \$170 per week or approximately \$9,000 per year.²

This presents an urgent, unsolvable dilemma for many families: having one parent stay at home is as unfeasible for families that need the income as is paying for expensive childcare. The difficulties of finding affordable childcare not only increase unemployment but also perpetuate poverty as the constant struggle to find feasible arrangements limits the time parents can devote to work, training, and education.

While federal aid is meant to prevent these issues, existing aid is highly insufficient. The Child Care and Development Fund

KEY FACTS

- The annual cost of childcare for an infant at a childcare center is higher than the cost of tuition at an average four-year public institution in most states.⁶
- Low-income families spend the largest proportion of their income on childcare, at an average of 30 percent, compared to 18 percent for families within 100 to 200 percent of the poverty level and six percent for families with incomes at or above 200 percent of the poverty level.⁷
- Three out of four Americans support policies that would increase both the quality and affordability of childcare.8
- Twenty-two states had waiting lists for childcare assistance in 2011.9

(CCDF), which provides block grants to states for childcare assistance, is estimated to cover only one out of every six to eight eligible children.³

The single largest income support program for low-income families with children is the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC), which provides a credit of 20 to 35 percent of up to \$3,250 for taxpayers with qualifying expenses, and up to \$6,044 for taxpayers with three or more children. However, although the credit is intended to help low-income working taxpayers, it actually disproportionately favors higherincome families, with many low-income families unable to obtain the maximum benefits ⁴

As opposed to simply pouring money into inefficient policies, the government should seek to first improve aid programs by ensuring they primarily support their target populations. In particular, the CDCTC should be reformed to become fully refundable.

TALKING POINTS

- Many low-income families' efforts to find and keep employment are hindered by their inability to find affordable childcare.
- Reforming the CDCTC to be fully refundable would shift the base of its recipients from higher-income to low-income families, its intended beneficiaries.
- Improved childcare assistance policies are supported by the majority of Americans and are vital for enabling many parents to continue working.

ANALYSIS

On paper, the CDCTC appears to cater to low-income families: the credit system is inversely proportional, with higher credit rates going to families with lower income. However, because the CDCTC is mostly non-refundable, only families who owe federal income taxes can benefit. Since many low-income families owe little or no such taxes, they often fail to qualify for the maximum benefit. In 2013, it was estimated that the largest average benefits among families claiming the CDCTC went to those with incomes between \$100,000 and \$200,000. As well, families in the highest income quintile received the greatest share of the benefits.⁴

By making the CDCTC refundable, it can aid its actual targeted recipients – low-income taxpayers who often don't have tax liabilities. Furthermore, typical concerns of fraud are unsound considering research has proven that people have no more incentive to fraudulently claim a refundable tax credit than a nonrefundable credit.⁴

Next Steps

The most important step to take now is for federal legislators to propose a new bill or amend Senator Shaheen's currently stagnant bill to make the CDCTC fully refundable. Furthermore, Congress should ensure it is not merely read and referred to a committee where it may lie dormant until forgotten but rather debated adequately and promptly voted upon.

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Improving Business Improvement Districts Through Community Involvement

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Existing New York City statutes that require property owners to direct Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) should be modified to give control to anchor institutions and business owners, ensuring that BIDs serve as stewards for neighborhood improvement rather than tools for displacement.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are public-private partnerships that act as a form of hyperlocal governance. With over 1,000 chartered in the United States, BIDs are an increasingly popular strategy for economic development at the community level. Generally, BIDs function by levying an extra property tax on commercial properties in an established area. Revenues from this tax are filtered back into the community, where a board decides how to spend the money.

Currently, there are 70 BIDs in New York City, collectively handling over \$100 million in funds. The activities of BIDs may include neighborhood branding, holiday celebrations, garbage collection, and lobbying for government services. A board consisting of property owners, elected officials, and business owners sets the agenda and allocates funds. Property owners must hold a majority of seats.

Areas of New York City with BIDs have

KEY FACTS

- According to a 2008 study, 64 percent of small businesses in rapidly gentrifying Downtown Brooklyn did not feel represented by the BID.
- Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia allow BIDs, with the chartered amount continuing to increase each year.
- BIDs in lower-income areas are disproportionately more likely to contain "absentee landlords," who are property holders that are not a part of the neighborhood. In these communities, property owners are less likely to support equitable development.

lost mom-and-pop stores in favor of chain stores in the last decade, demonstrating that BID activity in New York City favors corporatization. A dramatic example is Fulton Mall, New York City's third most productive shopping district, which once served primarily lower-income black Brooklynites. The area BIDs supported a development project that replaced nearly all of the mom-and-pop stores with national chains, diverging from the historic character of the neighborhood. The BIDs could have functioned as a steward for equitable development rather than a buttress for displacement.

The New York City Council should amend existing statutes to grant equal representation to business owners, property owners, and anchor institutions (organizations with deep interest in the community, such as schools, museums, hospitals, libraries, and nonprofit service providers) on the boards of directors for Business Improvement Districts in New

TALKING POINTS

- Small businesses are integral to fostering neighborhood character.
- As a form of hyperlocal governance, BIDs should be especially responsive the needs of community members.
- Current statutes that require property owners to have a majority of seats on the board of directors are missing a key opportunity for community involvement.

York City. This change will ensure that BIDs can continue to provide the services that benefit all interests (such as security and public art) without facilitating neighborhood turnover.

ANALYSIS

Small businesses are beneficial to their neighborhoods, fostering a sense of community identity and directly boosting the local economy. Anchor institutions can provide a balanced perspective that supports the growth interests of community members. Such groups should have their positions weighed alongside those of property owners in BID discussions. This policy change would elevate the interests of the community so that they may be seriously considered.

The empowerment of business owners and anchor institutions would not hinder BIDs. By surveying the remaining small business

owners at Fulton Mall, researchers found that most would have embraced the redevelopment if it had included protections for small businesses (such as lease renewal guarantees) and the character of the neighborhood.

BIDs were created to help neighborhoods achieve their economic potential, but the current model may catalyze displacement. Allowing anchor institutions and local businesses to have an increased say in BID decision-making will ensure more equitable, bottom-up development for communities.

Next Steps

The New York City Council should pass legislation that mandates increased representation for small business owners and anchor institutions on the boards of directors of BIDs. The timeline and parameters that would make the transition seamless require further study. This change is politically feasible; progressives such as Mayor Bill de Blasio, City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, and Public Advocate Letitia James, who currently control the municipal government, have shown support for neighborhood autonomy and the empowerment of small business owners. This plan is scalable for use in other states and municipalities across the country. As BIDs become ubiquitous, we must ensure that they serve the economic needs of their communities.

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A Solution to NYCHA's Funding Crisis: Taxing Luxury Apartments

Benjamin Marchiony, George Washington University

To close the New York City Housing Authority's budget deficit, the city of New York should impose an extra property tax on Manhattan's luxury apartments.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) currently suffers a \$150 million-per-year budget deficit, which keeps It from providing for the poorest residents of the city. Meanwhile, the mean income of the top five percent of wealthiest households in Manhattan grew nine percent between 2012 and 2013.¹ The city should impose an extra, flat property tax on its most expensive apartments to effectively reduce the deficit and ensure the long-term stability of the public housing agency that houses 615,000 New Yorkers.²

In addition to the current deficit, NYCHA has a projected deficit of \$300 million per year through 2018.³ In 2014, the city itself paid for

KEY FACTS

- NYCHA has a \$300 million deficit through 2018.¹³
- Ten percent of Manhattan apartments cost more than \$3.25 million each.
- A luxury-apartment tax to fix NYCHA's current deficit would average about a 5 percent increase in property taxes on Manhattan luxury apartments.

\$17 million of NYCHA's budget, about 0.5 percent of the agency's total budget.⁴ The majority of NYCHA's funding consists of tenant rental revenue (33 percent) and a combination of various federal subsidies (66 percent).⁵ The amount of federal subsidies NYCHA receives varies year to year.

Luxury apartments are defined as the top 10 percent most expensive units, or apartments whose value is more than \$3.25 million.⁶ Between October 2013 and October 2014, the number of luxury apartments for sale in Manhattan doubled from 742 to 1,473 units.⁷ Capitalizing on this market trend, the city could levy a tax on this bracket of apartments, which—given there are 752,000 apartments

total in Manhattan—includes close to 75,000 units.8

If NYCHA's deficit problem is not solved, the agency will have to lay off 500 workers and remove 1,200 families from Section 8 housing, and low-income residents who remain in NYCHA facilities will face a \$690 yearly increase in rent.⁹ As average yearly rent is \$5,340 for public housing in New York,¹⁰ this amounts to an 11 percent increase in total housing costs for the 615,000 New Yorkers served by NYCHA.

To fix the NYCHA funding gap, an extra property tax should be levied on luxury apartments in Manhattan, defined as the top ten percent most expensive apartments. This will be a flat tax for apartments in this bracket, with each property owner paying an equal share of the \$300 million projected deficit.

TALKING POINTS

- If each owner of a luxury apartment in Manhattan were to pay a proportional share of NYCHA's deficit, the yearly cost would be less than 1/1000 of the value of each apartment.
- NYCHA houses 615,000 people, just over 7 percent of the city's population. If the agency's deficit is not paid for, the agency will have to evict 1,500 families and raise average yearly rent by \$690.14

ANALYSIS

A tax to close NYCHA's current deficit of \$150 million would amount to an average of \$2,000 per year on each Manhattan luxury apartment. On average, New York County residents pay 0.73 percent of total property value in taxes each year. Distributed evenly, this would average close to a 5 percent property tax increase for all Manhattan luxury apartment owners.

However, the NYCHA funding deficit could also be solved simply by extra appropriations from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, (HUD) or congressional appropriations, which the city is currently trying to obtain. In that case, the luxury apartment tax could still be in place but only be active when NYCHA has a funding gap. The city could also levy this tax for entirely different purposes, such as helping to fund Mayor Bill de Blasio's affordable housing program, which seeks to build 200,000 new units in ten

years.¹² This could be used in conjunction with his plan to build the apartments using the current inclusionary zoning policy.

Next Steps

Changes in NYC tax laws must be approved by the New York State legislature. The tax amount should be determined by dividing the NYCHA deficit by the number of apartments in the top ten percent.

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Rails with Trails: Promoting the Construction of Mixed-Use Trails Alongside New Jersey's Rail Lines

David Meni, George Washington University

The New Jersey State Legislature should amend land use statutes to facilitate the establishment of bicycle and pedestrian trails along active rail lines. Rails-with-trails can connect local economies and reduce the high rate of rail trespassing casualties.

The New Jersey State Committee on Transportation Choices has called for a significant reduction in the use of automobiles by 2030. Eighty-three percent of New Jersey residents drive to work; only 2.3 percent walk, and 0.2 percent take a bicycle. In addition to reducing congestion, mixed-use transit has economic benefits: cyclists and pedestrians make more visits to local businesses and spend more there per month than those who drive, even in suburban areas.

New Jersey also has a high rate of rail trespassing casualties.⁴ With 33 casualties in 2013, a 153 percent increase from the previous year, New Jersey is one of the top 10 worst states for rail trespassing.⁵

KEY FACTS

- Only 2.3 percent of New Jersey Residents walk to work; 0.2 percent take a bicycle.²¹
- New Jersey's rail trespassing casualty rate increased 153 percent from 2012 to 2013.²²
- New Jersey has more than 2,900 miles of freight and passenger rail lines.²³

Mixed-use trails, built alongside anything from freight lines to high-frequency Amtrak lines, have gained popularity as a means of increasing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.⁶ Rails-with-trails naturally improve rail safety, as the barriers and controlled crossings built alongside such trails mitigate trespassing.⁷

Rails-with-trails can usually be established in negotiation with only one property owner, and they provide an additional mobility option between pre-existing population and employment centers.

The New Jersey State Legislature should amend its Recreational Use Statute (RUS, which governs state recreational lands) to apply to the right-of-way corridors of railroads owned by NJ Transit and private companies, as well as trail managers within those properties. This would make negotiating the construction of a trail with railroad owners easier by protecting the railroad from excess trail-user liability and would make rail-with-trail acquisition and funding a part of the NJ Recreational Trails Program, which provides both state and federal funds to trail managers.⁸

ANALYSIS

New Jersey's rail system has more than 2,900 miles of track but only four miles of rail-with-trail. 9,10 The usage corridors of these railroads will continue to be an untapped resource until public statute facilitates easement negotiations. A more extensive rail-

TALKING POINTS

- The low grade of a rail line and the connection between existing population centers make rail corridors ideal candidates for mixeduse trails.²⁴
- Rails-with-trails significantly reduce rail trespassing and vandalism.²⁵
- The State of New Jersey should act as a facilitator of negotiations between trail managers and reticent railroad owners.

with-trail system can increase transit access to more than 400,000 households in New Jersey that do not have access to a car.11The most common objection to rails-with-trails is the lack of state protection in Recreational Use Statute liability insurance. 12 Amending this statute would thus facilitate trail-building negotiations.¹³ Railswith-trails address the issue of pedestrian trespassing. In 20 years, there has only been one recorded fatality along a rail-withtrail.¹⁴ Protective barriers are built along with the trail, which allows planners to control how users cross the tracks. Instead of imposing new costs, this policy would be incorporated into the \$1 million per year set aside for state trail grants.15 Rails-with-trails cost the same as a traditional mixed-use trail and are generally funded with a mix of federal, state, county, city, and private sources. 16 Policies in other states that encourage rails-with-trails have proved successful. In 1990, Pennsylvania passed a Rails-to-Trails Act, amending the Pennsylvania RUS and establishing best practices for building railswith-trails.¹⁷ There are now more than 52 miles of rails-with-trails in Pennsylvania.¹⁸ Similar policies exist in Wisconsin, Michigan, and New Hampshire.19

Next Steps

The New Jersey State Legislature should take immediate action to amend its Recreational Use Statute to extend liability protection to rails-with-trails, a category currently excluded from the NJ RUS.²⁰ The New Jersey Recreational Trails program should undertake a feasibility study of rail-with-trail acquisition and construction, particularly with property owned by NJ Transit, highlighting areas well-suited to trails. The Department of Parks and Forests and the Recreational Trails Program should establish a set of best practices for trail managers to follow when negotiating acquisition of rail rights-of-way. Following these studies, the State Legislature should pass a more comprehensive rail-with-trail bill similar to the 1990 Rails-to-Trails Act in Pennsylvania.

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Modernizing Maryland's Tax System: Authorizing the Use of Pre-Populated Personal Tax Returns

Brianna Starosciak and David Meni, George Washington University

Maryland's General Assembly should authorize the establishment of a pre-populated personal tax return (PPTR) system for simple returns to reduce the state's cost of processing returns, improve accuracy, and create a straightforward service for Maryland taxpayers.

Americans spend 1.35 billion hours per year filing individual tax returns.1 Eighty-nine percent of individuals turn to professional services or purchase tax software because of the complexities of tax compliance.2 However, tax bureaus already receive most of the information that taxpayers have to provide for simple returns. With congressional authorization, tax bureaus can provide pre-populated tax returns (PPTR) for taxpayers to accept or correct.3 These systems have been implemented in many jurisdictions, including Denmark, Sweden. Estonia. Finland. Chile, and the province of Quebec.4 All of these programs have reported lower administrative costs.

In 2011, two bills were introduced in the U.S. Congress calling for implementation of a national PPTR.⁵ Both bills died in

KEY FACTS

- PPTR users have an error rate 10 times lower than those in a control group (includes tax software and selfcompliance).²⁰
- Time spent filing a tax return can be reduced by 80 percent with a PPTR.²¹
- PPTRs have been proven to save the implementing government \$2.25 per return.²²
- California's ReadyReturn program has a satisfaction rate of 98 percent.

committee, largely due to lobbying by tax-preparation companies.⁶ However, in 2004 California implemented a PPTR program called ReadyReturn.⁷ In 2009, the California Franchise Tax Board saved \$2.25 per ReadyReturn participant (\$360,000 in savings for a pilot of 160,000 users).^{8,9}

By passing bill. an authorization the Maryland General Assembly aive can the Maryland Department of State and Comptroller the power to create a PPTR system based on Maryland's iFile electronic return infrastructure. 10,11 A taxpayer would electronically access a tax return pre-filled by the Comptroller with information that is already known from I-9s and other similar forms. The user would then be able to review and correct any information before submitting the return.

ANALYSIS

With the General Assembly's authorization, the Maryland Comptroller can provide preprepared returns to the 2.8 million individual taxpayers in Maryland.¹² Initially the program would apply to taxpayers who take the basic deduction and receive most of their income from wages—about two-thirds of taxpayers, primarily from the lower and middle classes. Nearly all individual taxpayers could be eligible within three to five years.¹³

A taxpayer spends an average of \$30 filing state tax returns, which means Maryland taxpayers could end up spending up to \$60 million per year on tax preparation; a PPTR system could bring that number to zero.¹⁴ The simple format of a PPTR would allow taxpayers to spend on average 80 percent less time on each return, with a tenfold lower error rate compared with control groups.^{15,16}

This program would also reduce noncompliance.¹⁷

A pre-populated method could save the state up to 89 percent of the cost of each return, which could lead to \$4 million or more in state savings given full program buy-in. Yearly administrative costs can be kept constant at \$100,000-\$200,000, which would be more

TALKING POINTS

- Pre-populated tax returns benefit both taxpayers and state governments by reducing compliance burdens and cutting overall costs.
- PPTR has bipartisan support but has been opposed nationally by tax preparation companies. Statelevel implementation has been able to circumvent this influence.
- PPTR will immediately benefit lower- and middle-class families while also saving the government time and money.
- At least eight other countries, as well as Quebec and California, have successfully introduced a pre-populated return; nearly all taxpayers who use these systems are satisfied with them and continue to use them.²⁴

than offset by the program's savings.¹⁹

Maryland is an excellent candidate for this system because tax companies like Intuit currently have little lobbying influence there, making this proposal more politically feasible than at a federal level or in many neighboring states.

Next Steps

Several administrative costs should be analyzed before implementing PPTR in Maryland. Returns must be processed earlier, and supplementary information would have to be received from employers. A pilot program of 30,000 to 50,000 participants should be run for one to two years. After the pilot, program eligibility should be expanded to all simple returns, with potential for future expansion. After full rollout, a budget should be appropriated by the Maryland Comptroller to advertise the system.

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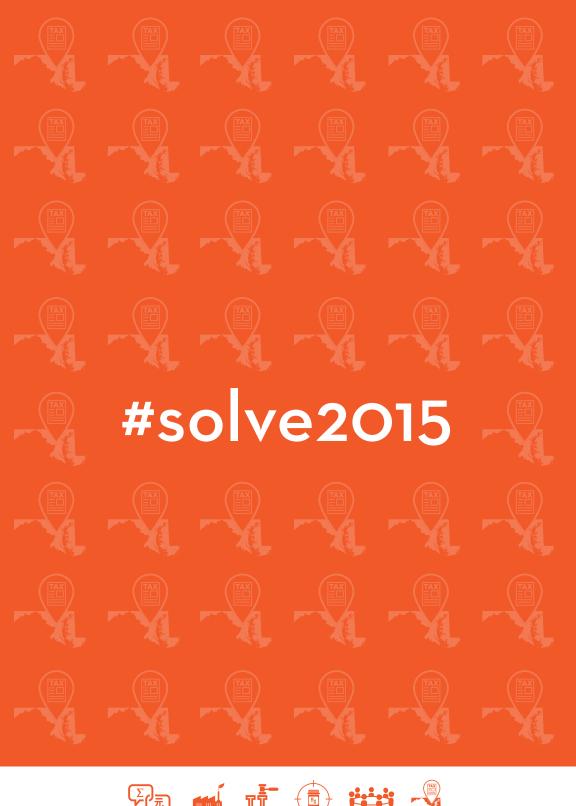
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POLICY OF THE YEAR NOMINEE:

The Consent Concern:
Addressing Sexual
Assault at the
University of Georgia



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In this year's 10 Ideas journal, we present some of most promising and innovative ideas from students in our network. With chapters on 120 campuses in 38 states, from Los Angeles, California, to Conway, Arkansas, to New York City, we have the potential to effect policy ideas that transcend the parameters of our current national debate. Our student authors push for practical, community-focused solutions, from using pavement to improve sanitation in Louisville, Kentucky, to creating community benefit agreements for

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Policy matters most when we take it beyond the page and bring it to the communities and institutions that can turn it into reality. Many of the students in this year's publication have committed to pressing for impact. They're connecting with decision-makers in city halls and state capitols, armed with the power of their own ideas.

The breadth and depth of our network is reflected in the diversity of the proposals featured in this journal. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much we did. The next generation of innovative minds and passionate advocates is here, and it's changing this country one idea at a time.

Sincerely,

Joelle Gamble
National Director
Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Cali Callaway

author of The Consent Concern: Addressing Sexual Assault at the University of Georgia

Nominee for Policy Of The Year

A jury of Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network members, staff, and alumni select one piece from each journal to nominate for the honor of Policy of the Year. We base our nominees off of the quality of idea, rigor of research and potential for implementation. The cover design of this journal portrays this year's nominee in visual form.

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The Consent Concern: Addressing Sexual Assault at the University of Georgia

Cali Callaway, University of Georgia

With four separate on-campus entities with varying definitions of consent overseeing sexual assault response at the University of Georgia (UGA), unnecessary convulsion of institutional policy significantly contributes to the severe underreporting of this heinous crime. To simplify and standardize policy between state law and school proceedings, the state of Georgia should enact a consistent, formal definition of consent for application to the university system and its flagship institution.

The Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) is responsible for all sexual assaults that take place on campus, connect to UGA programs, or threaten the community. These incidences are handled by the Title IX Coordinator, a federally mandated position in EOO, and her team of investigators who act under their formal definition of consent. If this policy alone defined the procedure for sexual assault response at UGA, students would have a clear standard for action; however, three additional entities also oversee the handling of these cases.

If an act of sex violence occurs at the hands of a UGA student outside the "University Community," the student faces investigation from Judiciary, a board of peers tasked with evaluating violations of the UGA Code of

KEY FACTS

- Only 1 percent of an estimated 1,200 sexual assaults were reported to UGA campus police in 2013.^{11,12}
- Perpetrators are often serial offenders, averaging 5.6 rapes per person.¹³
- The Campus Sexual Assault study found 19 percent of women and 6 percent of men claimed to have experienced attempted or completed sexual assault during college.¹⁴

Conduct. This document, which clearly defines the standard of actions for UGA students, does not have a definition of consent.³

Relationship The and Sexual Violence (RSVP) Prevention Office. which responsible for aiding students in need, their own "aold maintains standard" through definition shared educational seminars.4 Additionally, UGA Police operate under Georgia State Law, which lacks a formal definition of consent.

Four separate bodies in different locations on campus are simultaneously holding students to different standards. Even university faculty members are often unaware of the steps to take in the event a student seeks their aid during a crisis.⁵ It's unreasonable to

TALKING POINTS

- Both a national grass roots movement and federal governmental activities set the stage for action in Georgia.
- Georgia would be the first Southern state to overtly respond to this issue.

expect students to know and abide by policies that experts in the field fail to grasp. Until these inconsistencies are addressed on a scale larger than the university, false information will continue to circulate throughout the student body.

In order to improve both campus understanding and legal proceedings, the Georgia Legislature should adopt a formal definition of consent to be applied at UGA and the University System of Georgia.

ANALYSIS

In the state of Georgia, all sex crimes are defined as committing a specific sexual act without consent; however, consent is not defined. This unfortunate reality means determining the validity of a charge depends upon a nebulous cloud of questions determined by an officer, judge, or university administrator. This policy eliminates the discrepancy between academic and legal entities by providing a standard upon which students can guide their decisions and investigators can choose their questions. In other words, the university would abide by word of law instead of informal school code.

Given clear misconceptions about sexual assault, clarifying this definition would also help to dispel some of the notions that drive sexual decision-making. A recent survey found that 35 percent of college-aged men reported that friends thought getting a woman drunk for sex was acceptable.8 Considering that 73 percent of all assaults occur at the hands of an acquaintance, it follows that many men and women committing these crimes just need education.9

Media attention, as demonstrated by the California "yes means yes" policy, would further highlight the importance of this issue, educate the public, and allow for open dialogue about sexual assault. 10 All of these benefits come only at the cost of time and effort required to lobby current legislators. The Republican-dominated House of Representatives could dissent, but national momentum may sway opinions.

Next Steps

RSVP, UGA Police, EOO, and University Judiciary should partner to agree on a single definition of consent. Key student groups should also work with UGA to pressure the state legislature and the Governor's policy office for change. A group of Georgia lawmakers must eventually respond to this pressure from students and administrators and propose this definition to the legislature.

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Social Reparations: Re-Allocating Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Profits Toward Sexual Assault Care

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Due to Virginia's inadequate education on sexual assault prevention and inaccessible after-care, the Commonwealth should re-allocate 20 percent of profits made by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Department to provide sexual assault services to college students on public university campuses.

Since 1975, the cost of college has tripled.² In 1997, the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund was created to include services and compensation for victims of any crime due to the rapid increase of reported cases of sexual assault.¹ Sexual assault

is defined by the Department of Justice as "any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient." Survivors are required to go through a forensic examination with intent to prosecute. Intending to prosecute is a significant responsibility put on recent survivors, and few alternatives exist; so, they are forced either to consent to this procedure and report the case or say nothing.

Most sexual assaults occur on weekends between the hours of midnight and 6:00 AM.³ On-campus student health services at public universities are generally open during daytime hours on weekdays.

In April 2014, President Obama launched the "It's on Us" campaign to increase campuses' awareness of sexual assault and equip them

KEY FACTS

- The Department of Justice defines sexual assault as "any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient." 10
- College-aged women are four times more likely to face sexual assault than any other age group.¹¹
- At least 79 percent of reported sexual assault cases occur when at least one party is under the influence of alcohol.¹²

with tools to prevent sexual violence on campus. The campaign has been successful in creating a dialogue on campus for students to become informed; however, it is not a comprehensive project that provides care for victims, nor does it introduce a permanent plan to educate students on the topic.

Because one in five women is sexually assaulted on college campuses,⁴ it makes symbolic sense to use that fraction to represent the amount of profit reallocated from the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) towards the creation of new programs and after-care options for victims. The ABC brings in \$134 million in profit each year.⁵ 20 percent would be approximately \$27 million to go towards the creation of programming on Virginia public college campuses.

TALKING POINTS

- The number of reported sexual assault cases doubled between 2012 and 2013 at the University of Virginia.¹³
- There is no center that directly works to prevent sexual assault at universities in Virginia.
- Given the definition of sexual assault, one in 12 collegeaged men admit to perpetrating this crime at some point in their college career.¹⁴

ANALYSIS

According to the Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 79 percent of reported sexual assaults occur when at least one party was under the influence of alcohol.⁶ Alcohol is often used as a scapegoat either to blame the victim or safeguard the perpetrator, and ABC should take responsibility.

The services provided will include the creation of an "after-hours" clinic, open 24 hours and staffed with one to two nurses. Based on Virginia averages, staffing each public university 24 hours a day, 365 days a year would cost approximately \$286,000.7 Additionally, programming on how to prevent sexual assault will be provided to educate students and staff to establish a standard of care. Such services are not provided at public universities in Virginia.

George Mason University (GMU) has very comprehensive options for "after-hours" healthcare, whereby an on-call nurse is available for students to contact at any hour, but this is not enough to give care immediately. Moreover, GMU provides only after-care services, not preventative ones. Preventative education must be provided if universities hope to decrease sexual assault on campus.

Next Steps

Due to extremely low tobacco costs in Virginia, the Commonwealth should lobby Big Tobacco to raise taxes to make up reallocated ABC profits. There is currently a \$0.30 excise tax on a pack of cigarettes in the Commonwealth, and, in fiscal year 2013, \$169 million was generated in revenue for the Commonwealth.8 If Virginia doubled the tax, the number of smokers would stay relatively the same, with a decrease of only one cigarette per day on average. 9 The ABC reallocation program could then be scaled to move into other states with similar alcohol regulations. By successfully piloting such a program in Virginia, this campaign has the potential to be implemented on every public university campus in the country.

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Raising the Bars: Holding Arizona Private Prisons Accountable

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The Arizona Department of Corrections should create more rigorous standards for private prison contracts that take into account outcomes, and allow an open bidding process when contracts are renegotiated.

Privatization of the prison system, which began with a bid by the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) in 1985, has expanded since its introduction as a result of more than \$45. million spent on campaign donations and lobbying.1 Where there were once only five private prisons with 2,000 inmates, there are now over one hundred institutions for 62,000 people.² In Arizona, the CCA's lobbying, led by Chuck Coughlin, a close friend and advisor to Governor Jan Brewer and former U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini, has led to new contracts.3 That very same year in 2012, Governor Brewer increased the Arizona Department of Corrections' budget by \$10 million, the only major department that did not receive a cut.4 Last year, the CCA reaped more than \$162 million in profit, with over 57 percent of the income stemming from state contracts. 5 Currently, Arizona contracts are based on occupancy quotas in which the state guarantees a payment based on a predetermined level of occupancy regardless of actual occupancy. This reduces the prison's financial risk, but burdens taxpayers.⁶ The Arizona private prison system is trapped in a cycle that rewards lobbying for tougher

KEY FACTS

- Arizona Department of Correction reviews have found that Arizona private prisons cost more than their public equivalents, with the state overpaying these private institutions by \$10 million.¹²
- The three largest private prison corporations MTC,¹³ CCA,¹⁴ and GEO¹⁵ Group have donated tens of thousands of dollars to campaigns and PACs in Arizona, alongside traditional lobbying.
- There is currently a severe lack of accountability and oversight in Arizona private prisons – despite recent reforms, private prisons are still not held accountable to the state or taxpayers.¹⁶

sentences and laws,⁷ which lead to a higher incarceration rate, with little accountability.

Arizona should develop a holistic rubric that covers both the inputs and the outputs, providing specific targets for programs aimed at improving the wellbeing of inmates and truly achieving cost effectiveness. With a limited 15-year contract term, these criterions will be used in the rebidding process where the public and private sectors can both compete to earn the renewed contract, ultimately achieving improved outcomes and reduced costs.

ANALYSIS

The holistic rubric includes specific inputs such as price, security, and health standards and outputs including literacy levels and recidivism. These contracts should provide goals and better living condition standards. All contracts should be limited to a 15-year term, at the end of which both other private

TALKING POINTS

- Private prisons in Arizona are making millions in profit while conditions are substandard.
- Private prison corporations are lobbying for more punitive policy to increase profit, as well as for the construction of new prisons.
- Minimal oversight results in prisons escapes and drug use.
- Arizona public prisons have been proven to be more cost-effective than uncompetitive private ones.

prison corporations and public sector institutions can bid on the renewed contract. Competition between firms and the public sector will reduce the sizeable profit margins that are currently extracted through contracts and encourage innovation and cross-fertilization of methods and ideas among public and private prisons. This model has been proven successful in both the UK and Australia. In addition, due to more competitive pricing, this system will significantly reduce the marginal return for lobbying undertaken by the private prison corporations. The policy would affect the nearly 7,000 inmates that are incarcerated in private Arizona prisons and those that are at risk of becoming imprisoned. Between 1979 and 2009, the number of felony adult offenders increased almost 12-fold, and as of June 2010, 14 percent of these inmates were housed in private prison. Private prisons have higher rates of inmate violence and substance

abuse issues than many publicly run facilities, and also face a higher degree of major incidences such as escapes.¹¹

Next Steps

The initial steps to the implementation of this policy would be the drafting of a new set of metrics by which to judge private prisons. This rubric would be passed to the legislature and codified along with a provision allowing for contract renewals to be subject to rebidding. Contract renewals should be subject to the new contracting procedure and any new private prisons should meet the rigorous standards for both inputs and outcomes. As competition between private firms increases, occupancy quotas should be phased out to ensure that the Arizona taxpayers reap the cost-saving benefits promised by privatization.

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Equal Internet Access for Equal Opportunity

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In order to help address the educational, health, and economic disparities faced by residents of the Bronx and Brooklyn as well as other low-income New York City residents, Internet services should be provided within the Section 8 units codes followed by the New York City Housing Authority.

Low-income New York tenants, especially in the Bronx and Brooklyn, suffer from a lack of Internet access. Such lack of access hinders economic, educational, health, and community opportunities. In addition, the lower average wages of the Bronx and Brooklyn's residents¹ compared to those of Manhattan and Queens are correlated with lack of Internet access.

As a result, low-income residents find it difficult to access job opportunities, informational resources, and vital social communications online. They rely on public services such as libraries.² Internet services provided by libraries are limited by timed sessions, and the volume of computer use desired by many residents in the same plight creates long waits.

The New York City government currently supports its low and mid-income residents through the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). NYCHA provides housing assistance through programs such Section 8 Leased Housing, Section 8 units are privately owned, with rental rates set at no more than 30 percent of the tenants' monthly income.3 The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development distributes funds to local public housing agencies to administer vouchers to Section 8 residents.4

KEY FACTS

- 37 percent of Bronx residents and 24 percent of Brooklyn residents do not have access to the Internet.¹¹
- 36 percent of the respondents who did not have Internet access blamed cost related factors such as high monthly bills and activation fees.¹⁰
- Low-income residents rely on limited public services for job searches and educational resources.²

New York City has taken measures to address this disparity of Internet access. Programs such as the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program and Digital Vans provide computer use to NYCHA residents for job searching and resume development. However, these public services are also limited by timed sessions or temporary services, which makes it difficult to search for jobs or contact friends and families. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays, Digital Vans provide computer labs to allow NYCHA residents to work on their resumes or search for jobs online; however, the Digital Vans change locations every day, and NYCHA residents must therefore wait for certain dates to use these vans. The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program is also of limited availability. In fact, the last program listed on NYCHA website was from October 2013 to December 2013.

ANALYSIS

The Internet is known to provide job opportunities, communication access, and educational resources: McKinsey & Company reports that Internet access creates jobs. Facebook and Deloitte have also released a study documenting social benefits of providing Internet. These benefits include, among others, better healthcare knowledge and access, learning resources, and the sense of inclusion within communities. The sense of inclusion within communities.

According to Figure 1, the Bronx and Brooklyn have the most Section 8 units under lease in all the boroughs. Section 8 landlords are only required to adopt Housing Quality Standards (HQS), which do not include Internet access or any other telecommunication amenities. Requiring Section 8 landlords to provide Internet services to tenants will be an effective starting point to address this disparity of access.

Landlord provision of Internet for Section 8 residents will reduce the cost of technological access. Although some might still need to buy hardware (computers, laptops, or other mobile devices), the extra burden of monthly

TALKING POINTS

- Providing Internet access to lowincome residents will create more jobs opportunities.
- The mandate to provide access within NYCHA Section 8 housing will be an effective start to combating the Internet access disparity in New York City.
- The policy can be replicated in other cities in an effort to promote greater access to resources promoting healthcare, education, and social connection.

payments and activation fees will be removed. The 2010 Federal Communication Commission report indicated that these service

costs are the main reasons why residents do not have Internet services. Removing these costs will help low-income residents.

Next Steps

Internet services should be mandated within Section 8 units' HQS adopted by the NYCHA. Furthermore, it should be required of landlords so that it does not increase the tenants' costs. Within the first three months of implementation, the NYCHA should collaborate with the New York City Department of Information Technology to determine the appropriate bandwidth requirement. Primary stakeholders, including Section 8 landlords and NYC government, should be informed of the economic development opportunities gained by providing such services. It should be made clear to Section 8 landlords that increased job opportunities can provide higher and more stable incomes for tenants. Since Section 8 rent is set based on income, landlords benefit from tenants' improved financial position. In order to pressure the NYC government to adopt such measures, Section 8 tenants should mobilize via grassroots campaign. They should inform their local council member of the benefits of increased Internet access to low-income New York residents whose access has been limited up to now.

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Integration of Child Refugees: International Academy Models in D.C. Public Schools

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With the influx of unaccompanied minors from Central America into the U.S., D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) should widely integrate international academy models to help young refugees transition with better language support and cultural immersion.

Since 2011, there has been an ever-growing number of unaccompanied minor refugees from Central America entering the U.S. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the number of unaccompanied minors apprehended at the border soared from 4,059 in 2011 to more than 68,000 in 2014.^{1,2} Though a program that promises to grant refugee status to minors from Central America was implemented in December, social welfare provisions and refugee integration efforts have yet to be improved.3 Currently, the School Impact program under the Office of Refugee Resettlement serves a subsidiary function by providing funding to relevant initiatives.4 As more minors will obtain refugee status under a recent White House program, D.C. public schools should actively institute substantive policies to serve the educational needs of these children.

KEY FACTS

- Of the 37,000 children who have crossed the border since January 2014, 7.56 percent of them have ended up in the D.C. area, a disproportionately large number for the region's size.¹²
- INPS has established 17 schools for immigrant children over 30 years. In 2011, students in INPS schools in New York had the lowest dropout rate (9 percent) compared to ELL students in New York City (20 percent) and in the state of New York (21 percent). 13
- From June 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, INPS spent \$610,967 on new school development, 25.3 percent of its annual expenses. In comparison, model dissemination cost (\$508,064) was 21.5 percent and professional training (\$592,006) 24.5 percent.¹⁴

An international academy is a school system integrated within public schools that provides strong additional

academic, and development language, support for English language learners (ELL).5 Based on the expertise of the nonprofit organization Internationals Network of Public Schools (INPS), Cardozo Education Campus in Columbia Heights launched its new international academy this year.⁶ The impetus was the big shift in demographics - 90 more non-English speaking immigrant students in the 2013-2014 school vear.7 DCPS should expand Cardozo's integrative model into other D.C. public schools.8

ANALYSIS

Cardozo's international academy has now 165 ninth and tenth graders, over 90 percent of who are native Spanish speakers.4 Unlike a traditional language immersion program, the international academy format allows ELL students to work in their native languages in small settings, so that students are no longer self-conscious of their limited English ability and are more willing to collaborate and get involved.9 Moreover, integrating international academies into public high schools allows for cultural immersion through interactions with native-speaking students and various after-school programs. In future years, the academy will also help students find internships and make their college or career plans.7

TALKING POINTS

- With the surge of refugee children arrivals, there is urgent need to provide stronger educational and social integration support for them.
- The combined academy models are not only more effective than traditional ELL programs but are also more cost-efficient than founding separate international schools.
- Cardozo's pilot program has seen positive feedback from students and teachers.
- Investment in language support and cultural integration through education can have a long-term positive impact on the lives of the immigrant children as well as D.C. public schools' overall performance.

The combined model is also more cost-efficient compared to establishing separate international schools, as teaching staff can be shared and resource use maximized. Manhattan International High School, an independent school for ELL students, for example, spent a total of \$16,832 on each student in the 2011-12 academic year. In comparison, Cardozo Education Campus has projected to spend

Finally, DCPS can seize this opportunity to accomplish its commitment to "better schools for all children" in the D.C. community.⁹ The program could successfully increase graduation rates: with language support, ELL students are less likely to drop out.

Next Steps

The project should be proposed in annual DCPS public budget hearings, where principals, parents, NGOs, and community leaders can further determine the program's scope and funding needs. To apply professional pedagogic knowledge, DCPS should work closely with INPS to monitor the performance results. Admission of students should not be limited to D.C., but should also include adjacent areas that have taken in refugees who would be better served in this program, if need be. Collaborating with the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which runs under the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, can also generate monetary and data support.

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Labor Unchained: Voluntary Labor Rights and Equitable Wages for Incarcerated Americans

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The American prison system exploits the autonomy of inmates by forcing them to perform captive labor at inadequate rates. Prison labor should instead be voluntary, allowing inmates to choose to work at sufficient wages.

Involuntary servitude has unfortunately been a mainstay of American society since our founding. While the Thirteenth Amendment banned chattel slavery, it did not end the practice of slavery for inmates, as it reads, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States."

To fill the cheap labor vacuum left by abolition, the prison population expanded due to punitive black codes, and penal servitude was used for duties previously performed by slaves. Penal servitude and the convict-lease system were the precursors to our contemporary prison labor system. To this day, inmates are forced to pick crops and manufacture goods for wages as low as \$0.23 per hour federally and for no wages at all in some states.²

The formal creation of the modern prison labor system began with a federal statute in 1930 allowing inmates to work.³ In 1934,

KEY FACTS

- The Crime Control Act of 1990 requires all physically able inmates in federal penitentiaries to work, which is reflected in 99,339 out of 117,949 federal inmates who were given labor assignments in 2003.8
- Refusal to work can carry severe consequences, with punishments including loss of credit for reduced sentences, fewer privileges, and even solitary confinement.9
- Well-implemented work in prisons provides valuable vocational training, which reduces recidivism for participating inmates by 43 percent and increases post-release employment by 13 percent.¹⁰

Executive Order 6917 created Federal Prison Industries, Inc., which

sells goods produced in prisons to federal government agencies.⁴

Creating a voluntary prison labor system would end the practice of involuntary servitude within prisons. Georgia's high incarceration rate and \$0 per hour prison labor wage make it an ideal site for a pilot program that could be expanded nationwide. Wages would be calculated for labor to meet demand and allow prisoners to choose to work for the wage offered. Inmate choice would settle wages at an equilibrium with smaller deductions, incentivizing inmates to work and vice-versa, thus making the prison labor market efficient. This would balance equitable compensation for inmate work and the governmental demand to offset incarceration costs.

ANALYSIS

Voluntary prison labor is a direct solution to a problem with deep historical roots, as it would apply free market principles behind bars. As seen in the voluntary prison labor economic model presented, inmate wages would settle at the rate that enough prisoners would be willing to work for. An agency or firm contracting with the prison

TALKING POINTS

- Prisoners do not need coercive penalties to work, provided that wages are equitable enough to incentivize participation.
- Inmate work can be a productive use of prison time if it helps instill the ethics of fair pay for hard work.
- Providing income for an inmate's savings account provides a stronger safety net upon release and can help support any dependents outside.
- The United States needs to take a definitive stance on whether the use of unfree, forced labor in any form should continue to be tolerated.

would thus have the economic pressure to provide enough wages to incentivize a sufficient number of inmates to meet the labor demanded. Prison revenues generated from the contracted work would continue to benefit existing government purposes such as offsetting incarceration costs and victim restitution.

There is no need to force inmates to work if they are justly compensated. Providing fair pay would help break the poverty trap that incarceration often worsens by providing inmates with the savings and training needed for successful release.⁵

Next Steps

The Georgia legislature should amend current prison statutes to end mandatory work details and eliminate the \$0 per hour maximum wage cap.6 The issue should then be brought before other state legislatures to amend their laws and statutes governing inmate labor, allowing inmates to opt-in to work without incurring punitive repercussions for non-participation. After the success of these programs is evaluated, there should be a congressional hearing in the House or Senate Judiciary Committee about involuntary prison labor to consider the issue and increase knowledge of the widespread exploitation of involuntary prison labor. Federal policymakers should then amend Title XXIX §2905 of the Crime Control Act of 1990 to make inmate labor voluntary.7 They should also eliminate the \$1.15 per hour federal maximum wage cap, which underprices inmate work.2

- 1 U.S. Constitution, Ammendment XIII. 1865.
- 2 Peter Wager. "Prison Labor." The Prison Index. http://www.prisonpolicy.org/prisonindex/prisonlabor.html (accessed November 15, 2014)
- 3 An Act to Provide for the Diversification of Employent of Federal Prisoners, for Their Trading and Schooling and Occupation for Other Purposes. In 340, III.; United States of America. May 27, 1930.
- 4 Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Executive Order 6917 Establishing the Federal Prison Industries, Inc." (1934) 5 Joseph R. Biden. "Crime Control Act of 1990." (1990).
- 6 John Tierney. "Prison and the Poverty Trap." The New York Times, Feb 18, 2013.
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Illegal Guns in Chicago: Holding Firearm Buyers and Sellers Accountable

Michael Miller, Northwestern University

Chicago's poorest neighborhoods suffer from disproportionate violence caused by illegal guns flowing into the city. The state of Illinois, while working with other states in the region, must begin licensing and monitoring gun stores to prevent gun trafficking.

The gun violence epidemic takes especially hard toll in all urban areas where social problems from poverty to mass incarceration spur crime, but Chicago faces a tide of gun violence unseen even in other large cities. Chicago had a gun homicide rate of 13.39 per 100,000 in 2011, compared with a rate of 5.93 in Los Angeles and 3.84 in New York City.1 Such a high rate stems from the sheer presence of illegal guns in the city, as "Chicago recovers seven times as many crime guns per capita as New York City and double the number per capita of Los Angeles."2 All these illegal guns are not solely Chicago's problem, as the majority of crime guns recovered in the city were actually first purchased outside of Illinois.3 For the guns that did originate locally, however, just four gun stores (three in Illinois and one in Indiana) accounted for 20 percent of all crime guns recovered by police from 2009-2013.4 Oftentimes these stores sell guns to "straw purchasers," who are legal gun buyers obtaining guns for criminals or traffickers.5

In order to hold the specific stores that

- More than 25 percent of guns recovered at Chicago crime scenes from 2008 to 2012 were bought in Cook County just outside the city limits, with one store (Chuck's Gun Shop) accounting for more than 1,300 guns on its own.¹¹
- States with weaker gun laws provide 60 percent of guns recovered at Chicago crime scenes, with Indiana alone supplying almost 20 percent.¹²
- Unlike states such as California and New York, Illinois currently does not license and regulate gun dealers operating within the state.¹³

supply crime guns accountable, Illinois must enact a state licensing and review framework for gun shops with specific emphasis on known key sources of guns. Recommended measures include stronger employee background checks, better employee training for detecting potential straw purchasers, and video cameras to record the point of sale.⁶ Illinois must also work closely with neighboring states to track guns trafficked across their borders.

ANALYSIS

The specific stores that supply the most guns to Chicago are well-known, so state-level regulations focusing on these stores will have a large impact on the flow of illegal guns. In New York City, similar policies to those proposed here were implemented in 2006, and guns supplied by the top sources of crime guns in the city subsequently dropped by 85 percent. Furthermore, new regulations must be enforced by state inspection due to the strained capacities of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, which is only permitted to conduct one

TALKING POINTS

- Illegal guns tear apart Chicago communities through violence. Other social problems become even worse when illegal guns are pervasive in these communities.
- Decisive action against known sources of illegal guns is the most immediate way to stop the flow of these guns. Without prioritizing source inspection, any system to curb illegal guns will be incomplete.
- Guns don't respect political boundaries. Chicago's gun regulations don't work when laws elsewhere are ineffective.

inspection per year and often only inspects a store once every few years.⁸ In states that do regularly inspect gun stores, fewer guns sold in-state end up in the hands of criminals than in states without such inspections.⁹ Considering the Chicago Police Department spends 44 percent of its overtime payments sending officers to high-crime areas, this policy will lower the crime-fighting costs of an overburdened police force.¹⁰

Next Steps

State and regional level responses to combat gun trafficking will be most feasible in the current political climate. The Illinois legislators whose districts suffer the most from gun violence must lead the effort to draft legislation modeled on this policy and build a coalition supporting this effort. Such leadership is necessary to overcome reluctance from other lawmakers to support gun regulations.

For adequate enforcement mechanisms, lawmakers should be sure to allow law enforcement the ability to inspect stores when necessary with an ample budget to do so. Finally, after Illinois has an established gun accountability system, the state must join forces with its neighbors to create a regional tracing center for gun flows across state lines.

- 1 City of Chicago- Office of the Mayor, Chicago Police Department, Tracing the Guns: The Impact of Illegal Guns on Violence in Chicago: May 27, 2014, http://www.cityofchicago.org/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2014/May/05.27.14TracingGuns.pdf (accessed November 26, 2014).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid. 5 Ibid.
- 5 IDIO.
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- 13 Ibid.

Baltimore's LGBTQ Homeless¹ Youth: Housing Guaranteed

Maxen Jack-Monroe, Goucher College

There is a need for emergency shelters to guarantee housing – at least 10 beds at each major shelter – specifically for LGBTQ homeless and housing insecure youth in Baltimore.

Approximately 40 percent of homeless youth between the ages of 12 and 24, nationwide identify as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning).² Due to discrimination against sexual orientation and trans* identities, many LGBTQ youth are at high risk of being rejected from homeless shelters, or forced to dress in clothes and placed into housing not in line with their gender identity, or experiencing harassment, violence, and sexual assault.3 Many shelters say they do not have the funding to improve services for LGBTQ youth.4 In Baltimore, MD, there are no shelters or set amount of beds designated specifically for LGBTO teens and young adults.

There needs to be a guarantee for safe and equitable housing for LGBTQ youth in Baltimore. A set amount of the city's Continuum of Care (CoC) funds should be designated to set aside 10 beds at each state-funded shelter in the city. Furthermore, each shelter must have high-quality, low-cost continuing competence training for staff in

KEY FACTS

- At least 3000 people experience homelessness on any given night in Baltimore.8
- Nationwide, about half of all LGBTQ youth are rejected from their family, and of these, about 26 percent reported parents or guardians who "told them to leave home after learning of their sexual orientation or gender identity." 9
- Only about 10 percent of LGBTQ youth in the U.S. have received sexual education, which leads to heightened risk of transmitting STIs and HIV/AIDS.¹⁰

order to address needs that pertain to LGBTQ homeless and unstably housed youth.⁵

ANALYSIS

In 2013 and 2014, the Washington D.C. City Council passed the LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Amendment Act. This bill states that 10 beds in each of the District's emergency shelters must be set aside for LGBTQ youth. If the D.C. city government complies with this policy, safety and comfort will be guaranteed each night for a high percentage of this population. In addition, the Wanda Alston House, founded in 2008, is the only example of transitional housing in D.C. that exclusively houses LGBTQ homeless youth.⁶

What makes safe and equitable housing such an immediate need is the high rates of discrimination, sexual assault, and violence in homeless shelters that lead many LGBTQ youth to avoid shelters as much as possible. It is common for members of this population

TALKING POINTS

- There is no housing designated for LGBTQ youth in the city of Baltimore.
- LGBTQ homeless youth are often victims of hate crimes, both in the street and in shelters.
- As a disproportionate number of homeless youth are LGBTQ-identified, funding should be directed towards guaranteeing housing for this population.

to sleep at friends' houses, or even participate in survival sex, with the possibility of spending the night at a client's home. Safe and equitable housing can only be accomplished through staff monitoring client behavior, and intervening as necessary. A disproportionate number of homeless and unstably housed youth are LGBTQ, and 10 beds per shelter should be a sufficient starting point.

Next Steps

In order for this policy to be effective, it must start small, through raising public awareness of the issue. From there, members of a coalition dedicated to LGBTQ homeless justice will lobby the Baltimore city government for funding and support. As members of different agencies throughout the city work together and work with LGBTQ youth, it will be easier to determine who is in greatest need of safe, equitable housing. This will prevent the chance of heterosexual, cisgender youth taking LGBTQ-designated beds.

- 1 In this memo, the term "homeless" refers to anyone without stable housing, sleeping on the street, or at friends' or clients' homes. However, the definition of homelessness has legally been changed to refer to only those with no place to stay whatsoever. Source: Whitney Burton, MSW, MPH,CPH, interview with author, January 13, 2015
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- 4 L.E. Durso and G.J. Gates, "Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth who are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless.", UCLA School of Law: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund (2012) http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Durso-Gates-LGBT-Homeless-Youth-Survey-July-2012.pdf. 5 Whitney Burton, interview with author, January 13, 2015
- 6 Natwar M. Gandhi, "Fiscal Impact Statement—'LGBTQ Homeless Youth Reform Amendment Act of 2013,'" Government of the District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer, December 11, 2013, http://app.cfo.dc.gov/services/fiscal_impact/pdf/spring09/FIS%20-%20B20-51%20LGBTQ%20Homeless%20Youth%20 Reform%20Amendment%20Act%20of%202013.pdfhttp://app.cfo.dc.gov/services/fiscal_impact/pdf/spring09/FIS%20-%20B20- (accessed December 1, 2014)
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- 8 Health Care for the Homeless, "Homelessness Frequently Asked Questions," Health Care for the Homeless, Inc. http://www.hchmd.org/homelessnessfaq.shtml (accessed November 28, 2014)
- 9 Youth Equality Alliance, "Living in the Margins: A Report on the Challenges of LGBTQ Youth in Maryland Education, Foster Care, and Juvenile Justice Systems," (2014, Baltimore: FreeState Legal Project), http://freestatelegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/YEA-Report-2014.pdf (accessed February 5, 2015).
- 10 Whitney Burton of STAR TRACK, e-mail to author, November, 24, 2014.

Dignity at the Fringes: Municipal Certification of Immigrant-Driven Informal Services

Andre Mozeak, The City College of New York

New York City's government has the ability to incorporate a right of public solicitation by informal providers of otherwise lawful services into its human rights code, and to dignify these service providers through certification programs.

Working immigrants and their allies rejoiced last November as New York City officials decided not to adopt high-cost regulations for the more than 80 costumed performers who work for tips in Times

Square.¹ Street performers, day laborers, and street vendors represent some of the many informal industries that exist on the fringes of American society. The majority of the people providing these otherwise benign services are poor Latino immigrants. Oftentimes they are also undocumented, and public solicitation allows their skills to be put to use without scrutiny on their citizenship status. Municipal "anti-solicitation" laws treat these employment alternatives as nuisance crimes rather than expressions of institutional failure in the United States.

Although there have been regulatory conflicts with migrant-driven informal industries for many years, civil rights advocates trace contemporary legislative trends to a 2006 attempt by officials in California to pass a bill that would have severely punished individuals for hiring day laborers.² Since then, service providers and advocates have repeatedly taken lawmakers to court to protect their First Amendment right to express their economic need. Street vendors have been

- Advocacy and civil liberties groups have taken on over 30 court cases across the nation challenging municipal anti-solicitation laws and similar bills since 1990.
- Costumed performers in Times Square and Hollywood earn less than \$100 on average for an eighthour workday. They often spend between \$250 and \$400 on their costumes.
- Three-quarters of day laborers nationwide are reported to be undocumented migrants.

able to secure their right to sell artistic work in NYC,³ but other informal service providers (ISPs) still face derision. Constant attacks on their liberties and the marginalization of their skills have helped foster a cultural dialogue that shames these entrepreneurs for trying to make an honest living.

ANALYSIS

Municipalities have, time and again, proven unable to justify reactionary anti-solicitation measures. It is difficult to prove that this set of informal activities meaningfully affects negative externalities, as evidence of damage to public welfare, public safety, and private economic interests is scant. Moreover, anti-solicitation laws and their kin can be viewed as setting up a system of de facto discrimination against Latino immigrants. The policy problem here is as much a result of our nation's unbalanced wage and labor standards as it is a side effect of its broken immigration system.

The NYC Commission on Human Rights (NYCCHR) holds enforcement capacity of

the city's human rights laws.⁸ With the amendment of individuals' right to publicly seek profit from lawful services, the commission would be able to serve as an executive check on the power of the legislature in criminalizing this narrow group of people. The city already provides millions of dollars in funding to workforce training programs (almost \$7,000,000 for the Consortium for Worker Education's programs in Fiscal Year 2015)⁹ under which ISPs could develop skills, contribute field data to the city for analysis, and gain job-appropriate certification.

Establishing a nationally scalable municipal certification system based on knowledge acquired on the job would help to repair the dignity of these workers. Pulling these services away from the

TALKING POINTS

- Anti-solicitation laws provide a means for municipalities to take the place of federal agencies in enforcing restrictions on the liberties of immigrants, especially in suburban and rural areas.¹¹
- Solicitation-based service providers draw tourists through performance, improve housing stock, and become local consumers.¹²
- NLPS was awarded \$613,131 through the Project Prevent Grant to improve school climate, which can be used to implement these policies.¹³

fringes of the law would also significantly curb the exploitation and harassment¹⁰ of undocumented workers. The city would enjoy improved data on labor and ground-level conditions, safer public spaces, and an opportunity to hedge the detriments of clandestine economic activity.

Next Steps

A coalition of policymakers, advocates, legal consultants, and stakeholders will be established to build government support for a proposed amendment to the city's human rights law. NYCCHR's Community Relations Bureau will draft a feasibility study to assess the costs and scope of a certification initiative. The Community Relations Bureau and Department of Consumer Affairs will also devise a public information program, which will launch alongside the pilot initiative.

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- 4 Ibid.: Cummings: 1628.
- 5 The Judicial Review standard of Strict Scrutiny is considered for this argument.
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- 8 New York City Administrative Code Law, "\$8-105: Powers and Duties"
- 9 The Council of the City of New York, Fiscal Year 2015 Adopted Expense Budget Adjustment Summary, Schedule C, Latonia McKinney, et al., (New York, NY: New York City Council Finance Division, June 2014), 71-2. 10 Ibid.: Cummings: 1619.
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The Need to Release and Integrate Elderly Prisoners into Society

Julia Saltzman, Cornell University

Since the elderly are the fastest-growing segment of the already cumbersome prison population, we should release older prisoners who do not threaten public safety and create programs to re-introduce them to society.

Due to tough-on-crime policies and longer sentences, our country's prison population has risen dramatically, more inmates are staying in prisons into their old age. Nationwide, there are 246,600 elderly prisoners including 8,392 in New York.1 This number will increase as prisoners serving long sentences age. The imprisonment of the elderly raises ethical, medical, and budgetary concerns. The elderly have the lowest recidivism rate and are unlikely to threaten public safety. Many suffer from serious medical conditions and imprisonment accelerates the aging process, as medical care is poor and prisons are not built to accommodate the elderly.2 Additionally, the cost of imprisoning an individual skyrockets with age. The American Civil Liberties Union reports that the annual cost to imprison an average prisoner is \$34,135 but doubles to \$68,270 for those older than 50.3 Reintegration into society is challenging

KEY FACTS

- The elderly are the fastest-growing segment of the prison population: from 1995 to 2010 the entire prison population increased by 42 percent and the elderly inmate population increased by 282 percent.¹⁰
- By 2030, one-third of all inmates will be elderly.¹¹
- Recidivism drops dramatically with age, so as released prisoners get older, they are less likely to commit crimes.¹²
- A state could save \$1 million per year by releasing 14 elderly inmates.¹³

for any prisoner, but the elderly face additional risks including "greater risks of homelessness, low employment, increased anxiety, fragmented community and family ties, chronic medical conditions, and increased mortality rates." Many of these inmates have been imprisoned for so long that they no longer have support systems and they return to a world they know nothing about.

A two-pronged approach must be taken to release⁵ elderly prisoners who do not pose a threat to public safety and to help integrate these prisoners into society. The first is to initiate a review process for offenders who are over 50 and have served over 10 years. The second part will create a program in New York to replicate Colorado's Long Term Offender Program that will help prisoners adjust to life outside of prison. Although Colorado's program is temporarily suspended, it has helped selected elderly inmates learn how to succeed by offering classes during imprisonment and providing mentorship and support after their release.⁶

ANALYSIS

It is imperative that both policies are implemented together. Reviewing inmates will examine their personal growth and prison record, determine if the inmate wishes to be released, and assess whether the inmate fully understands the consequences of his or her crime. This process will ensure that those who deserve to be released

TALKING POINTS

- Elderly inmates are simultaneously the most expensive to incarcerate and the least dangerous to society.¹³
- Releasing elderly inmates carries higher risks to the prisoner than releasing the average inmate, including increased risk of homelessness and high rates of physical and mental health problems.¹⁴
- New York should develop a program that will release elderly prisoners and prepare them to function in society.

are released, and that unfit candidates who may pose a future burden to the incarceration system are not. Returning to society is especially difficult for elderly inmates. Some elderly ex-prisoners have difficulty obtaining identification and navigating changed public transportation. Colorado's Long Term Offender Program addressed this issue by focusing on peer support and restorative justice. While still in prison, participants learned about possible situations that arise upon release, including finding housing and employment, and setting up a bank account. They are then released to a halfway house and supported by counselors and meetings with their peers. Of the 32 participants, all have been able to find employment and housing.

Next Steps

As New York initiated the tough-on-crime era with the Rockefeller Drug Laws in 1973, it can now start a new era of prison reform. Stakeholders such as ex-inmates, correctional employees, and geriatric care experts should unite and share with policy-makers why current policies fall short. They will encourage policy-makers to initiate programs in New York prisons that will include a mechanism to review inmates who are over 50 years old and have served over 10 years, as well as a parole program that focuses on education, conversation, and peer mentorship to help integrate elderly prisoners into society.

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POLICY OF THE YEAR NOMINEE:

Fighting Pain with Pills:
Overprescribing
and the Opioid
Addiction Epidemic



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Who We Are

The Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network, the nation's largest student policy organization, engages young people in a unique form of civic participation that empowers them as leaders and promotes their ideas for change. Through coordination with political actors and community leaders, Network members design and implement solutions to the pressing issues facing their towns, counties, and states. Now boasting 120 chapters in 38 states with thousands of members, we're building a network of young people who are filling the ideas gap in communities across the country. In doing so, we're preparing a new generation of thinkers and policymakers to burst forth onto the nation's political stage.

What You're Holding

Now in its seventh year, the 10 Ideas series promotes the most promising student-generated ideas from across our network. This journal, which includes submissions from schools located from California to Georgia to New York, stands as a testament to the depth and breadth of our network of innovators.

Our 10 Ideas memos are selected for publication because they are smart, rigorously researched, and, most importantly, feasible. We want to see these ideas become a reality.

How You Can Join

As you explore these ideas, we encourage you to take special note of the "Next Steps" sections. Here, our authors have outlined how their ideas can move from the pages of this journal to implementation. We invite you to join our authors in the process. Contact us on our website or by tweeting with us @VivaRoosevelt using the hashtag #solve2015.

Thank you for reading and supporting student generated ideas. Together we will design the future of our communities, from towns to countries and all that lies in-between.

WELCOME!

Dear Readers,

Young people on college campuses are often asked to make phone calls, knock on doors, and campaign for existing agendas, but they're rarely asked about their own policy ideas. Since 2004, we have been working to change that norm. At its core, the Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network seeks to defy the public's expectations of young people in politics today.

Over the past 10 years, we have built an engaged, community-driven network of students who are committed to using policy to transform their cities and states now and build the foundation for a sustainable future. We believe that broader participation in the policy process will not only improve representation but produce more creative ideas with the potential for real impact.

In this year's 10 Ideas journal, we present some of most promising and innovative ideas from students in our network. With chapters on 120 campuses in 38 states, from Los Angeles, California, to Conway, Arkansas, to New York City, we have the potential to effect policy ideas that transcend the parameters of our current national debate. Our student authors push for practical, community-focused solutions, from using pavement to improve sanitation in Louisville, Kentucky, to creating community benefit agreements for

publicly funded stadiums in Lansing, Michigan, to building workforce development programs for agricultural literacy in Athens, Georgia.

Policy matters most when we take it beyond the page and bring it to the communities and institutions that can turn it into reality. Many of the students in this year's publication have committed to pressing for impact. They're connecting with decision-makers in city halls and state capitols, armed with the power of their own ideas.

The breadth and depth of our network is reflected in the diversity of the proposals featured in this journal. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much we did. The next generation of innovative minds and passionate advocates is here, and it's changing this country one idea at a time.

Sincerely,

Joelle Gamble
National Director
Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Erin Hollander

author of Fighting Pain with Pills: Overprescribing and the Opioid Addiction Epidemic

Nominee for Policy Of The Year

A jury of Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network members, staff, and alumni select one piece from each journal to nominate for the honor of Policy of the Year. We base our nominees off of the quality of idea, rigor of research and potential for implementation. The cover design of this journal portrays this year's nominee in visual form.

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Preventing Discrepancies in Out-of-Network Billing: Reducing Consumer Costs and Increasing Transparency

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Out-of-network billing, specifically Usual Customary and Reasonable (UCR) calculations, suffers from a lack of transparency that places an undue financial burden on

consumers. More stringent regulations, direct consumer access, and uniform calculations of UCR values can mitigate overcharging by health care providers and under-reimbursement for procedures by insurance providers.

Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) insurance plans currently allow individuals to receive care outside of their policies' negotiated networks by requiring an external fee schedule. Usual Customary Reasonable (UCR) calculations are the primary parameter used to calculate consumer reimbursement amounts. UCR is calculated on the basis that a procedure is a "provider's usual fee for a service that does not exceed the customary fee in that geographic area and is reasonable based on the circumstances."

The widespread use of UCR is problematic, as UCR calculations are not standardized, and proprietary information prevents cost transparency.² The lack of transparency affects the 151.6 million Americans enrolled in PPOs, comprising 57.8 percent of insured Americans.³ In 2011, Ingenix, the nationwide leader of "data benchmarking" products for

- A California Health Plan and Insurers survey found customer satisfaction in regards to getting plan information on what they pay was 6.25 percent less for PPO plan enrollees than for HMO enrollees.¹¹
- Out-of-pocket expenditures (which includes out-ofnetwork care) comprise 13 percent of the \$3,446 billion annual health care costs in the United States.¹²
- All states (excluding Alaska) have consumer protection laws against balance billing (billing consumers the difference between procedures costs and insurance coverage) for HMOs, while only 27 states have similar laws for PPOs.¹³

UCR calculations (owned by UnitedHealth Group), was found to have underestimated reimbursement values by up to 28 percent.⁴ This faulty database was used nationally for over a decade, impacting millions of Americans, including over two million federal employees and military service members.⁵ This prompted the creation of a non-profit database, called the FAIR Health Database, which provides unbiased data for UCR calculations, allowing for uniformity and transparency.⁶

California should pass legislation that mandates insurance providers to provide clear information regarding how they calculate prevailing rates for UCR, including a comprehensive database that allows both consumers and providers to estimate reimbursement amounts. As an alternative,

TALKING POINTS

- Using the existing non-partisan database mitigates costs and increases feasibility.
- Informed consumers can exert pressure and accountability on both medical and insurance providers.
- Transparent fees makes health care more equitable, as individuals can compare costs and reimbursement and are protected from balance billing.

insurance providers should be able to use the FAIR Health Database as their own fee schedule.

ANALYSIS

California has the potential to become a more competitive insurance market. Over five providers have over 5 percent market share each, and no provider has over 42 percent market share, making California a viable region for insurance market reform. Greater transparency will generate informed consumers and impose greater discipline on cost structures. This can mitigate overcharging by medical providers and discrepancies in UCR calculations by insurance providers. A 2009 AHIP (American's Health Insurance Plan) survey found that in California, physicians' claims for outpatient visits of moderate to high severity were 3,365 percent higher than the prevailing Medicare charges. Many insurance providers moved to Medicare-based reimbursements during the development phase of the FAIR database, decreasing reimbursements further. Requiring providers to utilize FAIR or comparable databases can reverse this

development, and this practice is currently being incorporated into a New York health care bill. The FAIR Health database is updated biannually, and overseen by the Upstate Health Research Network (UHRN), an independent group of health care researchers, and reflects real, non-negotiated values for claims. The database is already published and accessible online, streamlining its potential and feasibility as either a benchmark tool or actual fee schedule for insurance providers.9

Next Steps

California should pass legislation that mandates the use of either the FAIR Health database for calculating reimbursement, or a publicized nonpartisan database that uses the same criteria and is equally accessible to consumers. Overall, providers should be required to make calculations for reimbursement based on UCR values as opposed to Medicare rates.¹⁰

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Mandated Coverage for Diabetes Screening Through Medicaid in the District of Columbia

Derek Altema and Saumya Bollam, Georgetown University

Preventive diabetes screening as a mandated coverage benefit through Washington, DC Medicaid will minimize long-term costs associated with treatment of latestage diabetes and related complications, and hinder the progression of diabetes to enhance patient welfare.

Type 2 diabetes is a preventable illness that has become increasingly prevalent in the United States. A 2014 National Diabetes Statistics Report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that 9.3 percent of Americans have diabetes.¹ The Community Health Needs Assessment released by the District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH) shows this has increased from 8.7 percent measured in 2010. In 2010, 8.3 percent of Washington, DC residents had diabetes,² but in Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8, diabetes rates were well above the 2010 national average. Lower-income residents with higher morbidity risks inhabit these medically underserved wards.

Screening is utilized to detect early onset of diabetes. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that people who are over age 45, have high blood pressure, or have high cholesterol get screened for diabetes.³ Although 85 percent of deaths attributable to diabetes occur in patients above age 55,² diabetes is a progressive disease that worsens over time and is exacerbated by poor lifestyle habits.

Medicaid provides health coverage for lowincome people from communities at greater

- 27.8 percent of the U.S. population remains undiagnosed with diabetes.¹
- Health care costs for diabetic patients increased by 40 percent in five years.¹
- Diabetes screening in high morbidity-risk populations decreases overall health care costs.⁷

risk for developing diabetes. The National Conference of State Legislatures database shows that Medicaid in DC provides coverage for direct treatment and treatment supplies for those diagnosed with diabetes, but screening isn't expressly covered.⁴

Blood sugar testing, a prevention strategy used for early detection and mediation of diabetes, is critical for minimizing long-term health costs. Expanding Medicaid coverage to include diabetes screening could hinder the progression of diabetes in higher-risk populations.

ANALYSIS

Mandatory coverage of diabetes screening through Medicaid in DC will help reduce health

care costs resulting from diabetic complications. In 2007, estimated health care costs resulting from diabetes totaled \$174 billion; the DC DOH estimated \$346 million was spent on diabetes-related health care in the District in the same year. Medical expenditures for people diagnosed with diabetes increased 40 percent over a five-year period. Diabetes elevates risk for hypertension, heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, retinopathy, and lower-extremity amputation. Early diagnostic screening can curtail progression to prevent such severe side effects. While costly treatments and procedures are included in benefit coverage, preventive screening is not. In DC, where health care expenditures per capita exceed all 50 states according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a reduction in health care costs is warranted.

A study from Chatterjee et. al. suggests diabetes screening exhibits cost-efficacy in populations with higher morbidity risk.⁷ Over a three-year period, health care costs decreased 7.3 percent for those with a body mass index (BMI) of 25 to 35 and 21.5 percent for those with a BMI over 35. Similarly, screening cut costs by 8.1 percent for adults age 40 to 55 and by 17.1 percent for adults over age 55. Because

TALKING POINTS

- Health complications from diabetes are preventable with early detection.
- A significant proportion of Washington, DC Medicaid enrollees reside in high morbidity-risk areas.
- Diabetes treatment costs likely exceed the costs of instituting Medicaid-mandated diabetes screening in DC.

of cost and inefficiency, implementation and screening are likely deterrents for coverage expansion. Nonetheless, cost reduction can be observed in the short-term while diabetes becomes less burdensome on the health care system in the long-term.

Medicaid should expand benefit coverage to include diabetes screening. Out-of-pocket expenses for diabetes screening may discourage low-income Medicaid enrollees from getting screened. Medicare covers diabetes screening for enrollees, as older patients greatly contribute to health costs for diabetes treatment. Screening at earlier stages in higher risk populations can alleviate treatment costs by preventing complications in older patients altogether.

Next Steps

A proposal from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to federal and DC governments is necessary for extending Medicaid coverage to include diabetes screening. The exclusion of screening from Medicaid coverage is not explicit in legislation, so discretion is left to CMS to expand benefit coverage. For this benefit to require minimal out-of-pocket input from enrollees, the program should wholly cover the costs of screening while financially incentivizing providers to perform blood sugar tests. This is important to promote diabetes screening in higher-risk communities.

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Reducing Unintended Pregnancies: Promoting the Use of Long-Acting Contraception

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One in three women in the United States becomes pregnant before age 20. To reduce this rate, policy makers should create public programs to provide education about and access to the most effective forms of birth control: long-acting contraceptives.

Over half the pregnancies in the United States are unintended. Surprisingly, almost half of these unintended pregnancies occur among women who use birth control. Since many birth control methods are difficult to use perfectly, many women experience birth control failure. Birth control pills, the most common form of birth

control in the country, has a relatively high rate of failure. In clinical trials where women use the pill correctly and consistently, it's over 99 percent effective at preventing pregnancy, yet about nine in every one hundred women experience an unintended pregnancy with the pill each year. To ensure maximum effectiveness, women must take the pill at the same time every day. Understandably, many women occasionally forget to take their pill on time or are unable to get to the pharmacy to pick up a new pack on time. These simple mistakes can lead to an unintended pregnancy.²

Unlike the Pill, several safe methods of contraception have extremely low rates of failure, even with typical use. These methods are referred to as Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives, or LARCs, and include the

- Almost half of all unintended pregnancies in the United States result from incorrect or inconsistent use of contraception.
- Long-acting contraception is the most effective form of birth control because it eliminates the risk of human error.
- Education and access substantially increase the proportion of women who choose longacting contraception.

intrauterine device (IUD) and implants. They are effective because once they're inserted, women don't have to tend to them for several years, thereby virtually eliminating the chance of human error that causes almost half the unintended pregnancies in America.¹

Although LARC methods are the most effective forms of birth control, they're used by only eight percent of American contraceptive users.¹ The most significant barrier to LARC usage is that many women don't know about them or receive incorrect information about them. Some physicians refuse to prescribe IUDs to young women based on false perceptions of safety. Even when women choose to use LARCs, they can be as expensive as \$1000.

To promote the use of long-acting contraception among young women,

policymakers should provide public funding for education and access. Education will help women understand their options and choose a method that best fits their lifestyles to minimize mistakes. Access will help women make these decisions based on effectiveness rather than cost.

ANALYSIS

A recent effort to decrease teen pregnancy in Colorado demonstrates the power of increasing education about and access to LARCs. Since 2009, when an anonymous donor contributed \$23 million to a Colorado family planning initiative, Colorado has provided LARCs at little or no cost to over 30,000 women. At the 68 participating family planning clinics, the number of young women using LARCs increased fourfold. Between 2009 and 2013, Colorado's teen birth rate dropped 40 percent. Colorado attributes three-quarters of this decline to the initiative to provide LARCs to young women. The decreased teen birth rate generated a ripple effect, leading to lower

TALKING POINTS

- Unintended pregnancies are part of a complex web of societal factors that magnify and perpetuate inequality.
- Education about and access to longacting contraception drastically reduces unintended pregnancy rates.
- Policy makers should embrace longacting contraception as basic, preventive, and highly effective health care.

abortion rates and a \$42.5 million decrease in spending on health care related to teen births.³

Another project to provide young women with long-acting contraception produced similar results in St. Louis. The five-year project cut the teen pregnancy rate by 79 percent and the abortion rate by 77 percent.⁴ In both studies, almost 75 percent of the participants that received comprehensive information about birth control options chose LARCs. A nationwide policy to increase education about and access to LARCs would decrease unintended pregnancies and their social and economic costs.

Next Steps

The next step is to provide public funding for education and access to long-acting contraception. Education should begin with public outreach campaigns, school health programs, and local clinics. To increase access, policymakers should distribute public funds to clinics and health offices so that women can receive long-acting contraception at little to no cost. A sliding-fee scale is an effective way to maximize the use of public funds to help all women access high-quality contraception.

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Closing the Adolescent Health Service Gap in Community Health Centers

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Community Health Centers should implement programs to target the specific health needs of the adolescent population.

Community Health Centers (CHCs) provide health care for high need populations where private practices can fall short. These centers fall under the "patchwork system of safety net providers" created to provide care for uninsured and low income patients. Although continuity of care is better, CHCs only manage to provide health

services for about one in six people who do not have access to a primary care physician.² With this imbalance in access, the adolescent population can easily fall by the proverbial "health care wayside."

Health care professionals in the United States report self-perceived limitations in the provision of health care geared specifically population, towards the adolescent particularly in the areas of greatest concern which include sex, depression, and obesity.^{3,4} Other studies show that there are deficits in adolescent medicine ambulatory care training in pediatric residencies across the United States.⁵ These shortcomings call for the implementation of guidelines that can supplement care where health care professionals fall short. CHCs are critical because they are an important source of preventive care for impoverished adolescents who are known to have greater psychosocial

- Adolescents who use CHCs have greater psychosocial problems although they seek preventive care as often as those using private practices.⁷
- One in five adolescents experiences significant emotional distress, and one in ten faces more serious impairments.¹²
- Uninsured adolescents are five times more likely to lack a usual source of care and four times more likely to have unmet health needs.¹³

problems than adolescents seeking care at private practices.⁶

Adolescent medicine should be included in the federally required health services that New York City CHCs must provide to the catchment area that fall under their responsibility. The proposed provision of health services should be done through the implementation of a health service program, like Guidelines for Adolescent Preventive Services (GAPS), a set of guidelines created by the American Medical Association that provide preventative service recommendations and systems for identifying patients who face socially-based health risks. If patients ages 12 to 18 are provided with treatment and management of current chronic and acute conditions and preventive care for future conditions, adolescent health services can facilitate care as patients enter adulthood and seniority.

TALKING POINTS

- Regular and comprehensive visits may be an effective strategy for CHCs to provide preventive services to adolescents.⁷
- The immediate next pool of workers and citizens will be overtaken by those who are currently adolescents in a not-so-distant future, therefore their health has an impact on the economy and body politic.¹⁴

ANALYSIS

CHCs are an important source of health care for underserved adolescents because this population is more likely to be underinsured compared to other age groups. Socioeconomic status (SES) has been shown to be inversely related to the prevalence of mental health disorders among the adolescent population. SES is also associated with obesity and depression, both of which are chronic illnesses predictive of adult disease.

Today, CHCs have the opportunity to target, treat, and educate this population through special programs. GAPS can be implemented rather easily since it requires less specialized training and utilizes services that are already provided at most CHCs.¹⁰ GAPS has been shown to improve quality of care for adolescents through the provision of preventive services and more health education material.¹¹

Next Steps

The Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS), as the premier organization for optimizing health care quality and access to CHCs in New York, should initiate the movement towards implementing adolescent health services, such as GAPS, in CHCs throughout the state. This can be done with local health centers, initially, then further expanded throughout the state depending on the level of success.

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Fighting Pain with Pills: Overprescribing and the Opioid Addiction Epidemic

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In the last two decades, deaths related to opioid overdose have increased fourfold, and prescriptions of opioids per year have increased sixfold. To curb overprescribing of opioids, the Narcotics and Drug Agency of Georgia should mandate that all opioid prescribers maintain a working Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) and that prescribers consult state PDMPs before prescribing opioids and report any prescriptions they provide.

Opioids are powerful painkillers prescribed for conditions ranging from injury to chronic pain.¹ Opioid overdose deaths have quadrupled since 1999, with almost 17,000 deaths per year attributed to opioid overdose in 2013. Georgia had 461 deaths in 2013 related to opioid overdose.² One cause of the high overdose rate is the overprescribing of opioid painkillers by doctors and emergency rooms, resulting in an easier diversion of opioids to non-prescription holders and continued consumption of opioids beyond chronic pain relief.³

Overall, the 259 million prescriptions for opioids in 2012 is a dramatic increase from the 40 million in 1991.³ Emergency rooms in the United States increased prescription of opioids by 10 percent for pain-related visits between 2001 and 2010, although the percentage of visits related to painful conditions only increased 4 percent.⁴

- Total societal costs of opioid addiction were estimated at \$55.7 billion for 2007.
- Opioid overdose deaths have quadrupled since 1999, with almost 17,000 deaths per year attributed to opioid overdose, while opioid prescriptions have increased from 40 million in 1991 to 259 million in 2012.^{3,11}
- One percent deterrence of opioid addiction results in \$22.6 million in avoided health care costs, \$11.8 million in avoided productivity losses, and \$112,000 in avoided law enforcement costs.¹²

Overprescribing also allows opioid diversion from those with legitimate prescriptions to non-medical abusers; three out of four abusers of opioids received them from friends or family with a prescription.⁵

Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs, or PDMPs, are electronic databases that collect information on prescriptions for a particular state. Authorized individuals can access the databases to determine if a patient should receive opioids or not.⁶ To decrease the rates of over prescription, enrollment and logging of patient prescription information should be mandatory for opioid prescribers in Georgia.

ANALYSIS

This policy idea originates from Florida's success with a similar program. Between 2003 and 2009, Florida experienced a 61 percent increase in drug overdose deaths. In reaction to the staggering change, in 2010, Florida made changes to its policies on opioid regulation. Changes included new mandatory usage of the state PDMP. Previously, usage of the PDMP had been

TALKING POINTS

- The rapidly increasing overdose rate and high societal cost of opioid addiction indicate current policies are failing to address the problem.
- Overprescribing by physicians enables non-medical use of opioids, either by the prescription holder or more commonly by a friend or family member.
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs, online systems where doctors can log patient prescription information, are cost-beneficial and effective ways of decreasing opioid overprescription.

voluntary, but now prescribers of opioids are required to file a weekly report on patient, prescriber, and dispensing information for prescription drugs in schedules II, III, and IV of the Controlled Substances Act. Within two years, mortalities dropped by 23 percent in Florida because of this and other favorable changes.⁷

The Congressional Research Service has estimated the cost of starting a PDMP at \$450,000 to \$1.5 million, with maintenance costs between \$125,000 and \$1 million a year.8 However, Georgia already has a functional and maintained PDMP, so the initial cost is not applicable, and PDMP maintenance is in the current budget. The greatest challenge for policy implementation would

be convincing the Narcotics and Drug Agency that mandatory PDMP usage is a cost-effective solution to opioid overprescribing. The successes of states such as Florida in decreasing opioid prescriptions through PDMP usage would aid in overcoming this challenge.⁹

Next Steps

Georgia has already set up and maintained a state PDMP, so the first step would be to pass a bill through the state legislation mandating PDMP usage as outlined in this paper and giving the Drugs and Narcotics Agency the power to enforce usage. The second step would be to set a time limit for all prescribers of opioids to enroll in the program and begin updating their patient prescription records. Finally, after a trial period to allow prescribers to become familiar with the new system and fully integrate their records, prescribers must log every time they prescribe opioids to a patient.

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Mind Net: Early Detection and Treatment of Mental Illness

Emily Lau, Georgetown University

California primary care providers should be mandated to provide mental health screenings at physical checkups to promote early detection and treatment of mental illnesses.

Undiagnosed and untreated mental illnesses can have a huge negative impact on physical health, job productivity, and overall health and social outcomes due to stigma, lack of access to mental health resources, or insufficient mental health education. One in ten people suffering from schizophrenia and nearly one in five people suffering from bipolar disorder will commit suicide.¹ Four out of ten of the leading causes of disability in developed countries are mental disorders.² Mental illnesses lead to as many lost work days as physical illnesses.³

primary care providers (PCPs) While are in a prime position to identify and address mental illness, screening and early intervention services tend to be lacking at the primary care level.4 A study showed that 90 percent of people who committed suicide suffered from mental illness, and of that 90 percent, 40 percent had seen their PCP within a month of their suicide. but their mental health statuses often went unaddressed.5 In order to better diagnose and treat people with mental illness, there needs to be a move towards a system of wellness and early intervention and away from crisis management through a program of early detection and treatment.

California PCPs should provide mental health screenings during or before physical

KEY FACTS

- The economic burden of depression, which can be primarily attributed to lost work days, is estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars in the United States alone.¹²
- The median delay between the presentation of symptoms and the treatment of mental illness is 10 years.¹³
- Earlier interventions can prevent the cumulative effects of mental illness and can result in a greater capacity for recovery.¹⁴

checkups to identify possible symptoms of psychosocial ailments that patients might be experiencing. Using any of the recognized primary care mental health screening tests, PCPs can quickly evaluate the mental health of their patients and either perform appropriate psychosocial interventions such as problem-solving treatment with the patient or refer the patient to a mental health provider.

ANALYSIS

Instituting mental health screenings at the primary care level means that all people who go to a physical checkup are screened. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA)⁶ combined with California's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) makes California a prime location to institute ground-level mental health intervention services.⁷

Studies show that short mental health screening tests such as the five-item version of the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5) are just as effective as longer tests, making mental

TALKING POINTS

- It has been shown that treatment of mental illness in patients with other chronic diseases can result in a 20 percent decrease in health care resource consumption.¹⁵
- California's Mental Health Services Act already sets aside 20 percent of its funds to target prevention and early intervention and 5 percent to target innovation.¹⁶
- Mental health screenings at the primary care level are a low-cost to free method of increasing early intervention and treatment of mental illness.¹⁷

health screening an easy addition to typical physical checkups.⁸ Many screening tests with evaluation instructions are available for free from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).⁹ If symptoms are identified, the PCP can refer the patient to appropriate mental health services. Additionally, there is evidence that interventions by general practitioners are an effective mental health wellness practice.¹⁰ Early diagnosis and treatment of mental illness would cause a decrease in lost work days and result in increased economic productivity.¹¹

Next Steps

The mental health screening mandate would need to be introduced as a bill. Analysis of how California's MHSA funds are being used for intervention and innovation should be done to establish what funds may be available to support the development of a new system of detection and intervention. Additionally, a study should be conducted to evaluate different screening tools and their efficacies by collecting data from PCPs that already conduct mental health screenings at checkups.

After the mandate is instituted, studies should be commissioned to evaluate the effect that screenings have on increasing early detection and intervention as well as whether screening done by a PCP leads to appropriate referrals and follow-up by mental health specialists. Continued evaluations of the policy's outcomes should inform physicians on which screening tools to use and how to use the results to best serve their patients.

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Revolutionizing Primary Care Medical Education

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To combat the growing deficit of primary care physicians, the North Carolina legislature should provide grants to establish three-year medical education models for students who commit to practicing primary care medicine.

In 1910, the Flexner Report transformed American medical education by establishing a four-year educational model.¹ However, the lengthy, expensive process generates an average student debt of \$185,000 and pressures students to enter lucrative specialty fields.² A 50 percent rise in specialist salaries between 1995 and 2012 spurred exit from primary care, which observed salary growth of only 10 percent.³ Consequently, the number of specialty physicians increased 26 percent in that time despite a constant physician supply.¹

Meanwhile, an aging U.S. population is demanding greater primary care services for chronic conditions that constitute 75 percent

KEY FACTS

- The United States will face a shortage of 52,000 primary care physicians by 2025.5
- The median debt for medical students is \$185,000,4 and average primary care physicians earn 40 percent less than specialists.³
- Investments in primary care save the nation an estimated \$31.5 billion annually.8

of health expenditures.⁴ Eight million Americans wielding health insurance under the Affordable Care Act are also seeking primary care, yielding a shortage of 52,000 primary care physicians by 2025.⁵ However, the state's call for a 30 percent increase in primary care physicians has failed to increase the proportion of medical students pursuing primary care.¹

State legislatures should provide grants to medical schools to establish three-year educational models for students who commit to pursuing primary care residencies. The policy change incentivizes medical students to pursue primary care by eliminating irrelevant medical rotations, which can expedite graduation and reduce debt loads.

ANALYSIS

Nearly 56 million Americans lack access to primary care services that address chronic health issues before they become emergency medical problems.⁶ Primary care physicians provide timely, preventative care to patients managing chronic diseases, thereby mitigating the risk of life-threatening complications.⁷ Primary care saves the United States an estimated \$31.5 billion annually since long-term disease management is 41 percent less expensive than emergency treatment.⁷

Critics of three-year primary care policies claim that a one-year training reduction compromises care, but the four-year structure

TALKING POINTS

- The United States faces a shortage of primary care physicians because of demographic shifts, health insurance expansion, and incentives for specialization.
- Three-year primary care models permit earlier career starts and reduced debt loads without compromising medical education.¹
- An investment in primary care education yields significant health care savings.8

persists solely out of tradition.⁸ Some research-oriented schools like the University of Pennsylvania substituted one year of education for one year of research and did not observe any reductions in the students' clinical abilities.¹ Another concern is higher burnout rates in the condensed model; this was a reason the federal government abandoned its three-year educational change initiated in the 1970s.⁶ Although 95 percent of students completed the federal programs, the policy was ineffective because students could choose any specialty, thereby reducing time for career exploration.⁷ In contrast, the new three-year policy will require commitment to primary care, eliminating indecision and burnout.¹

Next Steps

The North Carolina Institute of Medicine can be leveraged to lobby state representatives for funding, conceivably via a tax, to change policy by first piloting programs at the state's public medical schools. Medical schools and the American Association of Family Physicians can also convince the state that earlier career starts and reduced educational expenses for primary care physicians are investments that save billions in health care expenditures while expanding health care access. Publicizing this opportunity to university premedical offices is critical to securing qualified applicants.

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Promoting End-of-Life Planning with Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment

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To address the deficiencies of advance directives, North Carolina should pass legislation enabling physicians to issue and implement Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST).

Advance directives are legal documents specifying desired medical treatment in the event of incapacitation.¹ Under the Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990, patients gained the right to choose a desired treatment from a variety of medical care options.² Each state then developed unique legislation, with North Carolina mandating only that physicians follow advance directives.³

However, advance directives are limited in both participation and scope. Only half of adults over 60 dictate advance directives, and the legal focus on specific clinical conditions ignores the broader issue of patient-doctor communication.¹ Since only 12 percent of patients

discuss end-of-life plans with physicians, even the requests of patients with directives often go unfulfilled.1 Over 65 percent of physicians were unaware of an advance directive and thus provided undesired treatment.1 Oregon developed POLST, a unique form that consists of medical orders under physician completed quidance.1 POLST incorporates a brightly colored, one-page form displayed prominently on medical records that addresses patient desires regarding resuscitation, comfort measures, and artificial nutrition. POLST forms are approved by physicians and easily implemented by all health care entities.4

KEY FACTS

- Only 50 percent of Americans over 60 have an advance directive.¹
- 65 percent of physicians were unaware of a patient's advance directive.¹
- End-of-life planning saved Medicare \$5,585 per decedent in high spending regions.⁶

North Carolina should develop legislation to enable physicians to issue and implement POLST forms. POLST will transform attitudes toward death by fostering communication between medical professionals, patients, and families, ultimately fulfilling a patient's end-of-life desires while reducing the decision-making burden on grieving families.

ANALYSIS

Physicians are significantly more likely to recognize patients' wishes during emergencies with POLST. Resuscitation was withheld as desired in 94 percent of POLST cases but only 50 percent of non-POLST cases.² The chief concern with POLST is that patients

are less likely to receive full medical care if incapacitated. However, POLST patients are more likely to receive field resuscitation (84 percent POLST to 60 percent non-POLST) and hospital admission (38 percent POLST to 17 percent non-POLST) if desired because the medical orders permit no hesitation in treatment.⁵

POLST also possesses cost-saving potential because 93 percent of POLST patients choose to avoid full treatment for a serious illness.³ Medicare spent 28 percent of its total budget – \$170 billion in 2011 – on treatment in patients' last six months of life. POLST creates an opportunity to fulfill patient wishes while avoiding the expense of unwanted end-of-life hospitalizations. Even after accounting for hospice usage, advance directives saved \$5,585 per decedent in high spending regions.⁶

TALKING POINTS

- Advance directives are legal documents whereas POLST forms are medical orders issued by physicians.
- POLST is more effective in fulfilling patient wishes for both withheld treatment and full care measures.
- Most POLST participants select limited treatment options, providing an opportunity to reduce Medicare expenditures.

Next Steps

With health care costs surpassing 17 percent of GDP, the state can approve a trial program at public hospitals to demonstrate cost efficiency.⁶ The North Carolina Medical Board must develop seminars and integrate POLST into physician licensing renewal requirements since physicians will devote more time to patient education and discussion of end-of-life values. A sweeping federal law approving physicians' ability to issue and implement POLST could eliminate state discrepancies.

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Safe Injection Facilities: Rethinking the American War on Drugs

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To combat drug usage and reduce drug related deaths, the Virginia Department of Health should create Safe Injection Facilities (SIFs) where limited amounts of Schedule I & II narcotics can be used under medical supervision and without fear of arrest.

In 1971, the U.S. government declared a War on Drugs, which sought to reduce and ultimately eliminate drug usage by punishing drug sellers and users.1 Forty years later, illegal narcotics are cheaper and more readily available² despite a 96.4 percent increase in the number of federal inmates charged with drug related offenses.4 In 2012, 800 Virginians died of a drug overdose,5 which is a leading cause of death nationally.6 That same year 36,900 Virginians were incarcerated for drug use or possession.7 65 percent of prisoners charged with drug-related offenses meet the medical criteria for substance abuse and addiction, yet only 11 percent received anv addiction treatment - an oversight that causes higher recidivism rates.8 Clearly, a new approach is needed.

KEY FACTS

- SIF users in Canada saw a 35 percent drop in overdoses.²⁴
- SIFs in Spain reduced HIV among patients from 20 percent to 8 percent in 17 years.¹⁰
- SIF clients in Sydney were 44 percent more likely to start drug treatment than non-clients.¹⁰
- America's drug incarceration rate is 86.6 percent higher than that of Europe.²⁵

In the 1980s and 90s, European nations sought to treat rather than punish drug addicts by creating Safe Injection Facilities (SIFs).⁹ At SIFs, users can self-administer pre-obtained drugs under medical supervision. Users are given access to clean needles and syringe disposal facilities, along with information about vein treatment, overdose prevention, safe sex, and addiction treatment programs.¹⁰ SIFs currently exist in eight countries, and each country has seen a dramatic reduction in overdoses, HIV infection rates, incarcerations, and drug related deaths (see Key Facts).¹¹

The Virginia General Assembly should allocate \$15 million from the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) budget to the Virginia Department of Health to create five SIFs. The General Assembly should also pass legislation that allows defendants charged with drug use or possession to be sentenced to attend SIFs instead of prisons. However, any Virginia resident who needs assistance may attend SIFs, free of charge. Patients may use Schedule I or II narcotics, 12 obtained elsewhere, on the premises. Licensed medical personnel will staff each of the SIFs but may not handle any narcotics, unless there is a case of clear medical need.

ANALYSIS

Insite, a Vancouver SIF, serves as a good model for estimating the cost of similar facilities in Virginia. In 2012, Insite's budget was \$2.8 million, and it served 9,259 individuals. Assuming similar costs, Virginia would spend \$15 million per year for five

TALKING POINTS

- Virginia has record high rates of drug overdoses and of incarceration for drug use.⁵
- SIFs reduce usage, overdoses, HIV infection rates, and death among drug users.¹⁰
- SIFs prevent drug usage more effectively than incarceration, reduce recidivism, and are considerably cheaper.¹⁷
- State based SIFs are legal under the Controlled Substance Act.9

facilities, which will come out of the \$1.13 billion VADOC budget.¹⁴ Given that it costs \$25,129¹⁵ to house one prisoner per year and Insite costs \$305 per patient per year, SIFs are 98.8 percent cheaper than prison. Since those who voluntarily visit SIFs are 25 percent less likely to be arrested,¹⁶ and those who are arrested may be diverted to SIFs instead of prisons,¹⁷ SIFs represent an opportunity for significant budget savings for Virginia.

Despite some controversy, SIFs are legal under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Section 856 outlaws programs that facilitate drug consumption. However, Section 903 exempts state drug treatment programs from §856, unless the two programs "cannot consistently stand together." For §903 to apply, SIFs must accomplish the goals of the CSA and mitigate the harms of drug usage. Numerous studies show SIF patients are less likely to overdose or become infected with HIV and are more likely to enter into detoxification programs. Studies also prove SIFs prevent addicts from using drugs in public. Preventing

public drug use raises property values and reduces crime rates.²⁰ SIFs also relieve the burdens placed on emergency rooms, health care facilities, and first responders.²¹

Next Steps

The five SIFs should be distributed among Virginia's three major metropolitan areas.²² SIFs will provide clean needles, information about overdose prevention, and detoxification programs. The SIF program could be modeled after the existing Assembly-approved syringe exchange program.²³ Groups such as the Vera Institute of Justice and the Drug Policy Alliance should strongly endorse such legislation and lobby for its passage.

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Solving California's Shortage of Primary Care Doctors: Loan Repayment Programs for Medical Students

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The state of California is facing a shortage of primary care doctors. California's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development should restructure its State Loan Repayment Program to incentivize medical students to select primary care, by assisting with their loans while they are still in medical school.

California is expected to suffer from a major shortage of primary care physicians soon, with over 8,000 general practitioners needed by 2030 to maintain current doctor-to-patient ratios (which themselves are currently inadequate).¹

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) currently provides scholarships and assistance with medical student loans, as well as grants for states to carry out their own programs to incentivize work in primary care. California's State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), funded by the NHSC's grant, provides loan repayment aid to licensed professionals, provided that they serve in a health professional shortage area (HPSA) for a certain number of years.^{2,3,4}

However, this program ignores students who choose to specialize in the face of overwhelming student loan debt. California's current SLRP is a band-aid

KEY FACTS

- Loan repayment recipients tend to stay longest at HPSAs out of the five different types of service-requiring programs across the country.⁷
- Kentucky, by aiding 22 doctors with their loans via the SLRP, generated another 8 jobs and \$1.2 million dollars in economic impact.8
- The United States would save \$67 billion every year if every American consistently visited a primary care doctor.9

program for those who have already chosen general practice and does not attempt to spur more interest in primary care before doctors obtain their licenses.

The SLRP in California should expand its program to be more in line with the National Health Service Corps' Students to Service Program. California's SLRP would assist students with their student loans, provided that they commit to primary care. Students who commit to primary care by their third year of medical school would receive a substantial sum of money to pay off their medical school debt, and students who commit to communities in more dire straits will receive

TALKING POINTS

- Foster a sense of community that keeps doctors in rural communities.
- Tackle both ballooning medical costs and student debt in the United States.
- Allow states to bring a local touch to placing doctors.

more favorable aid. This proposal does not suggest eliminating the current loan repayment program for licensed professionals.

ANALYSIS

The NHSC also oversees a system of scholarships for first-year medical school students who are willing to commit to primary care. California's SLRP does not have an equivalent program. The scholarship program theoretically could be another method of incentivizing medical students to select primary care. However, the scholarship program, in a limited study, has been shown to observe lower retention of primary care providers in their assigned HPSAs compared to loan repayment programs. Expanding loan repayment programs would provide a more permanent solution to primary care shortages.

The decision to specialize is correlated with a student's predicted amount of debt. In a longitudinal study comparing medical students in Year 1 and Year 4, medical students who switched from primary care to a specialized field predicted that they would have higher amounts of debt than their peers who chose to stay with primary care from Year 1 to Year 4.5 With 31 percent of those who originally chose primary care switching to specialized vocations, attrition

could be reduced if debt is directly addressed, such as through this proposed revision of the current SLRP.

Debt is only one of many factors that medical students must consider. Those who choose to specialize reported significantly higher interest in future earnings than those who chose primary care. Specialized fields of medicine should not suffer from an increased focus on primary care.

Next Steps

Further research would be needed to fully understand which HPSAs to prioritize and how best to publicize this new program to students. In the meantime, California should petition the NHSC for more funding. In addition to California's usual grant for its current SLRP from the NHSC, the state could request a smaller amount of money (i.e beginning with an additional grant of \$200,000) in order to test the waters for a program similar to the Students to Service Program.⁶

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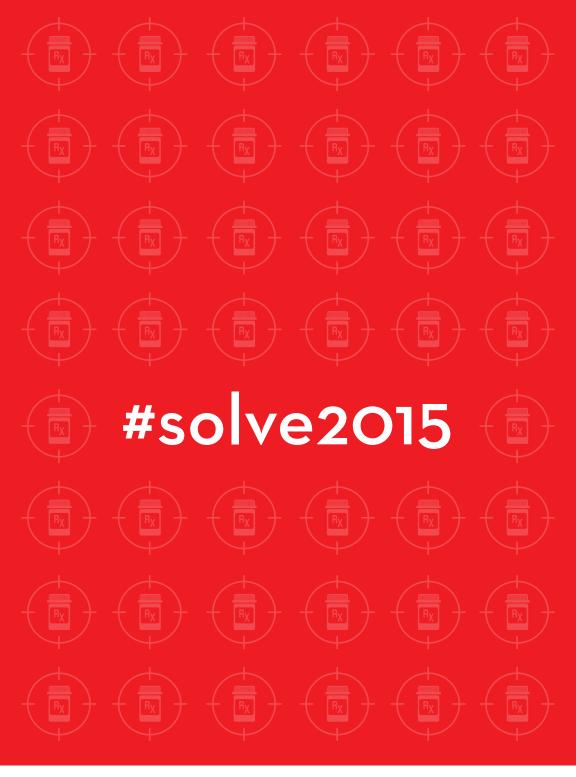
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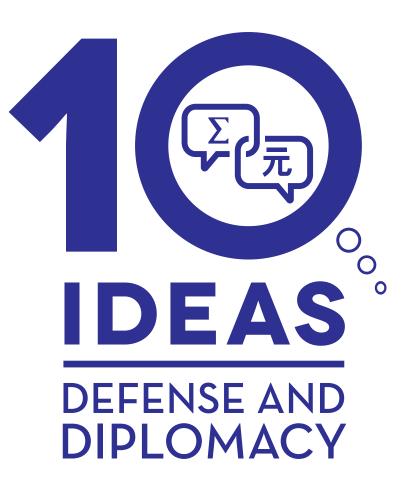
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POLICY OF THE YEAR NOMINEE:

Facilitating Public
Diplomacy Through Less
Commonly Taught
Language Exchanges



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Who We Are

The Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network, the nation's largest student policy organization, engages young people in a unique form of civic participation that empowers them as leaders and promotes their ideas for change. Through coordination with political actors and community leaders, Network members design and implement solutions to the pressing issues facing their towns, counties, and states. Now boasting 120 chapters in 38 states with thousands of members, we're building a network of young people who are filling the ideas gap in communities across the country. In doing so, we're preparing a new generation of thinkers and policymakers to burst forth onto the nation's political stage.

What You're Holding

Now in its seventh year, the 10 Ideas series promotes the most promising student-generated ideas from across our network. This journal, which includes submissions from schools located from California to Georgia to New York, stands as a testament to the depth and breadth of our network of innovators.

Our 10 Ideas memos are selected for publication because they are smart, rigorously researched, and, most importantly, feasible. We want to see these ideas become a reality.

How You Can Join

As you explore these ideas, we encourage you to take special note of the "Next Steps" sections. Here, our authors have outlined how their ideas can move from the pages of this journal to implementation. We invite you to join our authors in the process. Contact us on our website or by tweeting with us @VivaRoosevelt using the hashtag #solve2015.

Thank you for reading and supporting student generated ideas. Together we will design the future of our communities, from towns to countries and all that lies in-between.

WELCOME!

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Young people on college campuses are often asked to make phone calls, knock on doors, and campaign for existing agendas, but they're rarely asked about their own policy ideas. Since 2004, we have been working to change that norm. At its core, the Roosevelt Institute I Campus Network seeks to defy the public's expectations of young people in politics today.

Over the past 10 years, we have built an engaged, community-driven network of students who are committed to using policy to transform their cities and states now and build the foundation for a sustainable future. We believe that broader participation in the policy process will not only improve representation but produce more creative ideas with the potential for real impact.

In this year's 10 Ideas journal, we present some of most promising and innovative ideas from students in our network. With chapters on 120 campuses in 38 states, from Los Angeles, California, to Conway, Arkansas, to New York City, we have the potential to effect policy ideas that transcend the parameters of our current national debate. Our student authors push for practical, community-focused solutions, from using pavement to improve sanitation in Louisville, Kentucky, to creating community benefit agreements for

publicly funded stadiums in Lansing, Michigan, to building workforce development programs for agricultural literacy in Athens, Georgia.

Policy matters most when we take it beyond the page and bring it to the communities and institutions that can turn it into reality. Many of the students in this year's publication have committed to pressing for impact. They're connecting with decision-makers in city halls and state capitols, armed with the power of their own ideas.

The breadth and depth of our network is reflected in the diversity of the proposals featured in this journal. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much we did. The next generation of innovative minds and passionate advocates is here, and it's changing this country one idea at a time.

Sincerely,

Joelle Gamble
National Director
Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network



CONGRATULATIONS TO

Lee Ciocia

author of Facilitating Public Diplomacy Through Less Commonly Taught Language Exchanges

Nominee for Policy Of The Year

A jury of Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network members, staff, and alumni select one piece from each journal to nominate for the honor of Policy of the Year. We base our nominees off of the quality of idea, rigor of research and potential for implementation. The cover design of this journal portrays this year's nominee in visual form.

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Facilitating Public Diplomacy Through Less Commonly Taught Language Exchanges

Lee Ciocia, New York University

The current scarcity of fluent Less Commonly Taught Language (LCTL) speakers will inevitably hurt U.S. diplomacy. To help remedy this, New York City's government and foreign education ministries should facilitate LCTL instruction and exchanges in elementary and middle schools.

Although their speakers constitute a majority of the world's population, LCTLs still comprise a minuscule percentage of foreign language enrollment in the U.S. Less than one percent of U.S. K-12 students studied Chinese or Russian in 2007-2008, and enrollment for other LCTLs was in the thousands.¹ Furthermore, in areas that the State Department designates as being of "strategic interest," which also happen to be areas where LCTLs are primarily spoken, about 40 percent of diplomats do not meet language requirements.²

The federal government has recognized that increased LCTL fluency is an important factor in improving the U.S.'s foreign relations, and as such, it has established a number of opportunities for undergraduates, graduates, and high school students to obtain LCTL training.3 However, opportunities to learn LCTLs in elementary and middle schools are lacking. In 2012, Congress cut funding for the Foreign Language Assistance Program, the only federal program that funded foreign language education in primary schools. NYC, dual language programs highly skewed toward Western European languages, particularly Spanish.4

KEY FACTS

- In the U.S., Less Commonly Taught Languages refer to any of the 6,909 living languages other than English, French, German, and Spanish.¹²
- As of summer 2014, there are only 27 high schools in NYC that teach courses in a Less Commonly Taught Language.¹³

The lack of opportunities for LCTL education in elementary and middle school is alarming because it is in those grade levels where students absorb languages best.⁵ By only providing federal support for LCTLs starting at the high school level, the U.S. exacerbates its current shortage of qualified diplomats stationed in countries where LCTLs are spoken.

The Mayor's Office for International Affairs, together with the NYC Department of Education and education ministries in countries where LCTLs are spoken, should roll out optional exchange programs. These programs should be supplemented with daily classroom instruction in the relevant LCTL.

These programs would develop LCTL proficiency for NYC elementary and middle school students and English proficiency for the international students. They would also build cross-national rapport between the two groups of students.

TALKING POINTS

- LCTL speakers are incredibly beneficial for the U.S.'s economic competitiveness and national security, but are in short supply.
- Public diplomacy, though very effective in improving the America's image abroad, is highly underutilized.
- A language exchange that increases fluency in English and an LCTL would be a win-win for each party, which greatly adds to the attractiveness of signing on to such a program.

ANALYSIS

Traditionally, American soft power has come from its entertainment industry and universities.⁶ In recent years, however, innovative mediums of art and communication have created new opportunities to practice public diplomacy, a type of soft power focused on engaging with foreign publics.^{7,8} By connecting elementary and middle school students with their peers in other countries through videoconferencing, the two groups will be able to build rapport, hone their foreign language skills, and get a picture of people in other cultures that is not driven by local biases. By learning these languages, U.S. elementary and middle school students would help close a major gap in American public diplomacy vis-à-vis a lack of professional LCTL fluency.

It is also worth noting that attaining LCTL proficiency alone would yield tangible economic benefits for U.S. students. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 46 percent job growth for interpreters and translators between 2012 and 2022, fields that students will be well equipped to enter if they pursue further LCTL education.9 Government jobs, particularly in intelligence and security, pay a premium for those who have mastered LCTLs.¹⁰ Finally, as the U.S. increases exports to countries that speak LCTLs, students will find that this proficiency makes them more competitive in the global marketplace.11

Next Steps

The NYC government should leverage the international connections it has made through the Global Partners program (based in the Mayor's Office for International Affairs) to start fleshing out the content of the language exchanges. The focus should be placed on cities in Global Partners where a LCTL is spoken. A few suitable cities to pilot the exchanges include New Delhi, Moscow, and Shanghai. The NYC Department of Education and participating elementary and middle schools should then work together to find teachers for daily classroom instruction.

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Economic Development for Emerging Markets Through the Olympic Games

Erich Denk, Wake Forest University

The International Olympic Committee should revisit its process for selecting host countries for the Olympic Games. The new process should include a reutilization plan for self-sustainable development projects that would allow emerging states to host the Olympics and gain an economic boost. Reutilization is crucial to turning what could be a wasteful spectacle into a longer term investment with the potential for long term returns.

After a city is awarded a bid to host the Olympic Games, the news is met with great pride and excitement. Much of the excitement is a response to the promise of economic stimulus and soft power that should accrue to the host city and country. Unfortunately, this anticipated economic boost is rarely realized. Host cities, such as Athens in the summer of 2004, have not only failed to reach their

economic goals but have actually helped to trigger a decline in development. On the other hand, some cities like London have used the games as part of an urban renewal project and created sustainable multi-purpose infrastructure.1 In the most recent Sochi 2014 Olympic Games, the world witnessed a disconcerting lack of preparation and efficiency. These games cost approximately \$50 billion and time will tell as to what the economic impact will be. In fact, Russia could spend up to an additional \$7 billion over the next three years for upkeep of the new venues and infrastructure in Sochi.² With more emerging states bidding to host these mega-events, there needs to be more institutionalized awareness of long-

KEY FACTS

- Host cities experience a 30 percent increase in exports after they are awarded the games. This increase can be robust and permanent.
- The 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi are expected to cost \$7 billion in maintenance over the next three years.
- Developing countries now win half of all Olympic Medals.

term development as an important factor in site preparation. The International Olympic Committee, the governing body of the Olympic Games, can accomplish this task by reforming the bidding process to ensure sustainable development.

ANALYSIS

Emerging states have come to the forefront both in participation in the games and in serious bids to host the games. As far as participation goes, these states win now half of all Olympic medals, a significant increase from the past.3 Brazil will host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, a prime example of the push by rising powers to become more involved in the mega-event. There are concerns about whether developing countries can manage the burdens on infrastructure and institutions that hosting such events bring.4 Clear shortterm benefits to hosting the Olympic Games include job creation and stimulus, both of which are robust during the event. Continued growth after the 1988 South Korea games made the country once again an economic power in East Asia.5 The less quantifiable benefits, such as the global promotion of the host city, should also be considered. For example, studies have suggested that hosting the Olympics was vital in increasing the international standing and soft power of Beijing and Barcelona.6

TALKING POINTS

- Rising states are the future sites for Olympic Games, but the lack of sustainable development and preparation can undermine their development.
- Multiuse facilities and infrastructure are the keys to reaping the economic and soft power benefits of hosting the Olympic Games. The London Games in 2012 were particularly successful due in part to the incorporation of the games into a larger urban renewal strategy.8
- Reforming the National Olympic Committee bidding process to include reutilization plans would assert sustainable economic development as a pillar of the Olympic Games and be in accordance with the Olympic Charter.

The belief that facilities should be economically productive for the long term is a view shared by a similar mega-event governing body, the Bureau of International Expos (BIE). This organization requires multi-use plans in the bidding process for the World Expo. After the

Expo is complete, the BIE visits the host city to guarantee that the reutilization plan is implemented. The Olympics can also effectively incentivize self-sustainable development. However, there are currently no regulations for infrastructure or the building of stadiums in the Olympic Charter and it is left up to host countries to designate building committees to report to the IOC.⁷

Next Steps

The International Olympic Committee should utilize a similar process as the BOE and reform its bidding process. Before a city can even be considered by the IOC, their country's National Organizing Committee (NOC) must endorse them. The Executive Board of the IOC, the only entity in the IOC that can propose and administer reforms, should reform NOC evaluations to include a comprehensive assessment of the development needed to host the games. The assessment should include a reutilization plan that details sustainable construction practices, inclusive planning with local populaces to stem forceful relocation and displacement, and plans to use these development projects post-Olympic games. Rather than bankrupting them, emphasizing reutilization and sustainability can allow the Olympic Games to become a tool in aiding emerging countries in their development.

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Establishing a Peaceful Middle East Through the Kurds

Marc Getzoff, Cornell University

To effectively combat the Islamic State (ISIS), the United States should be the first to recognize a united Kurdistan. Although the Kurds have long suffered from oppression and violence, they have proven to be strong allies in the fight against ISIS. By providing them with military resources, helping them to establish a stable state, and engendering economic development, the U.S. can move towards creating a peaceful Middle East.

Despite persistent efforts, the Kurdish people have been impeded in their quest for autonomy since the 20th century. Numbering over 30 million, they reside in a region that includes parts of modern Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

Iraqi Kurdistan is an autonomous region that has diplomatic relations with over 25 nations including the U.S., Israel, Turkey, Germany, and India.³ The EU and the UN have missions in Iraqi Kurdistan. In Syria, the Kurdish forces have established a de facto area of autonomy.⁴

Throughout the 20th century, U.S. supported governments in Turkey and Iraq oppressed the Kurds. Recently, the United States and Turkey have altered their stances due to the threat posed by ISIS.⁵ They now rely heavily on the Kurdish armed forces, the

KEY FACTS

- ISIS's advance into Kurdish areas of Syria have caused over 300,000 Kurdish refugees to flee into neighboring Turkey.¹⁵
- The Peshmerga forces currently consist of approximately 200,000 soldiers.¹⁶
- The combined area of Iraqi Kurdistan and Syrian Kurdistan would encompass 10.9 million people.¹⁷
- Roughly 4.5 to 8 million people currently live under the rule of ISIS.¹⁶

Peshmerga,⁶ in the fight against ISIS and have recently improved relations with the Kurds.⁷

The current conflict with ISIS has destabilized the Middle East, killing over 17,000 in Iraq since 2011.8 ISIS has established control over large areas of both countries.9

The U.S. should lead major allies like Turkey, Israel, Germany, and India in recognizing a united Iraqi and Syrian Kurdistan. The U.S. should establish diplomatic ties with the new nation, provide military expertise and political advisors, and establish an embassy to coordinate its campaign against ISIS.

ANALYSIS

The Kurdish forces present the most effective way to combat ISIS due to their combat readiness and regional strength. Military aid to other groups has been ineffective and costly. Many Sunni militants have joined ISIS or are unwilling to support a Shia-dominated

TALKING POINTS

- The Kurdish people have been historically oppressed and deprived of their right to sovereignty.
- The Peshmerga presents the most viable force combating ISIS in both Iraq and Syria.
- Recognizing the legitimacy of Kurdistan would help the Peshmerga organize and energize the population to defend their new territory.

Iraqi government. Iraqi government forces have retreated from ISIS, despite their superior numbers and U.S. supplied modern weaponry.¹⁰ Anti-western sentiment precludes the use of large-scale American forces.

The Iraqi government recognizes an autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan. The Syrian government unwillingly ceded control to the Kurds at the start of the civil war.

Supporting the Kurds and uniting the regions would create a zeal of nationalism for the Kurds and the Peshmerga. The Kurds would be able to reinforce key positions such as Kobani and would provide the U.S. with a fundamental ally that has a trained army and moderate views (for example, women have achieved de facto equality in the military and much of Kurdish society).^{11,12}

Next Steps

The U.S. should work with other nations to recognize and help build a united nation of Kurdistan. Peacekeeping and occupational forces are unlikely to be necessary since Kurdistan is neither a former enemy nor a currently failed state. Due to its homogeneity and the discipline of its military, the country is a suitable target for nation building.¹³ For Kurdistan to develop into a prosperous nation, it will require a united government, military support to protect its territory, and help from the OECD to create trading markets.¹⁴ The U.S. and other regional allies should broker peace agreements amongst Kurdish militias, develop military forces with advanced weaponry, and establish long-term trading agreements. The final step would be to create a permanent embassy in the new state in order to maintain strong relations.

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Enforcing Non-Refoulement in the Midst of Increasing Migration Flows

Hazel Guardado, Cornell University

To make sure genuine refugees are not turned away from receiving countries, the United Nations should adopt clearer language on the international principle of non-refoulement and allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to have greater oversight in the asylum screening process at ports of entry.

The principle of *non-refoulement*, or no forced return, means that states should not "expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any matter whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." This principle is invoked in a number of international treaties, most notably the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Article 33).1

With rising migration flows, a growing number of states are resorting to *non-entrée* measures to keep migrants, and consequently refugees, from accessing their jurisdiction and thus gaining access to the benefits of international refugee law.² *Non-entrée* takes many forms, such as Spain's immediate deportation of immigrants crossing into the Ceuta and Melilla³ and Australia's interception of asylum seekers at sea,⁴ but they all violate *non-refoulement*.

UNHCR has little recourse but to remind governments to respect this international principle or to protest governments who disregard it. Though it is rare for states to not recognize their obligations to act

- Developing countries host 80 percent of the world's refugees.
- More than 3,400 people died in 2014 trying to cross the Mediterranean into Europe.
- Crushed by over one million registered refugees, Lebanon cannot handle any additional influxes.

in accordance with *non-refoulement*, the proliferation of *non-entrée* measures reveals that their support is often only nominal.⁵

The United Nations should reconsider how nations can be made more accountable for violating non-refoulement. Border closings and return of asylum seekers without proper screening procedures should be explicitly denoted as violations of international law, and appropriate measures should be developed with UNHCR to make sure legitimate refugees are not being turned away as ordinary migrants at ports of entry.

ANALYSIS

The current language on *non-refoulement* gives states too much liberty to interpret the principle according to their domestic and international interests. More precise language combined with increased oversight from UNHCR would make *non-refoulement* more enforceable.

TALKING POINTS

- Clearer and more consistent language on non-refoulement would give states less freedom to interpret the principle according to their interests.
- Oversight by UNHCR would take advantage of the agency's decades of experience in refugee affairs.
- Making sure countries respect nonrefoulement would reduce pressures on countries currently hosting the majority of refugees.

Failure to enforce this principle has serious international and humanitarian consequences. *Non-entrée* measures undermine the principle of burden sharing, which states that countries should shoulder the responsibility of hosting refugees collectively. The fact that developing countries host 80 percent of the world's refugees reveals today's deep imbalance in burden sharing.⁶

In addition, the closing of land routes forces refugees to resort to dangerous measures to attain a safe haven. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 3,400 people died in 2014 trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe.⁷

Created after World War II, UNHCR has over 50 years of experience

dealing with refugee affairs. Allowing UNHCR to have a greater role in migrant-screening at ports of entry would take advantage of this experience and make sure that agents do not turn away genuine refugees.

Next Steps

Officials at ports of entry have the most power in determining who gets into the receiving country. As such, state governments and UNHCR should work together to train those officials so that they can better determine who is in fact eligible for asylum. UNHCR training materials already exist, but training should become more comprehensive and streamlined. The first step would be to set up a board of asylum and legal experts to determine what the training process should look like. Funding for this project should be factored into the UNHCR budget, which donor states will ultimately be responsible for. Finally, the United Nations should adopt clearer and more consistent language on what constitutes *non-refoulement* to make the principle more binding, including clearly stating that the principle applies even in detention facilities located outside the receiving country's territory.

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Rethinking Biodefense: Shifting Towards Biosecurity

Garrett Hinck, Georgetown University

The U.S. biodefense program has encouraged the proliferation of labs researching high-containment biological agents, increasing the possibility of an accident or a malicious incident. In fact, current policy weakens biosecurity. Many of these labs should be placed under federal oversight or redirected towards less dangerous research. Federal funding should be channeled instead to public health research.

After the attacks of September 11, 2001 anthrax the scare that followed. and policymakers focused on preventing terrorist groups from acquiring biological weapons. In 2004, Congress passed the Project BioShield Act, providing billions of dollars in funding directed to countermeasures for bioweapons agents.1 Since 9/11, the American government has spent over \$55 billion on new "biosecurity" research and the building of high-level BioSafety labs to develop new countermeasures against advanced bioweapons.2 The number of BioSafety Level-4 (BSL-4) labs, which work with highly dangerous agents, including smallpox and hemorrhagic fevers, has tripled from 5 in 2001 to 15 today. The number of BSL-3 labs dealing with "select agents" substances such as tularemia and anthrax- is now at 1,356.3 No single federal agency has oversight over these labs, and private entities run many of them. With the proliferation of dangerous substances the chances of an

- There is no single federal agency regulating research into dangerous, highly infectious biological agents such as Ebola, smallpox, and anthrax.
- Of the \$60 billion the United States has spent since 9/11 on biodefense, only 2 percent has gone into laboratory safety and basic security upgrades.8
- Before 1990, there were only two BSL-4 facilities in the United States. There are now 15, with six outside the control of the federal government.9

accident or misuse have multiplied. In light of a recent incident in which an unsecured vial of smallpox virus was discovered at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), it is clear these agents are not always handled safely.⁴ The U.S. research program into dangerous, genetically modified bioweapons has lacked oversight and diminished overall security.

The U.S. government should redirect its biodefense policy towards biosecurity. BSL-4 labs not managed by the federal government should either be closed or repurposed to focus on less dangerous pathogens that infect large populations, such as antibioticresistant tuberculosis. Portions of funding currently earmarked for research into defense against technically advanced, genetically biological agents should modified redirected towards research into combatting naturally occurring infectious diseases. A new regulatory agency should be created to oversee research and labs dealing with dangerous biological agents.

TALKING POINTS

- U.S. policy should be based on using research funding to study likely threats, not on creating threats in order to defend against them.
- To continue the proliferation of dangerous bioweapons would be irresponsible, only increasing the probability of a devastating accident.
- It is common sense to exercise strict oversight on highly infectious biological agents. Clarity is essential for effective regulation; therefore, a single agency regulating this research is necessary.

ANALYSIS

Despite the doomsday prognostications of many leading officials, the risk of a bioterrorism attack is extremely unlikely. Jessica Stern, an expert on terrorism and a fellow at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health, argues that government officials have overreacted due to the vividly horrific consequences of a bioterrorism attack, despite its low probability. Currently, thousands of individuals work in BSL-4 and BSL-3 labs. Putting all BSL-4 labs under federal control would reduce the likelihood of these people accidentally or deliberately misusing dangerous agents through the use of uniform, strict protocols. Even though the NIH conducted an investigation of its facilities after the smallpox incident, they did not challenge the fundamental basis

of the U.S. biodefense program.⁶ Only a thorough revision of U.S. policy will address these deep issues. Direct oversight with a clear focus on safety is essential to solving these problems. Research into aerosolized compounds, novel agent delivery, and genetic engineering of bioweapons, all of which have been conducted by the BioThreat Characterization Center, should be stopped.⁷ A new regulatory agency governing research into dangerous agents would make the process transparent and non-threatening to other nations. The redirection of funds towards infectious disease research will better enable researchers to develop new vaccines for viruses such as Ebola and prepare for naturally-occurring disease outbreaks.

Next Steps

Congress should rewrite the Project BioShield Act to redirect NIH and CDC funding towards research into preventing natural infectious disease outbreaks. President Obama should issue an executive order for a comprehensive review of the safety practices of all federally managed BSL-4 and BSL-3 labs. Ultimately, Congress and the President should pass and sign into law a bill creating a new regulatory agency governing research into highly dangerous biological agents.

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Human Rights Crisis in North Korea: Protection and Justice for Female Defectors

Lynn Lee, Georgetown University

In order to protect North Korean defectors from facing torture when repatriated by Chinese authorities, the United Nations should label them as political refugees and restrain China from sending them back to North Korea.

North Korea is a totalitarian state in which the supreme leader employs imprisonment, executions, and torture as state policies to maintain his power.¹ The targets of these harsh punishments mainly consist of repatriated North Korean defectors.² Repatriated women in particular are subject to sexual degradations. The prison guards not only rape them, but also force all women who have possibly been impregnated by non-Koreans to receive abortions, often performed without doctor's supervision, in an attempt to preserve ethnic "purity."³

Despite such human rights violations, the Chinese government labels North Korean defectors as "economic migrants"⁴ instead of refugees, and aids the Kim regime in transporting them back to North Korea.⁵ Without any legal protection or assistance, 90 percent of female defectors fall into the hands of traffickers who sell them to Chinese "husbands" or force them into prostitution.^{6,7}

- North Korea is a totalitarian state that uses torture and imprisonment as state policies to maintain political power.¹²
- China labels North Korean defectors as economic migrants and helps North Korea repatriate the defectors.¹³
- Repatriated
 North Koreans face
 torture, forced labor,
 imprisonment, and
 possibly execution.
 Repatriated female
 defectors are further
 subject to rape, sexual
 degradation, and forced
 abortion.¹⁴
- 70 percent of North Korean defectors are women, and 90 percent of them will be victims of human trafficking due to a systemic lack of Chinese legal protection.¹⁵

As the UN suggests, North Korean defectors should be treated as refugees.⁸ I propose that the UN General Assembly (GA) pass a resolution that clearly defines all North Korean defectors as political refugees. Next, the Human Rights Council (HRC) should establish shelters near the North Korean-Chinese boarder in order to provide basic care to the defectors and to carry out the investigations suggested by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights (COI).⁹

ANALYSIS

In response to his crimes against humanity, the UN COI has suggested referring Kim Jong Un to the International Criminal Court (ICC).¹⁰ However, this is not a feasible solution due to the UN's inability to summon a state leader to the ICC. Therefore, the UN General Assembly should pass a resolution recognizing North Korean defectors as political refugees. Action by the UN is justified and necessitated by

TALKING POINTS

- People are tortured and killed with shocking frequency for attempting to escape North Korea.
- It is unlikely that the international community will succeed in referring Kim Jong Un to the International Criminal Court due to North Korea's alliance with China.
- China should immediately stop repatriating North Korean defectors and protect defectors' fundamental human rights.

the COI Report's conclusion that North Korea is a totalitarian state that uses inhumane methods to secure power. Changing the legal status of North Korean defectors would force China to treat them in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention and thus grant them fundamental human rights and protections.¹¹ If given these rights, defectors would be protected from human trafficking and could seek asylum without fearing capture by the Chinese police.

Next Steps

The United Nations General Assembly should immediately pass a resolution that defines North Korean defectors as political refugees escaping from the statewide persecution. The United Nations Human Rights Council should then work in tandem with South Korea's Unification Department, Chinese law enforcement, and relevant non-governmental organizations to build shelters along the Sino-North Korean border. Governmental and non-governmental organizations should initiate advocacy and awareness events in order to secure monetary resources for the refugee shelters from donors.

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Stronger Together: A Case for a Supranational Central American Union

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The Central American Integration System (CAIS) should be strengthened through greater political and economic integration in order to effectively combat the shared challenges – drug violence, poverty, and structural underdevelopment – of its member states.

The Central American Integration System, signed December 13, 1991, includes all seven nations within Central America as well as the Dominican Republic. Designed to coordinate regional responses to collective action problems as Central American nations moved from the civil wars of the late 20th century to the drug violence of the early 21st century,¹ the organization has been unable to exercise real authority and is regarded as inept by member states.² Regional violence has yielded economic turbulence and social unrest across the region, with ramifications for the entire hemisphere, as demonstrated by the 2014 child migration crisis.³

Collectively, the member nations of CAIS form a supranational union with the economic power to combat regional issues

KEY FACTS

- While the individual governments of the region respect recognized borders, the drug cartels working within Central America consistently fail to do so.
- Many of the issues facing the region stem from underdevelopment and violence, two deeply rooted issues that require substantial financial investment to remedy.

without international aid, boasting both a population larger than Spain and a GDP higher than Sweden.⁴ The Central American Parliament (PARLACEN) serves, despite very limited power, as the organization's governing mechanism. PARLACEN has failed to pass free movement legislation, although the Central America-⁴ (CA-4) Border Control Agreement, signed in June 2006, ⁵ allows for the free movement of citizens between Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras,

and Guatemala.⁶ In sum, the piecemeal nature of CAIS prevents it from achieving its maximum potential, making a case for further economic and political integration.

Economic integration should be focused on several key components: the addition of all member states into the CA-4 Agreement and PARLACEN, the introduction of a common currency and subsequent consolidation of national debts, the bestowing of the powers required to regulate a shared currency to the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), and the expansion of the powers of the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) to include economic regulation of the transnational agricultural sector.

TALKING POINTS

- The existing CAIS has the potential to empower member states to confront shared challenges without relying on international aid.
- The lessons of the Eurozone suggest that a shared currency may be very successful if its member states are willing to create the supranational political structure it requires.

ANALYSIS

Central America (including the Dominican Republic) has a population of 54 million people and a GDP of \$423 billion, with a collective governmental debt of \$193 billion. Five out of the eight nations hold a lower debt-to-GDP ratio (purchasing power parity) collectively than they do individually.7 As was the case for every member nation of the EU that adopted the Euro,8 a Central American shared currency would hold more value than any currency currently used by members (with the exception of the U.S. Dollar used by Panama.). Moreover, consolidating and collectively resolving member debt may avoid much of the volatility and instability of the Euro, which stems from the lack of a supranational political system capable of burden adjustment.9 In Central America, the necessary national mechanisms to strengthen CAIS already exist, and thus the region will find it easier than Europe to consolidate sufficient political power within a supranational structure to successfully manage a common currency.

In addition, the regional agriculture sector would benefit from a stronger CAIS and common currency. Agriculture's share of GDP increased in five out of eight member nations between 2011 and 2012. Cooperation on agricultural policy in member nations is the responsibility of the CAC, which convenes states' agricultural ministers to discuss shared challenges. This space for dialogue is critical in developing coordinated policies conductive to economic growth.10

Next Steps

The CAIS must enlarge the CA-4 treaty to include all member nations, and Costa Rica must join the PARLACEN. Then, CABIS should issue a single currency and purchase the national debts of each member nation. The CAC must be given the authority to implement regional agricultural policy. In today's globalized economy, greater Central American stability and economic output will lead to both a decrease in negative exports (unwanted migration, drug trafficking, violence, etc.) and an increase in positive externalities (a larger middle class, more international tourism stemming from heightened security, etc.).

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Closing Morocco's Language Gap: Incorporation of Bilingual Curriculum in Public Schools

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By using a French curriculum, Moroccan higher education favors French-taught private school students over Arabic-speaking public school graduates. Therefore, UNICEF should initiate a bilingual program in which Moroccan public school teachers receive training to teach both French and Modern Standard Arabic.

French colonialism drastically changed Moroccan language and education. In 1912, colonial authorities introduced French as the language of educational instruction, administration, and media. By establishing French as the official language, colonizers pursued their goal to rule Morocco by dividing it into distinct ethnic and linguistic groups. 58 years after decolonization, the country remains linguistically divided, especially with regard to education.1 Like most countries, Morocco's educational svstem includes private and public schools. By definition, funding differentiates the two: the former are funded through charitable trusts and tuition, while the latter are maintained at public expense. The languages of Arabic and French also distinguish the schools.2 During colonial rule, French became the official language of government, education, business, and sciences. Shortly after independence, the new government instituted a policy called Arabization that gradually transformed school curricula from French to Arabic. This change included public primary and secondary

- To advance from one year to the next, Moroccan college students must pass written and oral examinations and score at least 50 percent. Many public school graduates are forced to repeat a year, and many spend 6 years completing a 4-year degree.8
- Private school graduates in Morocco outperform public school graduates in every subject.⁹
- By the end of the sixth grade, only 5 percent of Moroccan public school students can read French, the primary language in academia, law, and medicine.¹⁰

education but excluded private and tertiary schooling. Due to this legacy, French still dominates higher education classrooms in Morocco. Therefore, the two tiers – public and private, Arabic and French – create a double linguistic standard by disfavoring Arabized high school graduates, whose education and welfare are already socio-economically disadvantaged compared to their more privileged French-speaking peers.³

To address this language gap, UNICEF should establish a program that trains Moroccan public school teachers to bilingually teach core subjects such as mathematics, science, and history. French would be introduced in public primary schools as a second language and gradually be incorporated as an instructional language parallel to Arabic. A program of this type has been used in Vietnam, with positive results that could also be achieved in the Moroccan context.

ANALYSIS

In 2007, UNICEF initiated the Mother-Tongue Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) program, a similar idea that helped Vietnamese minority students at the primary level overcome the "language barrier" between their mother tongues and the official instructional language, Vietnamese. MTBBE uses ethnic minority languages as the main

TALKING POINTS

- Rabat has 31,305 pupils enrolled in primary public schools and 14,269 pupils enrolled in private primary schools. 68 percent of the city's overall pupils receive Arabic instruction while only 32 percent receive French instruction, the dominant language of higher education.¹¹
- A bilingual training program similar to Vietnam's MTBBE will lessen the language gap between private and public school graduates.
- The results of MTBBE prove that gradually introducing a bilingual curriculum increases overall test scores.¹²
- A program like MTBBE will increase baccalaureate scores and decrease dropout rates of public school graduates.

instructional language and gradually introduces Vietnamese into the core curriculum. MTBBE serves small groups of students from preprimary to grade five in each province. Since Vietnam and Morocco share issues of native "language barriers," Morocco's UNICEF-sponsored program should mirror that of Vietnam.⁴ It should first

pilot in the city of Rabat for accurate measurement and review. Rabat is the country's capital and home to four public universities.⁵

Public higher education is free in Morocco, and many students would benefit from learning a secondary but academically dominant language. In UNICEF's pre-school assessment, MTBBE children scored at least 16 out of 20 in listening comprehension, understanding concepts, and understanding antonyms; non-MTBBE students received 13 as the highest score.6 A program like MTBBE would also improve teachers' job performance and language skills. Lastly, Morocco would benefit as inequality, in part a result of educational privatization, decreases and equal opportunity becomes the norm.⁷

Next Steps

UNICEF's next strategic plan should include training Rabat's primary and secondary school teachers to gradually incorporate French into the standard core curriculum. The program would include intensive in-service and pre-service orientation, bilingual teaching and advocacy materials, and an assessment of statebased test scores. Such a program requires funding and partnerships from donor states and organizations to reach the ultimate goal of equal opportunity. Furthermore, Morocco's government must endorse the program and counteract the push for educational privatization.

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Introducing Mobile Health to Guyana

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There is little emphasis placed on primary health care in Guyana, resulting in unnecessary health spending and the exacerbation of disease. The Guyanese Ministry of Health should require hospitals to create mobile health programs that provide health education and basic health services. This will encourage both locals and the government to prioritize primary health care.

Guyana's Ministry of Health (MOH) responsible for the health of the nation's people. This mandate includes providing services associated with primary care, such as health education, maternal and child health care, immunizations, and chronic disease prevention and treatment. However, patients usually bypass the few primary care resources currently provided by the MOH due to their lack of appeal, accessibility, and advertisement.1 This leaves many Guyanese with unchecked chronic conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, STDs, malnutrition, and respiratory infections - all problems that would be best addressed in early stages through primary care. Mobile health clinics, proven successful in areas like Maryland,2 Texas,³ and Canada,⁴ would not only improve healthcare but would also connect communities in Guyana to each other and their governments. To take just one example, the United States of America's roughly

KEY FACTS

- Efforts to use community-based primary health care to improve health situations in poor, rural communities have proven successful in East Africa and Central Asia.¹²
- In the U.S., a \$4 million investment in mobile clinics saved \$81 million in other health fees.¹³
- Although health care is essentially free in Guyana, citizens still pay for medical supplies and equipment with little guarantee of quality.¹⁴

1800 mobile health clinics have been proven to improve health in underserved communities by providing preventative care and disease management aid at a reasonable cost.⁵ The MOH should learn from this and many other examples and agree to pursue a similar course.

The Ministry of Health will require hospitals to create mobile health care programs to enhance primary care. These mobile health clinics will employ paid community health workers and youth program volunteers. They will travel throughout rural communities and provide both basic health services, such as monitoring vital signs and completing physical exams, and health education. Both groups of staff will receive funding from their sponsoring hospitals in order to review basic primary care practices.

ANALYSIS

The main roadblocks to successful primary care in Guyana are a lack of quality, knowledge, accessibility, and prioritization.⁶ A mandated mobile health program would overcome these challenges. By introducing highly accessible mobile clinics, people will

TALKING POINTS

- Because of the vast distances involved, Guyanese patients delay their hospital trips until absolutely necessary.¹⁵
- Citizens, especially those in rural, indigenous areas, lack sufficient health education to make educated decisions.¹⁶
- Most NGOs in Guyana focus exclusively HIV/AIDS rather than the whole scope of primary health care.¹⁷

be more able to receive checkups. Crucial health information will become readily available to an unprecedented number of people. Regular check-ups and door-to-door appointments that were previously unattainable in certain underserved areas would now be accessible. In sum, creating a mobile health care system in Guyana would solve many of the current problems facing the nation's primary care system.⁷

Guyana currently has seven hospitals. If one mobile health van costs about \$40,800 and its supplies \$4,500, three to five mobile clinics per hospital would cost the MOH about \$1,585,500.8 That is only .008 percent of the money used for Guyana's health expenditure from its GDP.9 Donations and volunteers from outside non-profit organizations like the MoorePark Foundation and Youth Challenge International could also contribute to the effort.10 This program will in fact reduce health spending over the long run, due to a decrease in emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and hospital readmissions across the country.11

Next Steps

The first step would be to appeal directly to the Minister of Health, Dr. Bheri Ramsaran. He would next meet with members from the Regional Democratic Councils (RDC) and Regional Health Authorities (RHA) to discuss this plan and its implementation. Once the MOH money is distributed, the seven hospitals will begin to implement the new mandate by organizing the training and distribution of the mobile health clinics. In order to save time and money, current community health workers should be removed from failing local health posts and used in these new mobile clinics. Other volunteers and donors should be continuously sought out as these new clinics are developed.

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Strengthening Women's Land Tenure Security in Kenya

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Women in Kenya experience less secure land tenure than men, primarily due to the prevalence of customary practices. The Kenyan government, in coordination with NGOs, should enact a public awareness and educational campaign to inform citizens at the county level about their land tenure rights as enumerated in the 2010 Constitution.

The insecure land tenure of women in Kenya should be contextualized within the nation's colonial history and recent reforms. Prior to colonization, Kenyan patrilineal clans promoted safeguards for divorced and widowed women, but the colonial system replaced these with an absolutist role for men in solely controlling property.¹

The 2010 Constitution requires that at least one-third of all public offices be held by women, and laws such as the Land Registration Act and the Matrimonial Property Act have respectively sought to

address the implementation of joint titling for land registration and legal protections for divorced women.² Despite these reforms, inequality in women's land rights persists due to the lack of localized awareness. Because of these failures, female-headed households disproportionately live below local poverty levels, and women are excluded from community governance and markets for productive resources.³

The Kenyan government, with support from NGOs, should enact education and public awareness campaigns at the village level with monitoring and implementation occurring at the county level. This policy

- Tangible Change: Community officials now require spousal consent for all land transactions.
- Sustainable Policy: The program trained 34 women in land management and alternative dispute resolution skills, and these women then held their own workshops that trained 268 additional women.¹¹

will center on educating people of their land tenure rights, similar to a Landesa pilot project that was conducted in two areas of the Mau Forest in 2010.

ANALYSIS

Scholars have found that the feasibility of a formal government-NGO partnership is high because NGOs often fill the gap in areas where the population is underserved by the government.⁴ The legitimacy of the national government and NGOs involved is greatly increased by operating jointly.⁵

The Landesa pilot project was effective in impacting critical points of intervention; it both increased community involvement and decreased land grabbing. Not only did community elders pass a constitution recognizing the importance of women's rights, but the villages also elected women to 14 out of 50 government offices. The training increased the women's knowledge of their land rights and consequently decreased land grabbing.

TALKING POINTS

- Biased local customary practices promote insecure land tenure for women in Kenya, which contributes to disproportionately high poverty levels for female-headed households.
- Although a new constitution has espoused liberal rights for women, problems with implementation persist because of a lack of localized buy-in.
- The Kenyan government should enact an educational and public awareness campaign in coordination with NGOs to inform women at the village level of their constitutional rights.

Next Steps

In order to defray the high estimated costs of this educational campaign, it should be conducted for 10 years, allowing for gradual institutionalization and reassessment. NGOs like Landesa should lobby the Kenyan government to pass legislation formalizing the campaign, similar to the passage of reform acts in order to facilitate implementation of the 2010 Constitution. The United States should create a USAID budget line item within the Development Grants Program supporting technical assistance to NGOs and partnerships with the Kenyan government. In order to demonstrate its support for global human rights and bolster the NGO sector to govern the program natively, USAID should revive its NGO Sector Strengthening Program that was utilized in both Angola and East Timor in order to identify and assist targeted organizations.^{7,8} In addition to NGOs, USAID should also forge links with government institutions such as the Ministry of Lands. 9 Through a global informational campaign, UNICEF should promote the story of Lady Justice Effie Owuor as an inspirational example of women's rights in Kenya. Kenya's first female judge, the national UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador has valiantly countered customary land practices, and Owuor would be a model candidate for generating awareness. 10

ENDNOTES

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