

Rehabilitating Sports Safety: Mandating Certified Athletic Trainers in California High Schools

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Roosevelt @ Claremont McKenna College

THESIS

California is the only state that does not mandate or regulate athletic training. The State of California should require athletic trainer certification and develop stricter safety codes in high-school sports, eventually requiring trainers at every high school athletics competition.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

When Miller Bofo, a Redlands High School football player, suffered a hit during a game, his team's athletic trainer (or AT) diagnosed his response as "flu-like symptoms." After the ambulance was called because Bofo became unconscious, he was taken to the hospital, subsequently undergoing a five-hour brain surgery for bleeding in the brain that almost went undiagnosed.¹ The Redlands High School athletic trainer is still employed and still not certified. And, as of now, that's perfectly legal.²

Athletic trainers are highly skilled medical professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of medical conditions. Currently, California is the only state that does not require ATs to have the National Athletic Trainers' Association's "Athletic Training Credential" (ATC).³

Only 25 percent of California high schools employ a full-time athletic trainer,⁴ and California ranks 50th out of 51 states, including D.C., for high school sports safety.⁵ A 2012 study by the American Pediatrics Association found that schools with certified athletic trainers have a significantly lower rate of injury for high school athletes than schools who do not.⁶ A lack of urgency and inadequate monetary allocations have caused a shortage of certified ATs. As a result, high school athletes, especially students of color, are at a significantly higher risk of injury. Black students are more likely to participate in both high school football and basketball, the country's most injury-prone sports; racial minorities are consequently disproportionately affected by sports injuries, and a lack of licensed ATs.⁷

TALKING POINTS

- In California, anyone can call himself or herself an athletic trainer, regardless of whether he or she possesses the educational qualifications, clinical experience, or sufficient medical knowledge to practice.
- Because licensure is not required through a central board, there is no formal procedure to file a complaint against an athletic trainer for malpractice and have it investigated.⁸
- Requiring certification for all athletic trainers would improve athlete safety by ensuring the presence of a qualified and educated medical professional who can quickly respond to crises with informed judgment.
- Students of color are more affected by the lack of athletic trainers, as they are more likely to play injury-prone sports such as basketball and football.⁹

POLICY IDEA

The California State Legislature should regulate the practice of athletic training by mandating licensure from the Board of Certification (BOC) of the National Athletic Training Association. It should immediately require all schools to draft and submit an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for approval until a certified trainer can be hired. California should also provide funding for the prompt hiring of athletic trainers in public schools and eventually require a certified athletic trainer at all high school competitions. Finally, the state should implement more stringent policies in secondary school athletic safety.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Given that California has nearly 1 million high school student athletes,¹³ it is critical to ensure their safety. Schools that lack qualified athletic trainers or trainers altogether put their athletes at significantly higher risk of serious injury.

A comprehensive study conducted by the Korey Stringer Institute found that North Carolina has the leading athletic safety policies. In addition to requiring licensed and regulated athletic trainers, North Carolina requires that every school that sponsors athletics should develop an Athletics Emergency Action Plan (AEAP) specifically for managing serious and/or potentially life-threatening sport-related injuries.¹⁴ In comparison, California has neither.

Overall injury rates are lower and concussions are correctly diagnosed more in schools with athletic trainers. A comparative study conducted by the American Association of Pediatrics showed that among soccer players, overall injury rates were approximately 1.73 times higher, and recurring injury rates were 5.7 times higher in schools without ATs than schools with them. Furthermore, concussions were reported 8.05 times more in schools with athletic trainers, indicating that significantly fewer number of concussions go undiagnosed and untreated when high schools hire an AT.¹⁵

In addition to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of student-athletes, an athletic trainer's ability to respond to issues swiftly leads to decreased costs for schools and parents. A case study of a Michigan school that employed a full-time athletic trainer reported saving over \$8,000, not including savings for athletes' families for decreased visits to doctors and physical therapists.¹⁶

NEXT STEPS

Our key allies include the California Athletic Trainers Association, National Athletic Trainers Association, and high school sports coaches, parents, and athletes statewide. To bolster our cause before the California Assembly, we will gather personal stories through interviews at local high school sporting events regarding California high school ATs.

In the immediate future, we plan to collaborate with the California Interscholastic Federation, which has made it one of its top priorities to educate principals, superintendents, and athletic directors on the importance of hiring an athletic trainer. We hope to collaborate with the CIF to brainstorm funding options to subsidize or decrease the current cost of hiring an AT, which amounts to \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year.¹⁷

To gather community support for our proposed policy, we will promote a social media campaign focused on sports education and safety, partnering with local news stations to widen the platform of our policy's reach.

KEY FACTS

- California ranks 50th out of 51 states (including D.C.) for high school sports safety based on adherence to best practices developed by a national task-force.¹⁰
- Only 25 percent of California high schools employ a full-time athletic trainer.¹¹
- 16.2 percent of high school athletic trainers in California are not certified.¹²
- High school football players experience more than half of all high school sports injuries, and black males are more likely than whites to participate in this injury-heavy sport, disproportionately targeting them for potentially life-threatening situations without a licensed trainer.
- Schools that employ athletic trainers have shown cost savings of up to approximately \$8,300 per year, excluding costs saved by student athletes and their families.

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Menstruation Matters: The Case for Free Sanitary Napkin and Tampon Distribution at George Mason University

By Erica Harp

Roosevelt @ George Mason University

THESIS

To create a more inclusive and accommodating campus, George Mason University should provide menstrual hygiene products free of charge in women's and gender-neutral bathrooms.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

With the elimination of the taxation on menstrual hygiene products across 13 states, sanitary pads and tampons are starting to be viewed as a necessity rather than a luxury in the U.S.¹ New York City recently made it mandatory to provide free menstrual hygiene products in public schools, shelters, and jails.² Multiple colleges and universities across the country are also beginning initiatives to expand access to such products.³ However, menstrual hygiene products are difficult to access on the George Mason campus.

While menstrual hygiene product machines are located in most bathrooms in academic buildings, they are often understocked or broken, as there is no current maintenance policy in place.⁴ As they require quarters to purchase products, the machines are inaccessible to many students on campus who use only their Mason IDs or credit cards for dining services and vending machines on campus. While boxes of menstrual hygiene products are available for purchase in a few convenience stores on campus, they are sold for nearly three times as much as those sold in off-campus pharmacies.^{5,6} When students are only in need of one tampon or sanitary napkin, they are either forced to buy a whole box, ask fellow students for a product, or walk to their dorm if they live on campus to retrieve products, causing students to miss out on valuable class and study time as a result.

TALKING POINTS

- As of 2016, with over half of George Mason's student population receiving some type of financial aid, including over a quarter of students receiving Pell Grants, the price mark-ups for menstrual hygiene products on campus may make these products totally inaccessible to students with financial need.⁷
- Many of the machines are outdated, understocked, or nonfunctional, and over 20 women's bathrooms on campus do not have any type of menstrual hygiene product machine. None of the gender-neutral bathrooms have machines.⁸
- George Mason's campus provides condoms free of charge in the Student Support and Advocacy Center Office, in residence halls, and in various academic buildings throughout campus. However, menstrual hygiene products are not offered anywhere on campus to the general student population free of charge.⁹

POLICY IDEA

George Mason University should provide menstrual hygiene products free of charge in women's and gender-neutral bathrooms in academic buildings across campus. In place of the current outdated vending machines, which are currently in campus bathrooms, George Mason will save money by simply providing the products in bathrooms instead of maintaining and buying new machines. The housekeeping department should refill stocks of the products in bathrooms as needed.

POLICY ANALYSIS

This policy option is the most financially practical for both the George Mason administration and students. While the university could install new machines in the bathrooms that do not have them, the existing and the new machines would still require regular maintenance. Currently, each machine costs around \$350 to purchase and install. If the university were to invest in new machines that would allow for credit card payment, they would be even more expensive. The most rational solution would be to stop using and installing the machines and instead stock menstrual hygiene products in the bathrooms free of charge. A pack of 500 tampons is around \$80 and a bulk supply of pads comes at a similar price.¹⁶ The funding for the products would come through University Life, which collects and manages student fees.

Other schools such as Brown University, The University of Minnesota and The University of Nebraska-Lincoln have successfully enacted similar programs and now stock free tampons and pads in all of their bathrooms on campus. Brown's Council of Students recently started an initiative to provide sanitary napkins and tampons in women's, men's, and gender-neutral bathrooms and restocks the supplies in bathrooms on a weekly basis.¹⁷

NEXT STEPS

George Mason University should implement a policy to provide menstrual hygiene products for free in bathrooms in every academic building. Roosevelt at Mason has just begun a university-wide student survey regarding access to menstrual hygiene products on campus. So far, based on a continuing Roosevelt @ Mason survey, 93% of students believe there needs to be a change in order to improve access to menstrual hygiene products on campus.¹⁸ Many students have commented that they should either be free in bathrooms or accessible to students in another way, possibly in the form of new vending machines.¹⁹ As the survey continues into next semester, there will be sufficient data to present to the university to help eventually implement this policy. If costs cannot be directly covered by University Life, George Mason should apply for a Planned Parenthood grant or similar funding which would help maintain the free supply of menstrual hygiene products in bathrooms.²⁰

KEY FACTS

- On average, women experience around 450 periods in their lifetime, spending over 2,000 days of their life menstruating.¹⁰ It is estimated that women spend around \$120 on menstrual hygiene products each year.¹¹
- According to a survey by Free the Tampons, 86% of women reported beginning their period in public without the supplies they needed, and only 8% reported the menstrual hygiene product dispensers in bathrooms working 100% of the time.¹²
- Each menstrual hygiene product machine at George Mason costs about \$350 to buy and install, whereas a bulk supply of 500 quality tampons costs about \$80, and a bulk supply of sanitary napkins costs about \$50.¹³
- A box of 10 Tampex tampons costs \$4.10 at an on-campus store, while a box of the same products at CVS only costs around \$1.50.^{14, 15}

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Snowmelt Systems: The Need for Accessible Pedestrian Pathways in Ann Arbor

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THESIS

By implementing snowmelt systems, the City of Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan campus could improve pedestrian safety by minimizing ice-related accidents, address environmental hazards caused by increased water and soil salinity, and save money on future infrastructure costs.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Between 2010 and 2016, downtown Ann Arbor's population grew 8.2 percent annually, meaning more pedestrians than ever before and an even greater need for improved infrastructure.¹ The University of Michigan has also seen a steady increase in enrollment over time, with an increase of 1,284 students from 2016 to 2017.² It is in the city's best interest to ensure their safety.

Michigan State, comparable to the University of Michigan in terms of size and annual snowfall, has added 160,000 square feet of snowmelt systems to their campus to provide safer pathways for students. Not only are there public safety positives from heated sidewalks, but there are also many economic and environmental externalities with road salt as well. In similar urban areas, 70 percent of salt applied to roads stays within the region's watershed. This salty water harms aquatic plants and animals. Furthermore, salt can get trapped in waterways and form dead zones.³

Between 1991 and 2004, 40 percent of urban and suburban streams reported chloride levels at or above EPA recommended levels.⁴ Due to a cold winter climate, Ann Arbor's sidewalks also often fall victim to freeze thaw cycles that cause cracking. Intelligent snowmelt systems such as the one we propose would reduce the effect of the freeze thaw cycle, and thus the frequency at which sidewalks require repairs. Implementing these heated pathways in high traffic areas downtown will benefit businesses as well. In Holland, Michigan, for example, much of the funding for their heated pathways came from businesses in the downtown area, which saw a rise in customer traffic during the winter season after implementation.

TALKING POINTS

- Snowmelt systems would allow more easily accessible pedestrian infrastructure, which would have direct and wide-ranging benefits for many players in the local economy emphasizing local businesses.
- Ann Arbor is already in the process of a major downtown infrastructure overhaul, making this a convenient time to implement snowmelt systems under pedestrian pathways.
- The city of Ann Arbor, including the campus and hospital area, has a high volume of pedestrian commuters and ensuring their safety should be a priority.
- The salts and chemicals currently being used on pathways cause costly and inconvenient replacement projects and large-scale environmental damage as salt is washed into runoff.

POLICY IDEA

To solve the aforementioned problems, we propose implementing a snowmelt system in the city of Ann Arbor. This would involve installing a system of pipes under the sidewalks, which would carry domestic hot water from buildings to melt snow and ice on the surface of sidewalks. These systems would ideally be first installed in areas of high pedestrian traffic in the downtown and campus areas. Planned to coincide with the city's infrastructure overhaul set to complete by 2020, the snowmelt systems would be installed with each portion of new road or building construction.

POLICY ANALYSIS

A snowmelt system in downtown Ann Arbor is the best possible solution. In attempt to compensate for the tremendous annual snowfall, Ann Arbor overextends itself, spending upwards of \$1.5 million on trucks and plows in one year. The city could save itself thousands just as Holland, Michigan has done so far. Holland has a snowmelt system amounting to about 10.5 acres and costs the city between \$20,000 to \$80,000 annually.⁸ The policy at hand is only concerned with certain downtown areas, so it is safe to assume that the operating costs for the Ann Arbor project would be less than \$20,000. As the area to be heated is relatively small, no additional hot water, other than what is already produced for domestic use, would be needed, thereby keeping operating costs low. The city would save on a snowmelt system, compared to the millions of dollars it spends on manual snow removal. However, initial installation of the systems will likely entail a large cost, as the process requires ripping up existing sidewalks to lay down pipes. In terms of the environment and sustainability, by utilizing hot water from buildings that would otherwise return to the power plant unused, the efficiency of power plants increases and energy waste is reduced. The snowmelt system will also allow for businesses to flourish during a time that is normally slow due to winter weather. In areas of Chicago, small business fronts report better sales due to heated pathways.⁹

NEXT STEPS

In order to gain support for these snowmelt systems in the city of Ann Arbor, several individuals and agencies need to be contacted in order to gain their support. Ultimately, The Ann Arbor City Council needs to be on board with this project. To accomplish this, we plan to reach out to City Council members, especially those on the energy and infrastructure committees. Additionally, to expand the snowmelt systems to the University of Michigan campus, we will contact and work closely with University Facilities and Operations, which oversee the Central Campus Power Plant, the North Campus Power Plant, and the Architecture Engineering and Construction department. All of which are instrumental in providing the energy, resources, and knowledge to implement these snowmelt systems in and around the U-M campus. With all of these organizations and individuals on board, a cohesive policy and mitigation plan could be drafted to best implement these systems throughout downtown and campus area of Ann Arbor.

KEY FACTS

- In 2012, the Ann Arbor City Council voted to purchase 11 new dump trucks and 4 front mounting snowplows for \$1.55 million.⁵
- In 2015, Ann Arbor put more than \$2 million dollars into year four of a five-year citywide repair program funded by a special sidewalk millage approved by voters in 2011.⁶
- There can be a \$500 ticket to Ann Arbor property owners if there has been over one inch of snowfall that has not been cleared from sidewalks after 24 hours.⁷

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Reducing Toxic Algal Blooms: Subsidizing Improved Farming Techniques in Michigan

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THESIS

To combat the outbreak of toxic algal blooms in Lake Erie, Michigan's General Assembly should award funds to counties situated along the Maumee River Basin to subsidize the implementation of cover crops, buffer strips, and subsurface application of phosphorus.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Concerns about Lake Erie's water quality in the 1970s led to the passage of the Clean Water Act and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.⁴ While water quality improved significantly in the following two decades, increased phosphorous discharge due to heavy rainfall and changing farming techniques⁵ is causing it to decline once again. Phosphorus from fertilizers flows into the Maumee River, a major tributary of Lake Erie, and has caused an increase in the size and growth rate of algal blooms in recent years.⁶

In Michigan, Lenawee County and Hillsdale County are two of the most prominent contributors of phosphorus to the Maumee River.⁷ Some algal blooms contain dangerous toxins, which contaminate Lake Erie and pose a significant risk to surrounding populations that rely on the lake for drinking water. Drinking water contaminated by algae results in rashes, gastrointestinal problems, and nervous system, liver, and kidney damage.⁸ In 2014, a toxic algae bloom forced 400,000 people in Toledo to drink from bottled water for three days.

In addition to health concerns, algae blooms in Lake Erie cause billions of dollars' worth of damage to commercial fishing as well as recreational industries, which rely on the lake for business. With progress stalled on remedying an issue, which poses a serious threat to both health and the economy,⁹ it is imperative that solutions to algal blooms be explored.

TALKING POINTS

- The Maumee River Basin is the largest contributor of phosphorus to Lake Erie and is responsible for creating larger and more toxic algal blooms.¹⁰
- Eleven million people live along Lake Erie, and the lake supports billions of dollars in fishing and recreation.¹¹
- Subsurface fertilizer application, buffer crops, and cover crops are the best practices for the reduction of pollutants and increased crop yields.¹²

KEY FACTS

- Phosphorus runoff from farms contributes to 75% of phosphorus input into Lake Erie from the Maumee River.¹
- Subsurface application of phosphorus, buffer strips, and cover crops would meet EPA goals of reducing phosphorus input into the Western Basin of Lake Erie by 40%.²
- Subsurface application of phosphorus increases crop yield compared to spreading phosphorus along the surface of the soil while reducing phosphorus runoff.³

POLICY IDEA

Farmers along the Maumee River Basin, particularly those within Lenawee County and Hillsdale County, ought to implement best practice farming techniques to reduce their phosphorus contributions. These methods include implementing cover crops, buffer strips, and the subsurface application of phosphorus, all of which reduce harmful agricultural runoff. We propose that the Michigan General Assembly establish a grant program to award farmers the necessary funds to implement these best practice techniques.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Phosphorus runoff from farms contributes 75 percent of phosphorus input from the Maumee River into Lake Erie.¹³ Thus, targeting the Maumee River is the most effective solution to algal blooms along the Western Basin of Lake Erie. Reducing phosphorus runoff to meet EPA targets will eliminate algal blooms,¹⁴ keep drinking water clean, allow for lakeshore recreation, help local businesses,¹⁵ and protect the local ecosystem.¹⁶

Used in combination with cover crops and buffer strips, subsurface application of phosphorus along the Maumee River Basin would meet the EPA's recommended binational phosphorus target of 40 percent reduction¹⁷ in total phosphorus entering the Western Basin of Lake Erie.¹⁸ While farmers worry that subsurface application of phosphorus may lower crop yields, researchers at Iowa State University found that injecting phosphorus fertilizers actually yielded more crops than spreading phosphorus fertilizer on top of the soil.¹⁹ An alternative strategy, used by cities like Ann Arbor, is to ban the use of phosphorus fertilizers.²⁰ However, while such bans are feasible in urban centers, barring farmers from using phosphorus fertilizers would dramatically lower crop yields.²¹

The cost of modifying seeding equipment for subsurface fertilizer application is \$15,000 per farm,²² planting cover crops will cost \$20.60 per acre,²³ and buffer strips vary in cost depending on the amount of farmland repurposed.²⁴ To fund this grant program, the Michigan General Assembly should draw from solid waste disposal and water supply fee revenues, valued at \$104 million annually, that are intended to monitor and improve water quality for Michigan residents.²⁵

NEXT STEPS

A coalition of students, people affected by recent algal blooms, and organizations within Michigan with missions centered on water quality and with legislative influence (such as the MI Clear Partnership and the Lenawee Conservation District) will mobilize to make the urgency of the issue clear to the Michigan General Assembly. The legislature will be pressured to create a fund for the implementation of best practices in agriculture. Furthermore, coalition members may volunteer to educate farmers in Lenawee and Hillsdale County of the causes of algal blooms, the agricultural solutions that can be employed to reduce their contributions, and the benefits they may receive by doing so.

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Directing Help Towards the Vulnerable: Joining Pennsylvania's SNAP and Energy Assistance Applications

By Sarah Crowley

Roosevelt @ George Washington University

THESIS

As the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) directs funds to the most vulnerable households, it is imperative that all low-income households experiencing energy insecurity apply. The Pennsylvania state government should use a joint application to automatically qualify households that receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to also partake in LIHEAP.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

In fiscal year 2011, almost seven million low-income American households were spending an average of 10 percent of their annual income on energy, such as heating and cooling. Non low-income households, by comparison, were spending on average only 2.7 percent of their annual income, or nearly four times less.⁴ This relatively high price for energy illustrates a condition known as energy insecurity, or “the inability to pay for heating or cooling required to maintain a home at a reasonable temperature.”⁵

LIHEAP, a federal block grant funded through the Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for approximately \$3.43 billion, tried to address energy insecurity.⁶ It is the largest government energy assistance program for low-income households. In Pennsylvania, the funds are used almost exclusively for heating, falling into three categories of assistance: cash, crisis, and weatherization. Cash assistance accounts for 50 percent of LIHEAP PA funds.⁷

Due to high demand and inadequate federal funding, LIHEAP PA cannot meet all eligible requests, instead prioritizing low-income households in danger of not being able to pay their energy bills, and therefore losing heat during the winter. Low-income households often are forced to spend less on food, education and healthcare in an attempt to keep the heat on in the winter months. A shutoff can exacerbate or lead to illness.⁸

Additionally, under the Trump Administration, LIHEAP PA is anticipating a 25 percent reduction in funding.⁹ Therefore it is vital that policies be put in place to effectively prioritize those most in need of these funds.

TALKING POINTS

- LIHEAP is used to target low-income households most vulnerable to energy insecurity, and assist them in paying their energy bills.¹⁰
- In other state studies, the outreach methods used to persuade low-income households to apply were found to be largely ineffective.¹¹
- Adequate heating improves the health of a household, and can lower healthcare costs.¹²

KEY FACTS

- Only 42.6 percent of households below the federal poverty line are served by LIHEAP.¹
- The projected budget for LIHEAP PA is \$171 million, with \$123.5 million available for benefits—a 25 percent reduction since the last fiscal year.²
- The Cash Assistance Program, the focus of this proposal, accounts for 50 percent of LIHEAP PA funds.³

POLICY IDEA

LIHEAP PA aims to assist low-income households most at risk of losing their energy during the winter months, due to an inability to pay. In order to accurately assess which households are most vulnerable, and should therefore be given priority, the pool of applicants must be expanded to include the highest number of low-income households possible. The most effective way to accomplish this is by amending the SNAP application to include the LIHEAP application. Although the majority of SNAP recipients will not be given LIHEAP funds, the joint application will allow the government to identify and prioritize energy insecure households.

POLICY ANALYSIS

As of 2014, which is the most current public data, only 42 percent of households below the federal poverty line, therefore a priority to receive LIHEAP, actually received assistance.¹³ Although there is no public data to show how much this deficit in assistance is caused by a lack of outreach, it has been found in multiple other states that LIHEAP outreach is ineffective, and therefore leads to lower participation rates.¹⁴ Current policy aimed at outreach involves “public education activities” to inform eligible households about LIHEAP, and how to apply. Based on the other state studies of similar programs, these efforts have not been widely successful.¹⁵ Increased funding to these efforts is not an effective method to address energy insecurity.

The SNAP program in Pennsylvania, on the other hand, has a participation rate of 89 percent.¹⁶ To automatically enroll SNAP participants into LIHEAP would be a negligible cost. These enrollees would not be guaranteed LIHEAP funding, but because it would attract more low-income households to LIHEAP, funds could be more effectively prioritized to assist the most vulnerable.

Additionally, studies have shown that lessening the energy burden on low-income families will result in improved health, which financially benefits individuals and saves the state Medicaid and emergency room costs.¹⁷ This creates a compelling cost-benefit analysis for implementing the proposed policy.

NEXT STEPS

To gain a better understanding of the extent to which outreach hinders assisting low-income households, Pennsylvania should publicly release data that shows the percent of households that actually applied to LIHEAP. Based on other states, we can assume this data will show a substantial number of low-income households did not apply to the program. This data can be used to lobby the Pennsylvania government to join the SNAP and LIHEAP application in an attempt to better reach these households.

An important ally for this step would be The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. The Housing Alliance’s partners include major state businesses, such as PNC Bank and Heinz Endowments, as well as government agencies including the Pennsylvania Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Housing Alliance can pressure the Secretary for the Department of Human Services, Teresa D. Miller, to release the application data.

Once there is adequate data to support a joint application structure between LIHEAP and SNAP, both the Housing Alliance and private utility companies (who would benefit from the proposed policy due to the decrease in utility shutoffs) should lobby both DHS and Governor Wolf to enact the policy. Because SNAP and LIHEAP are both administered by the Department of Human Services, the joint application will be easily integrated.

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Flooding in Broome County: Threatening the Environment, Economy, and Human Health

By Levi Matza

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THESIS

Flooding in Broome County is increasing due to global climate change and the increase of impermeable surfaces. No Adverse Impact (NAI) floodplain management should be implemented by local municipalities and agencies (DPW, EMC, Department of Planning and Economic Development) to improve community resilience and reduce flood damages.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Flooding is a significant problem facing Broome County. Increased floods and heavy rainfall caused a “100 year flood” in 2005, only to be followed by a “500 year flood” in 2006 and an even larger flood in 2011.¹ Ultimately, Broome and Tioga County experienced \$1 billion worth of damages and 20,000 people were evacuated.² While the City of Binghamton attempted to invest in floodgate infrastructure to mitigate damages, the city lacks the financial capital needed for such expensive pursuits. There is an urgent need to design development around flooding issues, with municipalities and agencies considering the impact of a property owner’s decisions upon others. When one property owner builds or increases impermeable surfaces, surface water is unable to percolate into the ground, placing a burden on stormwater systems and exacerbating flood events. The increase of impermeable surfaces is extremely hazardous when combined with increased precipitation levels. Between 1958 and 2012, the Northeast saw more than a 70 percent increase in the amount of rainfall measured during heavy precipitation events, more than in any other region in the United States.³ Moreover, Broome County has struggled to attract new business opportunities following the departure of prominent industry such as the Endicott Johnson Corporation and IBM. In addition, the flooding of the U.S. Air Force BAE Site at 600 Main Street, which forced the shutdown of the site, cost \$17.3 million and strained the local economy.⁴ The City of Binghamton has significantly increased standards (Chapter 360-Subdivision of Land, and Chapter 227-Erosion Control, for example), however, there is a need for unified approach to flood management at the County level. NAI standards will make Broome County a more desirable location, incentivizing business development and revitalizing the area, which is a top priority for Broome County.

TALKING POINTS

- Flooding in Broome County has created significant negative economic impacts.
- The implementation of NAI floodplain management will be extremely cost effective and successful in mitigating flooding on a long term scale.
- NAI offers a variety of positive side effects such as increased community resilience, improved property values, increased incentivization for development and business, improved air and water quality, improved groundwater recharge rates, and improved aesthetic value.
- Traditional approaches to flooding mitigation, such as floodwall infrastructure in Broome County, have failed from a practical and economic standpoint.
- Areas of green space, such as trees and pastureland, can decrease peak flows by 60 percent.⁵

POLICY IDEA

Broome County needs to implement a No Adverse Impact (NAI) strategy to ensure that preexisting and future developments don't exacerbate flooding. Local Departments in Broome County (DPW, EMC, Department of Planning and Economic Development) can establish what constitutes an "adverse impact" based on increased flood peaks, increased flood stages, higher flood velocities, increased erosion and sedimentation, or what impacts the community considers important. Minimum green space requirements should be developed for properties, based on effectiveness in preventing flooding and feasibility of implementation. NAI would be similar to Performance Zoning, which replaces conventional zoning districts with performance criteria to guide development, allowing for flexibility in how to meet performance zoning standards.⁶ NAI would be legally enforceable, with violators being heavily fined, taken to court, condemned, etc.

POLICY ANALYSIS

This policy is the most practical and effective long term approach to flooding in Broome County. While the county is taking significant steps towards improving community resiliency, it is imperative to approach flooding on a longer time scale, as precipitation levels will continue to increase in the Northeast. NAI is cost effective, as it is more economically feasible to invest in the root causes of flooding, such as land management, rather than spending money on floodgate infrastructure that will become obsolete. While one may argue that floodwalls are easier to implement politically, they are extremely expensive and impractical. Binghamton's floodwalls need to be recertified through FEMA, which would require rebuilding from the ground up, significantly exceeding available funds. In addition, rebuilding flood walls higher will increase river flow velocities, increasing flooding damages adjacent or downstream.⁷ In Binghamton alone, rebuilding floodwalls would result in 2,000 additional properties needing flood insurance, which would have an enormous cost.⁸ In the U.S., development in flood prone areas is almost incentivized due to Federal flood insurance programs and disaster assistance programs, which place the economic burden of flooding on the Federal Government rather than those building in flood sensitive areas. Currently, the National Flood Insurance Program is \$25 billion in debt.⁹ Implementing NAI standards would drastically reduce both local financial damages, as well as the massive federal debt. In addition, every dollar invested in stormwater infrastructure has been shown to save five dollars.¹⁰ While NAI is more effective on a longer time scale, requiring preexisting developments to maintain a set standard of green space will immediately reduce flooding damages. Moreover, there is a variety of positive economic externalities from increased green space such as improved water and air quality, improved property values, improved mental health, increased groundwater recharge rates, etc. Studies over a 30-year period in communities, neighborhoods, housing projects and prisons show that when landscaping projects are promoted, there is a definite increase in self esteem and a decrease in vandalism.¹¹ In addition, studies of three neighborhoods in Boulder, Colorado indicated that property values increased by \$4.20 for each foot closer to a green space.¹² While NAI floodplain management creates more initial work for local municipalities and agencies, the environmental, economic, and health benefits are outstanding. In addition, implementing NAI will reduce the burden on local municipalities and agencies in the event of a disaster, which is infinitely important. While Broome County has taken significant steps towards combating flooding, NAI will act as a unified approach to flooding, creating a resilient community that anticipates problems, reduces vulnerabilities, and encourages opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

September 2018

To make community shared solar accessible to a greater number of New York residents and to prioritize CSS projects for LMI communities, the New York Public Service Commission (PSC) must remove the barriers of pre-development costs for CSS projects. The Energy Democracy Alliance (EDA), an active statewide coalition with over 22 member organizations and 100 allied groups, should lobby the Public Service Commission to reform ASPTA and increase awareness for CSS projects throughout LMI communities in New York. Since the EDA has successfully lobbied the Public Service Commission to support CSS reform, the coalition should influence important stakeholders such as PSC Chair John Rhodes, New York State Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) President Alicia Barton, and Chair of Energy and Finance Richard Kauffman. Moreover, since Governor Andrew Cuomo directly appoints PSC commissioners, the EDA should pressure Governor Cuomo through a public campaign for ASPTA reform.

October 2018

Council, Broome County, Police Chiefs and Fire Marshals from Broome County towns and cities (Binghamton, Vestal, Dickinson, etc.), Broome County Department of Economic Development, and Broome County Department of Public

Works to create the specific criteria of what constitutes an “adverse impact.” These groups will need to work extensively to determine what standards will be most effective in reducing flooding, most feasible for current and future developments to implement, and what will be most cost effective. For example, Broome County could set maximum runoff levels allowed per square foot of property by coordinating with local engineers who understand the specifications of the area. In addition, Broome County could establish higher green space requirements and more strict stream and shore setbacks for future developments. Currently, Binghamton requires that urban properties contain 10% green space. While this is a good start, standards should be more strict, as flood events are exacerbated in cities due to the high amount of impervious surfaces. Various cities and towns must cooperate with one another, as actions caused by one area (increasing runoff, building of rip rap, etc.) can negatively impact areas downstream or adjacent to said area.

November 2018

Lobby Binghamton Planning Department to begin to legally enforce NAI management strategies through a floodplain ordinance. Appoint trained Floodplain Managers that will enforce NAI management at a municipal level. Violation letters will be given to property owners that violate new standards. Properties will have any time from a week to a month to adhere to NAI standards based on the severity of the violation. If they fail to do so, various strategies can be pursued, such as court lawsuits, condemnation of properties, and lockdowns. Broome County Head of Planning Frank Evangelisti has expressed great support for NAI, trying to get local municipalities to enforce these standards.

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Building Sustainable Community Development Initiatives: Participatory Budgeting of Binghamton University's Community Impact Fund Through the City of Binghamton Neighborhood Assemblies

By Brianna Cea and Garrett Shor

Roosevelt @ Binghamton University

THESIS

To create an inclusive participatory policy process, Binghamton University and the City of Binghamton should allocate the Community Impact Fund of \$200,000 per year, for the next five years, to reconvene the city's neighborhood assemblies.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

In 2006, the City of Binghamton launched the Neighborhood Assembly Project, which originally consisted of seven neighborhood assemblies. These organizations hold public community meetings to develop ideas for neighborhood projects and were given an allocation of \$70,000 from the Neighborhood Project Development Fund, which came from a portion of Binghamton's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. The funds were spent based on the recommendations of these assemblies. The original neighborhood assemblies spearheaded projects such as Fresh Cycles, which gave underprivileged children bicycles and taught maintenance skills, created community gardens, and established a new farmer's market in the Northside.¹

Currently, 97 percent of Binghamton's CDBG funds benefit programs for low- to middle-income individuals. Proposed federal cuts to the CDBG program will eliminate \$1.7 million from the City of Binghamton's budget,² so it is imperative that alternative sources of impact aid is directed to the City of Binghamton for the use of community development projects. In February 2017, Mayor Rich David announced that Binghamton University will contribute \$200,000 per year, for the next five years, in an "impact funding" program.³ The impact funding program allows municipalities to receive funds directly from universities and tax-exempt entities to mitigate the costs of community development projects. Hence, due to the proposed cuts to CDBG funds, the cumulative \$1 million of the impact fund will help to offset the \$1.7 million in federal cuts.

TALKING POINTS

- The active engagement of community members through local assemblies and panels has been demonstrated to yield better legitimacy for government decisions, a growth in civic skills for residents, and a greater diversity of represented views.⁴
- Participatory budgeting is proven to improve community connections, create a more reflective budget of community priorities, and strengthen the relationship between the municipality and its residents. Moreover, participatory budgeting of Binghamton University impact funds can strengthen its relationships with community members.⁵
- By opening the budget process to all citizens, participatory budgeting improves government transparency and accountability.

POLICY IDEA

Binghamton University's Town-Gown Advisory Board (TGAB) should allocate the Community Impact Fund equally among the current neighborhood assemblies and reconvene the inactive assemblies for community development initiatives. Residents will propose new projects, then present these ideas to the Binghamton Department of Planning and Community Development, where they will undergo further development. Lastly, competing projects will be voted on for a final decision. Binghamton University should enter an interlocal agreement with the City of Binghamton to ensure that the funds are appropriated to the neighborhood assemblies and used in a manner that benefits neighborhoods.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Participatory budgeting has been instituted in various forms in cities across the globe. The first to fully implement it was Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 1989. Since then, other cities, including New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, have implemented forms of participatory budgeting. These cities have portions of their city budget dedicated to projects developed based upon recommendations of public bodies.⁹ According to the Urban Justice Center, the New York City Council districts that adopted participatory budgeting saw growth in participation among groups, which typically are underrepresented in ordinary elections.¹⁰ Similar results have been found in cities such as Buffalo, New York, which adopted participatory budgeting in 2014.¹¹

According to the Scholars Strategy Network, participatory budgeting leads to the allocation of resources for underserved community needs.¹² As Binghamton University attempts to expand its community involvement, it has the potential to enable community-controlled projects that might otherwise be ignored.

The assemblies, which already follow a similar model, will function similar to those in Buffalo, New York. The program features public community meetings in which spending projects are brainstormed, and then budget delegates will be elected by the assembly to develop their ideas into well-defined project plans in conjunction with the city planning department. Following this, all neighborhood residents are invited to a last round of voting to make the final decision of which projects to fund.¹³ In this manner, Binghamton will have opened up the budget process to all citizens and ensured that community development is done with community input.

NEXT STEPS

The City of Binghamton and Binghamton University will make a public commitment to allocate the community impact fund to the Neighborhood Assemblies through an interlocal contract. The City Planning Department will next send representatives to meetings of the Northside Assembly, Southside Assembly, and Westside Neighborhood Association, where the funding source will be outlined. All residents of the neighborhoods will be allowed to attend these meetings and have input. Additionally, public notices will be put out for meetings where public deliberation is to take place. The participatory budgeting process laid out in the analysis section will be carried out, and the community development projects will commence. Additionally, steps will be taken to revive the neighborhood assemblies which have become inactive by holding new community meetings and making new public notices.

KEY FACTS

- In New York City, 57 percent of participatory budgeting voters identified as people of color, compared to 47 percent in the general election.⁶
- In Chicago's 2013-2014 participatory budgeting process, at least half of the voters in each district had never been members of community organizations before the budgeting.⁷
- Greater citizen participation in democracy increases public engagement, encourages people to listen to a diversity of opinions, and contributes to a greater sense of legitimacy of decisions.⁸

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Promoting Wholly Representative Primary Elections

By Jacob Gibson, Jacob Sugarman, David Carpenter, and Kevin Philips

Roosevelt @ University of Michigan

THESIS

To reduce voter disenfranchisement, ensure primaries represent the general electorate, and promote civic engagement, Michigan election law should be changed to allow 17-year-olds, who will be 18 by the date of the general election, to vote in the primary.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

In a 2016 survey of experts, Michigan was ranked 41st in perceptions of electoral integrity.⁵ Michigan is often criticized for archaic voter registration and absentee voting practices.⁶ However, an overlooked issue is the process by which the state assigns primary voting rights. Current Michigan law restricts all voting to adults age 18 and older. While this is not an issue in general elections, it poses a problem for primaries. By restricting the vote, 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the time of the general election are unjustly excluded from the primary voting process.

In Michigan's current political climate, this has the potential to be perceived as a partisan issue. In reality, this is a representation issue. Voting privileges would not be extended to any individual not already in the general electorate. As of now, 22 states have made changes to their constitutions, voting laws, or party structures to make their primaries wholly representative.⁷ Both red and blue states, from Mississippi to Vermont, have implemented this change to begin expanding voter turnout and increasing democratic access.⁸

With current voting practices, 17-year-olds, who will be 18 by the time of the general election, are denied their right to participate in the choosing of candidates. Through stopping the cycle of voter disillusionment and giving a voice to young voters, Michigan will allow a larger portion of the population to participate in the democratic process.

TALKING POINTS

- Primaries work best when they are wholly representative of the general election population.
- Research shows that teens are ready to vote as early as age 16, making little to no difference in the readiness of 17-year-old electors.⁹
- At the age of 17, soon-to-be voters should be awarded the same civic opportunity to choose candidates as the rest of general electorate.

KEY FACTS

- Primary voting at 17 has already been implemented and proven in 22 other states.¹
- Voting is habit based. Voters are 25 percent more likely to vote in a subsequent election if they voted in a previous election.²
- A 2012 study shows that extending voting rights to new voters should increase overall voter participation. Those who are closest to the voting age are more likely to vote than those who are one or two years older.³
- After voting rights were extended in Illinois, 17-year-old voters turned out at a higher rate than those ages 20-40.⁴

POLICY IDEA

Michigan election law (MCL 168.492) that defines who may register to vote should be amended. Election law currently states, “[Each person] who will have those qualifications at the next election or primary election, is entitled to register as an elector.” An amendment should be made to only require the stated qualification at the next “general election.” This, in turn, fixes the issue by ensuring that the same population of electors has the ability to vote in both the primary and general elections.¹⁰

POLICY ANALYSIS

Other states have extended primary voting rights to 17-year-olds in a variety of ways, from amending state constitutions to changing political party rules.¹¹ In Michigan, the best route for change is through amending Michigan election law. This relatively non-disruptive reform will change definitions, not alter the way in which we assign rights. Moreover, this solution is less institutionally demanding than amending the state constitution.

The number of individuals who will be extended voting rights will vary by election. The magnitude of change is dependent on the length between the primary and general. In the 2016 presidential election, the Michigan primary electorate would have included roughly 90,000 more individuals (estimated from two-thirds of those born in 1998).¹² With troublingly low youth turnout rates—38 percent in 2006—it’s clear that efforts are needed to increase voter participation.¹³ Recent studies suggest that individuals who vote in previous elections are 25 percent more likely to vote in the subsequent elections.¹⁴ This change could, therefore, increase turnout for years to come by promoting engagement early in life, while also creating a more representative primary system.

We recognize that this policy will, most immediately, have a greater effect in communities with already higher turnout, where there is less concern of disenfranchisement. However, with evidence from Illinois showing that the change in law energizes 17-year-olds to turn out at higher rates, we hope, as time goes on, that this voting will help form habits that will translate to greater participation in all areas.¹⁵

NEXT STEPS

We, currently, have submitted a resolution to the University of Michigan Central Student Government. It has had its first read, and we are in the process of ensuring its passage. The support of both Republican and Democratic campus organizations has been essential, so far, in securing broad community support, and we hope to continue this throughout our advocacy process. Our most immediate next step is to begin reaching out to other campuses across the state to demonstrate large student support. Once this support is established, we plan to begin lobbying county commissions to formally support this initiative. Since this is not an issue with large recognition, we plan to use our chapter’s lobby day at the State Capital in March to bring awareness of the issue before the 2018 election, where voting rights are set to be a significant issue.

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Improving Access to Legal Representation in Massachusetts: Mandated Reporting of Volunteer Hours

By Alexander Chow & Maggie King

Roosevelt @ Northeastern University

THESIS

Backlog in the Massachusetts court system causes overworked public defenders and a prolonged legal process for indigent defendants. Passing legislation in the Massachusetts Legislature to mandate reporting of volunteer hours by private attorneys will increase the amount of hours volunteered and therefore improve access and quality of representation for low-income defendants.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The right to an attorney is stated in the Sixth Amendment, but for many years that attorney was not provided by the government. In 1963, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision, ruled that “the framers of the constitution placed a high value on the right of the accused to have a means of proper defense,”⁴ and set the precedent that if one cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided by the government. However, the public defender’s office in Massachusetts is not well funded, leading to backlog in the system and overworked attorneys. Indigent defendants are subject to a prolonged legal process solely because of their economic circumstance. In order to make the legal system more just, we must encourage private lawyers to volunteer their services when cases arise in their area of expertise.⁵ Mandatory reporting of pro-bono hours is the best way to reach this means, as it has shown an increase in service hours volunteered by private attorneys in other states. In addition, it has also shown an increase in dollars contributed to legal aid groups because it improves the state’s ability to adequately track the amount of indigent representation needed. In Massachusetts, implementation of this policy will increase availability of counsel and raise awareness of the need for private attorneys to assist in representation of the indigent.

TALKING POINTS

- Mandatory reporting of pro-bono hours has seen success in other states such as Florida and Indiana.
- Mandatory reporting of pro-bono hours increases accessibility to constitutional right to legal representation.
- Mandatory reporting of pro-bono hours is economically feasible because it expands on existing court systems.

POLICY IDEA

In order to increase available representation for indigent defendants, we propose the implementation of legislation that mandates annual reporting of pro-bono or discounted work done by private attorneys. This system will encourage volunteerism and allow the state to more accurately document the need for counsel.

KEY FACTS

- In 2007, Massachusetts had 197 full-time equivalent Public Defenders, and handled 16,820 cases.¹
- The Public Defender’s office is only funded to represent 25 percent of indigent clients in Massachusetts.²
- After the Florida Legislature instituted mandatory reporting in 1997, the contributions of private attorneys over tripled (from \$1.5 million to \$4.9 million).³

POLICY ANALYSIS

Mandated reporting of volunteer work done by attorneys will increase access to legal representation for indigent defendants. States such as Indiana and Florida that require reporting of pro-bono work have seen a vast increase in the amount of volunteer work done by the private sector, which in turn reduces the quantity and quality of representation available to indigent defendants. Currently, reporting of pro-bono work done by attorneys is only required in nine states.⁶ The proposed policy does not force attorneys to do volunteer work, nor it does not violate the rights of attorneys. It only makes them aware of the suggestion for pro-bono work by the respective American (50 hours) and Massachusetts (25 hours) Bar Association, and encourages them to meet these standards.⁷ Our policy solution is an economically feasible approach to an expensive problem because it will cost the government a fraction of the cost of hiring additional public defenders while increasing the representation available to indigent defendants. The only cost associated with our plan is the administration of the program, which would entail documenting submitted pro-bono hours. Quality of representation would be maintained as attorneys have an obligation to represent their clients well and would be able to take cases in their respective fields of specialization. This policy is financially feasible and would improve access to and quality of representation for all.

NEXT STEPS

The Massachusetts Legislature should pass a bill that mandates reporting of pro-bono hours by practicing in-state attorneys. We will target Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee William Brownsberger, and Chair of the House Judiciary Committee Claire Cronin to advance our bill legislatively. A coalition of support for this bill will consist of communication with the American Bar Association, Massachusetts Bar Association, and Boston Bar Association to ensure the voices of practicing lawyers are represented. The Public Defender Agency of Massachusetts and the Public Defender's Office for Boston would also be strong allies, as they represent the interests of overworked public defenders. In order to adequately represent the voices of the indigent defendants, we will ally with the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute.

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Ending Shackling of Incarcerated Mothers: Prioritizing the Counsel of Health Care Professionals

By Lexie Freeman

Roosevelt @ Amherst College

THESIS

To protect incarcerated mothers and their children during labor, the Michigan Legislature should require the presence of a health care professional and grant them the professional authority in deciding if the mother is restrained with soft shackles during labor.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Shackling incarcerated mothers during birth is both a public health risk and a human rights violation. The misuse of restraints against incarcerated women during labor (shackles, waist and leg restraints, etc.) often results in dangerous injuries, as shackling decreases mobility (a necessary component of childbirth), can decrease a doctor's ability to assist the mother, increases chances for falling and other dangerous injuries, and threatens the survival of both the mother and the child.^{4, 5, 6}

Restraints are often used under an insufficient and/or inconsistent definition of "security risk" determined solely by correctional officers, without any professional insight from health care specialists. Oftentimes, correctional facilities do not have independent bodies that review cases of unwarranted restraint against a mother in labor.⁷ As a result, mothers in labor are often restrained even if arrested for nonviolent crimes.⁸

Shackling incarcerated mothers during childbirth particularly affects communities of color. People of color are not only overrepresented in today's prison populations, but they have higher rates of infant mortality even among the civilian population.⁹ The infant mortality rate is 30 percent and 300 percent higher for Latino and African American infants, respectively, in comparison to that of non-Hispanic whites.¹⁰ Additionally, African American mothers are more than three times more likely to die during childbirth.¹¹

TALKING POINTS

- The International Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have explicitly recognized shackling during labor as a human rights violation.¹²
- Skilled birth attendants are trained to ensure safe childbirth practices and delivery.¹³
- Shackling makes it difficult for the skilled birth attendant to assist the mother during labor, increasing the chance of injury and/or death for both mother and child.¹⁴

KEY FACTS

- About 66 percent of the female prison population is incarcerated for a non-violent crime.¹
- No mother on record has ever tried to escape during labor.²
- Shackling disproportionately affects women of color, putting infants of color, who already suffer from high mortality rates, at an even higher risk.³

POLICY IDEA

To prevent the shackling of incarcerated mothers, the Michigan Legislature should require the presence and counsel of the designated skilled birth attendant (midwife, doctor, or nurse), specifically when an inmate is declared to be in the labor stage by a licensed health care professional.¹⁵ Additionally, the use of hard shackles should be banned during labor, with soft shackles being the maximum alternative.

POLICY ANALYSIS

This policy is cost efficient in two ways: prioritizing the counsel of the designated skilled birth attendant requires zero costs, and reducing the chance of injury for the mother and child decreases long-term economic costs for Michigan taxpayers. When a mother is shackled during childbirth, the chances of improperly following delivery procedures increases, which can lead to injury to the mother and child.¹⁶ If the mother or child endure injuries, this cost potentially falls on Michigan citizens: an incarcerated mother in state care uses state health insurance, and if the mother or the child's family is unable to pay, the mother and/or child will then be reliant on health coverage from the State of Michigan.¹⁷ Ultimately, requiring the presence and prioritizing the counsel of a skilled birth attendant decreases the chance of injury for both the mother and the child, thus lowering the high price of long-term care for incarcerated mothers and their children with health complications from hazardous deliveries.

One major obstacle for implementing this policy would be to convince Michigan legislatures that the counsel of a skilled birth attendant should be prioritized over that of correctional officers, specifically because correctional officers most often exercise reigning opinions during the labor process. However, by prioritizing the counsel of the designated skilled birth attendant, the Michigan Legislature will counter rampant human rights violations against citizens in its care, and correctional facility officers will act as co-facilitators of a safe delivery for both the mother and the child.

NEXT STEPS

The Michigan legislature should pass this bill to protect incarcerated mothers in the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility in Ypsilanti, the state's only female prison. The Ypsilanti City Council is a principal actor in preventing the use of shackling during labor. Lois E. Allen-Richardson, Ypsilanti Council member and Washtenaw County Jail chaplain (home county of the Women's Facility), is a target and potential ally. Similarly, the support of state senator Rebekah Warren, who has expressed concern for mass incarceration, is crucial. An inter-state coalition with organizations that have secured anti-shackling laws (including Massachusetts' Prison Birth Project) and those who have extensive research on the intersection between reproductive and criminal justice (including University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Women and Gender) are crucial allies to include. Finally, solidifying a collaborative definition of "security risk" with regard to incarcerated mothers during labor will help to reduce unnecessary use of shackling.

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Equipping Chicago Locals for the Modern Age: Data Transparency through Neighborhood Change Statements

By Kevin Cao and Conor Rockhill

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THESIS

Chicago City Council should publish and disseminate yearly “neighborhood change statements” in communities where residents face economic displacement to serve as tools for community transparency and grassroots promotion of affordable housing.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Urban centers from Atlanta to Detroit are encountering a new, subtler form of modern economic segregation.¹ As neighborhoods meet with an influx of more affluent residents, neighborhood developments raise the overall demand for housing in the neighborhood, forcing out low-income and minority populations through rising rent and evictions.

In the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, for example, this phenomena is having an intense impact on the local community. While named after the Czech city of Plzeň, by 1970, Pilsen became the first majority Latino neighborhood in Chicago.² Though frequent community mobilization ensured that development remained inclusive through the 1990s, weakening local resistance and a more powerful city government eventually brought sweeping growth to the neighborhood that largely catered to a more affluent population.³ Most notably, despite fierce and active opposition from the Mexican-American population, the historic Thalia Hall was bought and transformed into a bar, restaurant, and music space largely inaccessible to the longtime, lower-income, Latino Pilsen residents.⁴ From 2000 to 2013, more than 10,000 Hispanic residents left the neighborhood, while the white population grew by nearly 1,000.⁵ This is undeniably related to the fact that the proportion of Pilsen households paying over 30 percent of their incomes for rent or mortgage increased from 26 percent for renters and 35 percent for owners in 2000 to 50 percent of renters and 52 percent of owners in 2010.⁶

TALKING POINTS

- Neighborhood inclusivity for low-income residents in Chicago cannot be fully exercised through rapidly rising property values and cost of living.
- Low- to middle-income families, long-established minority populations, and immigrants have shown a marked decline from Pilsen, being displaced from economically secure neighborhoods and destroying ethnic identities tied to such neighborhoods.⁷
- Neighborhood change statements equip policymakers and grassroots activists with up-to-date neighborhood information to craft informed actionable responses.
- Neighborhood change statements frame community economic inclusivity as a public good, similar to drinking water, with the hopes to expand racial and economic displacement as larger voter issue.

POLICY IDEA

Chicago City Council should implement independent yearly studies of changing neighborhood housing costs and demographic shifts to be published to the public to increase transparency for equitable housing, known as “neighborhood change statements.” Aldermen representing gentrifying neighborhoods should be required to update, maintain, and disseminate open-source data on gentrifying metrics to the residents of their respective ward similar to yearly drinking water quality statements. Also, new developments in gentrifying neighborhoods would be required to submit any data that would pertain to affordable living costs.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Current policy solutions from City Hall have been criticized by local policymakers and community advocates as being insensitive to the economic needs of a diverse Chicago. As an alternative to the top-down policy approach, neighborhood change statements function as a way to bridge the informational gap for policymakers and voters.⁸ The serious need for reliable housing data has been addressed through unofficial actors publishing their own versions of demographic and affordable housing data,⁹ but no such undertaking has been explored on a large municipal level.

Reliable, well presented municipal data offers an opportunity to empower grassroots organizations and local policymakers fighting to protect low-income and minority populations. Pilsen has historic roots as a major socioeconomic gateway for new immigrants and low income populations in Chicago. But since 2000, first-generation households, families living with children, and Hispanic residents have plummeted in the area, erasing significant cultural and economic milestones, along with further distancing lower-income residents from needed economic and social resources.

This residential displacement is not solely an economic issue. As America’s cities are getting whiter, Black and Latino voters are forced largely into the suburbs, limiting their ability to have a real impact on the local politics that affect them.¹⁰ A robust local advocacy presence has played an integral part in organizing against gentrification, and with such data will promote grassroots activism and the notion that community inclusiveness and economic security functions as a public good.

NEXT STEPS

The Chicago City Council should introduce a pilot program requiring Pilsen aldermen 22nd ward officials to analyze and publish open source data on the state of housing inclusivity and equity in Pilsen. Pilsen aldermen should work with private partners, like Zillow, Accela, and Esri, to ensure that data is as accurate and up-to-date as possible.¹¹ The specific metrics to be published by Pilsen can be determined in partnership with nonprofits, Chicago-based universities, and engaged community leaders, such as the Pilsen Alliance¹² and the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago.¹³ Additional resources may be needed to institute a full time affordable housing advocate to further integrate published data into policy. To further integrate this policy idea, grassroots advocacy and academic partnerships can be formed through the University of Illinois at Chicago’s College of Urban Planning and in-house policy institutes such as the Natalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Involvement.¹⁴

KEY FACTS

- From 2000 to 2013, over 10,000 Latino residents left Pilsen, while the white population grew by nearly 1,000.¹⁵
- The proportion of Pilsen households paying over 30 percent of their income for rent or mortgage increased from 26 percent for renters and 35 percent for owners in 2000 to 50 percent of renters and 52 percent of owners in 2010.¹⁶
- Nationally, over 20 percent of low-income movers from gentrifying neighborhoods ended up in a neighborhood with a lower median income.¹⁷

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Redefining Prison Labor: Expanding the New York Fair Labor Standards Act

By Sarmishta Govindhan and Matthew Perry

Roosevelt @ New York University

THESIS

To end the exploitative system of un/underpaid prison labor, the New York State Assembly should expressly classify prison laborers as “employees” under the state’s Fair Labor Standards Act to afford them equal access to benefits as other state employees.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Prison labor, as it exists today, traps disenfranchised and marginalized populations in disciplines of dangerous and inhumanely compensated physical labor performed on behalf of for-profit or state prisons.¹ In New York State, most assignments pay \$0.10 to \$0.26 per hour,² and opportunities for earning higher wages are restricted by draconian wage policies within the incarceration facilities.³ While multiple studies⁴ have demonstrated a link between an imprisoned person’s access to good vocational programs and their decreased likelihood of recidivism, such programs are difficult to access, or even implement, because the goals of the system (management of the population) conflict with the goals of the program (successful reentry).⁵ Issues including the relative unavailability of reentry programs and inherent systemic biases⁶ also increase the already high rates of recidivism. For multiple marginalized communities, the lack of protected employee status prohibits accessing crucial resources including reporting structures for sexual assault and child and healthcare services, which disproportionately affect women of color.⁷

These negative socioeconomic externalities are made possible by the New York State Fair Labor Standards Act’s absence of express recognition of prison laborers as “employees.” Though research has shown the economic benefits of prison labor are in fact greater if prisoners are afforded a living wage,⁸ the exclusion of prison laborers from the category of “employee” prevents them from having any legal claim to adequate compensation or benefits in New York State.

TALKING POINTS

- The current form of prison work draws in the unemployed, disenfranchised, and discriminated against, trapping them into disciplines of precarious waged labor.⁹
- The economic benefits would actually be greater if prisoners were afforded the same working rights as the general public.
- It is imperative that prison laborers, whose labor contribution adds over \$30 billion to the U.S. economy, are granted all of the basic rights that Americans “on the outside” are able to enjoy: minimum wage, worker’s compensation if injured in an accident, the right to unionize, etc.¹⁰

POLICY IDEA

The New York State Legislature should extend the definition of “employee” within the New York Fair Labor Standards Act (NYFLSA) to categorically include imprisoned labor in order to provide imprisoned populations with the wages, benefits, and protections attendant to the NYFLSA. Such legislation will present imprisoned laborers with a safeguard against exploitative labor conditions while also decreasing their likelihood of recidivism.¹¹ New York should lead the way in making fairness and equity, not profit and criminalization, the central components of prison labor regulation.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Statutory recognition of prison labor as employment is the most effective method of bringing prison labor in line with values of equity and fairness. It requires convincing a critical mass of NY state legislators to pass legislation extending the definition of “employee” within the New York Fair Labor Standards Act (NYFLSA) to imprisoned laborers, and little else. Allowing imprisoned people to earn a living wage during their incarceration would reduce recidivism more widely than allowing only those who can access the limited number of post-incarceration reentry programs to obtain gainful employment.

Providing imprisoned people with fair wages reduces the likelihood of recidivism.¹² Because African Americans are more likely (by around 10 percentage points) to recidivate than white people,¹³ our policy would have an especially benign impact on the post-incarceration lives of African Americans. Moreover, the increase in imprisoned persons’ economic output that would accompany attaching the federal minimum wage to prison labor would be enough to give each U.S. citizen \$125.¹⁴

The carceral state disproportionately ensnares people of color, LGBTQ, and the impoverished. African Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at a rate five times that of white people¹⁵, LGBTQ populations are incarcerated at a rate three times that of the general population,¹⁶ and low-income communities are coerced into accepting jail sentences through mechanisms such as money bail.¹⁷ Thus, creating a prison labor system that carries wages and benefits commensurate with those of “outside” jobs would primarily benefit those who carry identities targeted by systems of mass incarceration.

NEXT STEPS

The coalition including the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center (UIJPC), local prison justice community organizations, and organized labor groups such as IWW should work on creating and lobbying for a bill that would classify prison labor as employment under the New York Fair Labor Standards Act. The UIJPC and community organizations have evident commitments to improving the wellbeing of incarcerated people, which make them natural allies in this effort. Additionally, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) have demonstrated an interest in reforming prison labor by organizing nationwide prison strikes. This manifest commitment to prison labor advocacy could be translated into lobbying efforts for the aforementioned policy. Together, this coalition would target Scott Stringer, who is the current New York City Comptroller and has a progressive legislative record. Lastly, we would consult with labor lawyers and prison officials in appropriately re-organizing prison labor infrastructure to enforce this new law.

KEY FACTS

- New York State prisons require prisoners to perform labor at a wage of \$0.10 to \$0.33, and withhold as much as 80 percent of the paid wage for “legal financial obligations,” such as taxes, restitution, and room and board.¹⁸
- According to the Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center, in-prison job readiness and work release programs are helpful but have limited availability.¹⁹
- Most of the 2,220,300 prisoners in the U.S. work directly for the state to maintain the prisons in which they are confined. Only 6 percent of state prisoners and roughly 16 percent of federal prisoners are incarcerated by and work for private companies.²⁰

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Uplifting a Multilingual Workforce: Promoting Job Training for Non-English Speakers in D.C.

By Eli Craveiro Frankel, Daniel Ohiri, and Danjha Leon

Roosevelt @ George Washington University

THESIS

The District of Columbia should make job training programs more accessible to immigrant communities by subsidizing programs that offer education in languages other than English. Expanding education to other languages will increase immigrants' ability to find employment and reach economic stability.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The District of Columbia established a State Apprenticeship Council on May 21, 1946 after the National Apprenticeship Act took effect on July 1, 1937.¹ The Department of Labor ensures that apprenticeship programs have equal access and provide integrated employment and training information to the local community. Immigrants are crucial to the District of Columbia's labor force in various industries. Immigrants work in an array of industries, a major example of which is construction, which comprises of 28.3 percent of the immigrant share of labor in D.C. In 2015, 70,657 immigrant workers comprised 17.9 percent of the labor force in 2015.² In the workforce, especially in blue-collar industries such as construction, apprenticeship skills have been in high demand. Since 20.5 percent of adult immigrants in 2015 had less than a high school diploma, apprenticeships are vital for the entry of this population into the workforce. These programs integrate training and instruction for skilled occupations and include a requirement to have a minimum of 10th grade high school education with a commitment to enroll in a GED program.³ Many in the immigrant population have chosen apprenticeships as an option for job training, because over 1,000 occupations can be certified through an apprenticeship.⁴

TALKING POINTS

- This policy directs existing offices to focus on an underserved issue using existing grant programs. No laws would need to be altered.
- The number of immigrants in the U.S. workforce is increasing,⁵ and addressing their specific needs is important to keep the economy flowing.
- Apprenticeship training programs are mainly taught in English. Non-English programs could help uplift those with limited English proficiency.

POLICY IDEA

The D.C. State Apprenticeship Council should incentivize apprenticeships offered in languages spoken by D.C. workers. To do this, the Office of Apprenticeship, Information and Training should maintain a list of opportunities for which employers offer apprenticeships in different languages. Furthermore, the office should incentivize providers to expand to other languages by subsidizing resources through the existing Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Grant program. This subsidy should be offered to both providers currently on the Eligible Training Provider list as well as any providers who apply to be added. This will allow for an increase in job training amongst underserved linguistic minorities by increasing access to and awareness of opportunities in prevalent minority languages.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The importance of immigrant participation in the U.S. workforce is growing with each new generation, corresponding with the increase of overall immigrants. California, the state with the largest immigrant population in the country,⁶ and the state with the highest percentage of limited English proficient immigrants,⁷ has laws and initiatives to assist workforce development. The California Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which took effect in 2007, created job training centers for unemployed California residents using the Employment Development Department (EDD).⁸ California used the federal framework described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to provide recipients who are language and labor skill deficient priority for training and career services. However, access to these services cannot be fully utilized if individuals cannot understand the material due to a lack of English comprehension. Language proficiency is a substantial barrier for many immigrants entering the job market. Immigrants not proficient in English are nearly three times less likely to get a job in business, management, or the sciences than those who are. By that same token, those not proficient are overwhelmingly funneled into low paying and low career advancing service occupations.⁹ California eliminated this language barrier in workforce development by mandating that all resources provided by the EDD be interpreted to another language upon request.¹⁰ The underlying policy directives issued by the state of California have created a resilient base of immigrant workers that have a high likelihood of gaining employment. In 2009, 10 percent of immigrants in California reported being unemployed and seeking work, compared to 11 percent of American-born workers.¹¹ The overall unemployment rate has decreased from the 2009 average of 10.9 percent to 4.8 percent as of July 2017.¹²

The D.C. unemployment rate amongst Hispanics is around 4 percent, while the non-Hispanic white unemployment rate in DC is below 2 percent.¹³ By not only expanding state-run workforce services, but also providing bilingual training within those services or a facet thereof, the District of Columbia will be positioned to develop a similar workbase of immigrants of all backgrounds to participate in the local economy.

NEXT STEPS

Working with The Keystone Mountain Lakes Regional Council of Carpenters union, we would lobby the D.C. State Apprenticeship Council to encourage multilingual apprenticeship opportunities and create a framework for the Office of Apprenticeship, Information and Training to compile a list of options that can be delivered in other languages, while also developing strategies to promote them. On another front, we would propose to the Department of Employment Services to work with their Eligible Training Provider List partners to create job training programs in other languages. We would encourage the Department to incentivize partners by subsidizing new non-English programs under the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Grant program.

KEY FACTS

- 30 percent of D.C.'s non-native English speakers do not have a firm grasp of the language, including 36 percent of the District's 44,457 Spanish speakers.¹⁴
- 23 percent of D.C. metropolitan area residents are immigrants, of which El Salvador is the most common place of birth,¹⁵ while 26 percent of the total workforce in D.C. are immigrants.¹⁶
- 70,657 immigrant workers comprised 17.9 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁷

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Mending Achievement Gaps in Pittsburgh: Using Social Impact Bonds to Fund Early Childhood Education

By Emma Kiesling

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THESIS

To provide universal early childhood education in impoverished neighborhoods, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, should enter into bond agreements with the community in order to repay investments made by childcare centers that successfully decreased achievement gaps between poor and wealthy students by third grade.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Children from low-income families often suffer from achievement gaps before they ever begin elementary school—gaps which often can never be completely overcome. Research suggests that 60-70 percent of the achievement gap between America's poorest and richest children is already evident by kindergarten.¹ When children who did not attend preschool graduate from high school, this gap is usually still visible, resulting in higher chances of incarceration and lower wages for those children.² Most low-income families do not have access to free or affordable childcare; access to care allows working parents to fulfill other important responsibilities.³

Over a third of Pittsburgh children live below the federal poverty line.⁴ The social benefits of preschool provide those children with the opportunity to determine their futures. Report data from the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children indicates that students who participated in public pre-k programs performed better academically through grade two than those who did not participate.

Preschool education is the most cost-effective way to close the achievement gap because it saves the government money down the road. "If I could fund one single program, it would be early-childhood education," said John Wetzel, who has served both Democrats and Republicans as the head of Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections.⁵

TALKING POINTS

- Investing in preschool education is the most cost-effective way to close the achievement gap between low-income children and other children. The investment pays off even after the children graduate.⁶
- The Pay for Success model uses community investment to raise money currently unavailable to the government, then gives participants a return on their investment when agreed-upon criteria are achieved.⁷
- This policy positions the government as a major player in an important area which has traditionally been handled privately or on a case-by-case basis.
- Using the Pay for Success model in the City of Pittsburgh will ensure that everyone has access to quality, affordable childcare.

POLICY IDEA

The City of Pittsburgh should enter into a contract (Social Impact Bond) with locally active private investors and nonprofits in which new childcare centers would be created.

Achievement gaps in these neighborhoods will initially be measured in third grade using PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) data,¹³ and provided the gaps decrease for beneficiaries of the new centers, the city will reimburse investors with an agreed-upon return that depends on the agreed-upon duration of the bond.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Currently, Pennsylvania ranks 30th out of 42 states for providing publicly funded pre-k programming.¹⁴ The city government does not allocate significant funds to early childhood education compared to funds allocated to K-12. Economically, early childhood education is a large statewide industry; however, a large portion is handled outside the government. Pay for Success is the best model for solving this budget dilemma because it does not put financial stress onto the government until the government demonstrates that it will not lose money in the endeavor. Generally, returns on investment are slow, so currently there are few examples of successful programs; however, attempting to close achievement gaps later in life is both less effective and more expensive. Based on existing examples, however, the longer the Pay for Success model is in place, the more the government benefits; these centers continue to provide benefits to their communities long after their initial program ends. The Pay for Success program in Salt Lake City, Utah, raised \$7 million in initial capital for pre-k education and achieved its goals.¹⁵ In Pittsburgh, because of the flexibility of this policy, any amount of capital raised is effective. This policy presents no initial risk for the government; if the program is unsuccessful, the government is not obligated to pay back investors. Studies have put returns at \$7 to \$17 back per dollar invested.¹⁶

Regardless, working families would gain access to free, previously nonexistent childcare centers.

There are clear target neighborhoods for this policy: A study by the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children identified Homewood, the Hill District, and the North Side as most concerning in terms of poverty and achievement gaps. With a smaller achievement gap, children in these areas will have greater upward mobility and the chance to break the cycle of poverty in their communities.

NEXT STEPS

In order to enact this policy, the Pittsburgh City Council would draft an agreement with community organizations interested in investing in the area and reaping a reward. The Council and partners will open dialogues to determine what makes a childcare center “successful” based on PSSA results in the third grade. The Council will then work with its nonprofit partners to set up these childcare centers and determine target children for the centers. Potential allies and partners are the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, the New America Foundation, and the Fred Rogers Center. Since it is clear which neighborhoods in Pittsburgh are most in need of childcare centers, the Council and its partners should start in Homewood, the Hill District, and the North Side.¹⁷

KEY FACTS

- Only 55 percent of America’s three- and four-year-olds attend a formal preschool.⁸
- Around 1,140 of Pittsburgh’s income-eligible three- and four- year-olds do not have access to publicly funded, high-quality pre-k.⁹
- Studies find that investing in early childhood education yields a public return of anywhere from \$7 to \$17 for every dollar invested.¹⁰
- Low-income children who attended preschool are 14 percent more likely to be employed, 20 percent more likely to graduate, and 26 percent more likely to have a savings account.¹¹
- In all 50 states, childcare costs more than rent.¹²

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Instituting Open-Source Textbooks in Massachusetts: A Step Toward Solving Socioeconomic Disparities in College Classrooms

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THESIS

The cost of textbooks in the U.S. today creates an uneven dynamic in the classroom. To reduce socioeconomic disparity, Wheaton College should take steps to integrate open-source materials—the licensing of which makes them remixable, sharable, and free—into its curriculum.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The U.S. is home to one of the most expensive and inaccessible education systems in the world. Beyond the exorbitant price of entry, full participation is often blocked by the high costs of learning materials, risking an uneven dynamic in the classroom. The College Board estimates that college textbooks cost an additional \$1,220-1,250¹ per student annually after tuition.

Currently, five publishing houses control 80 percent of this multi-billion dollar textbook industry.² In most industries, consumers control costs by choosing products based on individual spending capacity. In the textbook market, however, product choice belongs to professors. Because textbooks are integral to class participation, students are compelled to purchase them, regardless of their ability to pay.

Wheaton College students are not exempt from the negative effects of the textbook market. Roosevelt@Wheaton conducted a quantitative survey asking students about the cost burden of textbooks. The survey was shared with the Wheaton student body and yielded a random sample of 40 students from various academic disciplines. Results from the survey showed that 72.5 percent of respondents based their course selection on the price of the class's textbooks. Considering that students and their families spend a large amount of money to pay for tuition, room and board, the additional textbook costs only further impede student access to higher education. A student's inability to purchase textbooks affects their academic performance, leading to lower grades and limited capacity for academic achievement. The opportunity to choose their classes according to their interests, without any financial restraints, would give them all the necessary tools to thrive in the classroom.

Faculty members are aware of this cost barrier for students and go to great lengths to find alternatives to assigning expensive textbooks. However, planning courses is a lengthy process that requires considerable support from the administration. One alternative that professors have employed in recent years are open source materials, which are texts written by faculty established in their respective fields with a copyright license that makes them legally free to use, edit, and alter.

TALKING POINTS

- Introducing open-source materials in college courses will create a better and more equal starting point for all students by easing cost barriers in the classroom.
- Increasing class participation is imperative at a moment in history when education threatens to exacerbate socioeconomic imbalances.
- Engendering partnership among faculty, students, and administration in the open-sourcing process is essential to preserving the quality of course materials going forward.

POLICY IDEA

Integrating open-source materials will combat the uneven classroom dynamic to which proprietary textbooks are naturally conducive. We propose that Wheaton College establish a faculty-run, student mediated open-sourcing committee to review two to three courses per year that serve as staples in the Wheaton curriculum. The review process would involve resource gathering, student input, and faculty deliberation. The committee would ultimately offer retooled, zero-cost classes with course materials tailored to specific professors' needs and teaching styles. Roosevelt@Wheaton's end goal is to design a model that can be replicated on any college campus through extensive documentation, qualitative reflection, and the formalization of a streamlined process for the policy's integration.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Open-source materials are the most viable and efficient option to maximize classroom equity at Wheaton. Over two-thirds of Wheaton students surveyed by Roosevelt@Wheaton indicated that the cost of textbooks presents a barrier within their education. Greater reliance on profit-motivated interests for academic participation will further tie academic success to wealth.

The best way to alleviate that connection is through circumventing private control over textbook proliferation (which is, by extension, private influence over student participation). Open-source textbooks will make classes—and by extension college—more accessible to students, helping to redefine higher education as a public good.

Though the good we seek to incorporate into our curriculum is free, its implementation has inherent logistical and timing difficulties. Many professors are willing to look into open-source solutions to classroom inequity, but concerns over quality assurance and time constraints stand in the way. Several Wheaton faculty have explained that support from the campus and administration, would make them more amenable to such measures. A faculty-run and student moderated committee devoted to selecting courses and integrating materials will both relieve the major time imposition of open-sourcing and create a mechanism for ensuring quality and course-specificity.

Each year this committee would review two or three courses for the following academic year. The committee would choose intro-level courses that primarily use textbook materials and draw large numbers of students. The committee would then locate alternative materials for evaluation by the committee. Students and faculty on the committee would bring the necessary perspectives to ensure the quality of materials chosen.

NEXT STEPS

The institutions likely to effect change at a policy-level are the Wheaton College faculty and administration. The breadth of this project is limited to Wheaton, therefore it's necessary to build a coalition capable of effectively lobbying administrative offices. Potential coalition partners could include:

- **The Student Government Association (SGA):** SGA allocates up to \$10,000 of their yearly budget to finance a book-sharing program, which they're seeking to expand.
- **Madeleine Clark Wallace Library:** The affordability of textbooks has been a long-term project of the Library staff. Library leadership is, in partnership with SGA, conducting a strategic review of textbook access on campus.
- **Members of Faculty:** According to our research, several faculty members have shown interest in open-source. Additionally, Roosevelt@Wheaton's faculty advisors will be helpful in advocating with other faculty members for the legitimacy of this project.

KEY FACTS

- 72.5 percent of Wheaton students surveyed by Roosevelt@Wheaton said they believe they are not getting the most out of their education due to cost concerns.
- From 1977 to today, textbook prices have increased at roughly three times the rate of the consumer price index, a byproduct of minimal competition in the textbook market.³
- Eight professors across Wheaton's three academic divisions interviewed by Roosevelt@Wheaton expressed interest in pursuing open-source material but had concerns about availability and quality control.

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Ineffective Standardized Tests in North Carolina: Moving Towards Stealth Assessments and Inspections

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THESIS

North Carolina's educational system currently relies on a series of standardized tests to measure student success. Student performance on standardized tests is then used to assess school and teacher quality. These assessments are publicized in end-of-year reports that compare each school's performance in relation to overall state performance. Moving forward, the state legislature should pivot toward a more comprehensive and holistic form of evaluation in order to reduce undue stress placed on students, allow instructors greater freedom in teaching methods, and replace the emphasis on studying with a focus on the joy of learning. The new evaluations should focus on a two-pronged approach: stealth assessments and randomized inspections.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, kick started education reform in the United States. One of the popular reform measures emphasized standardized testing.¹ This practice is meant to show the knowledge students have gained after a set amount of time. Instead of effectively assessing students in this manner, standardized tests encourage teachers to utilize only teaching methods that will allow their students to be successful on tests, as opposed to methods that would more effectively curate knowledge. As a result, students' test results have become a measure merely of their ability to regurgitate and their teacher's ability to teach to the exam.² Additionally, high-stakes testing not only leads students to cheat on tests, but also incentivizes teachers to cheat because their students' performance on standardized tests impacts their career and salary.³ Standardized testing is also a costly investment, in both time and money. Students take roughly 60 to 100 tests during their K-12 years. This adds up to about 100 million tests taken nationwide per year, a number that costs the country roughly \$1.7 billion annually and causes American students to become some of the most tested in the world.⁴ Students undergo chronic stress due to the intense preparation necessary for heavily weighted exams that in the end fail to accurately gauge student knowledge.⁵ As a result of our reliance on standardized tests, teachers are limited in their ability to teach effectively, students' time and the educational budget is overextended, and the stress level of students increases.

THE POLICY IDEA

The North Carolina General Assembly should adopt a multifaceted approach to evaluating their students, teachers, and schools. This approach should include the newly formulated stealth assessment model in order to track students' progress, and randomized inspections in order to track school accountability. These two approaches should be utilized simultaneously and lead to an eventual phase-out of the existing standardized tests. Unlike standardized tests, this new approach can incorporate factors such as funding and demographics into the final assessment of a given school system while reducing the negative externalities associated with standardized tests in their current form.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The proposed replacements to standardized tests focus on tracking progress from a holistic perspective. First, stealth assessments embed performance-based assessments in digital learning environments, primarily in core subjects such as math and English.⁶ The students' answers are logged, tracked over time, and compared to the answers of peers.⁷ This information indicates individual student success, overall classroom success, and school-wide success as a whole over time. It also utilizes a format that 97 percent of students are already familiar with: online games and practice tools.⁸

Furthermore, inspections of student success make use of school documents, school administrators, faculty, and parental input.⁹ These assessments provide a detailed evaluation using both subjective and objective factors, as opposed to the objective and often simplified results that accompany standardized tests. Together, stealth assessments and inspections provide concrete evaluations that an individual can use to compare students, classrooms, and schools without the undue pressure caused by a test. The results are more holistic, as they evaluate students from a number of perspectives and across an entire school year as opposed to one administered test. For example, learning games are used throughout the school year, providing constant updates to student progress. Following the United Kingdom's public school model, we can measure across 27 different factors during inspections.¹⁰ These nuanced perspectives supersede the value that a students' test responses can provide. Financially, Craig Jerald, President of *Break the Curve Consulting*, estimates that English-styled inspections will cost between \$635 million and \$1.13 billion annually in the U.S.¹¹ The variance in these numbers comes from differences in the methodology of the estimates. Using the same methodology as Rothstein in his \$2.5 billion estimate, but with more recent numbers, the cost would be \$1.13 billion. However, an estimate based on the operating budget of Ofsted (England's Office for Standards in Education) and expenditures per inspection, the cost would be \$635 million.¹² The cost of standardized tests is significantly higher than either of these estimates, at \$1.7 billion annually.¹³ An estimated 83 percent of schools already have the Wi-Fi capacity needed to incorporate stealth assessments, which indicates a lower cost needed for implementation, and test administrators can be taught to be inspectors.¹⁴ This solution is more cost effective than the existing evaluation method, feasible on its own, and produces better results.

KEY FACTS

- Teachers are evaluated and financially rewarded based on growth in standardized test scores, incentivizing them to teach to the test.
- The United States is the only nation among developed nations to rely mainly on multiple choice exams as opposed to performance-based assessments.¹⁵
- Current methods of testing cost \$1.7 billion annually, while the cost of implementing an inspection-based system (as in the United Kingdom) is estimated to be between \$635 million and \$1.13 billion in the U.S. annually.¹⁶
- 50-80 percent of year-over-year test score improvements were temporary and not caused by long-term changes in learning.¹⁷

TALKING POINTS

Using a combined approach of stealth assessments and inspections will provide both a subjective and objective assessment that more accurately gauges student learning.¹⁸ During inspections, schools will be evaluated on around 25 different factors, creating a more nuanced and holistic understanding of school performance. Moving away from standardized tests towards a combined approach of stealth assessments and inspections will decrease the cost of gauging student and teacher performance by at least \$600 million per year.

NEXT STEPS

North Carolina should plan to slowly phase in stealth assessments and inspections as traditional standardized testing is phased out. The North Carolina General Assembly should plan to first implement the stealth assessments in schools that already use a variety of digital learning environments, such as practice games. Once this trial period begins to locate successes and failures in these model schools, program directors can expand the assessments statewide. Inspections will be implemented in these flagship model schools and then expanded in order to form control groups of schools that are receiving the new evaluation and schools that are not. This methodology will allow us to determine the success of the new evaluation method.

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Shifting the Conversation: How Academic Institutions Can Change the Culture of Sexual Assault

By Adam Graubart

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THESIS

The District of Columbia should standardize time requirements and curriculum for all new university students. Students will participate in six in-person hours of intervention education, focusing on a curriculum that reflects contemporary research regarding impactful approaches. These efforts can shift the culture for young people throughout the District.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Sexual violence is pervasive on college campuses across the U.S. and particularly poignant in the District of Columbia.¹ In 5 women and 1 in 16 men experience sexual assault while in college. In 2015 alone, 25 reported rapes occurred on the campus of the George Washington University (GW).² Sexual assault is most likely to occur early in a student's first year.³

At GW, all incoming undergraduate students participate in one hour of online learning and one hour of in-person instruction about sexual assault prevention.⁴ In contrast, the Office of the Dean at the Catholic University of America organizes various efforts, including awareness month campaigns and a peer network support system.⁵ The District lacks a unified strategy based on existing research about how to maximize the effectiveness of prevention strategies.

The D.C. Council previously attempted to address sexual assault, and at the request of Mayor Muriel Bowser, it has recast its focus on this issue.⁶ Currently, legislation examining a judicial approach exists in the Council. In 2016, Councilmember Anita Bonds introduced a bill to regulate sexual assault information sessions on college campuses.⁷ Due to lack of input or engagement from stakeholders, namely impacted organizing by students and administrators, this legislation never advanced to a committee vote. No legislation around education currently exists to parallel efforts related to the judiciary.

TALKING POINTS

- Sexual assault education increases knowledge and creates attitudinal shifts, transforming long-term campus and professional culture around sexual violence and harassment.⁸
- Approaching these issues in a unified way across D.C. contributes to a District-wide cultural shift, particularly across campuses, professional settings, and neighborhoods populated by young people.
- Based on existing research, the most effective interventions focus on culture, myths, and facts about rape, risk reduction strategies, and effective bystander strategies.⁹
- Longer and more ongoing awareness efforts around these issues proved more effective than one-hour information sessions.¹⁰

POLICY IDEA

This policy requires any first-year undergraduate, first-year graduate, or new transfer students for all licensed universities whose primary student base is in the District of Columbia to complete a set of standards around sexual assault education and prevention.

This framework requires students to complete at least six in-person hours of intervention before or during their first semester. Learning outcomes would be set by the District government, covering gender-role socialization, myths and facts, risk-reduction strategies, effects of alcohol, consent, and bystander intervention. The policy would also convene a body of knowledgeable members in the field, including Title IX officers, curriculum developers, relevant faculty, and student leaders to consult the Deputy Mayor of Education in curating a model program for universities to implement.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Currently, each of D.C.'s seven colleges and universities takes its own approach to sexual assault prevention, with varying degrees of incorporation of contemporary research regarding the most impactful interventions. Depending upon the scope of involvement and the curriculum directed at students, sexual assault education efforts vary in the ways in which they affect campus life.¹⁴ With sufficient efforts, though, these initiatives have proven to shift attitudes around sexual assault, and they similarly increased the efficacy of bystander intervention.¹⁵ Addressing the statistical prominence of sexual assault during a student's first year, greater awareness efforts among this population transform the environment that these students occupy during this particularly dangerous time and for the remainder of their educational tenure.

In addition, a policy that compels schools to provide clear norms for student behavior in a unified manner sets clear expectations between institutions and neighborhoods. Students and alumni who have experienced this enhanced training would serve as ambassadors across D.C., facilitating a citywide shift on these pervasive issues, their visibility, and their acceptance, including in future professional settings.

Linda Anderson and Susan Whiston's meta-analysis of 69 sexual assault prevention efforts provides watershed evidence about the best practices in this field. The study found a positive correlation between the duration of prevention efforts and positive changes to attitudes about rape.¹⁶ The emphasis on risk reduction, gender role socialization, and rape facts/myths in this policy stems from the conclusions about the most likely factors contributing to attitudinal change observed in this research.¹⁷ Likewise, additional studies point to the positive impacts of bystander intervention training, clarifying resource availability, defining consent, and addressing the effect of alcohol consumption on attitudinal, reflecting the curriculum requirements in this policy.¹⁸

NEXT STEPS

The D.C. Council sets the requirements for licensure for universities in the District. Licensure requirements are enforced and authorized by the Higher Education Licensure Commission. This policy would pertain to colleges and universities whose primary student base is in the District of Columbia, tying licensure of a D.C. university to these standards. As chairman of the Committee on Education, Councilmember David Grosso could champion this legislation as a measure to provide more comprehensive protections for young people against sexual violence, which connects to his current efforts against child abuse in the District.

Ideally, Councilmember Grosso would convene a policy roundtable with student advocates and Title IX coordinators from all of the affected universities, incorporating their input into the final legislation. Title IX staff at the various universities could also serve as liaisons to higher administrators and the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

KEY FACTS

- Across the U.S., 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college.
- While the national average of rape per 1,000 students is 0.62 students per 1,000, the D.C. average is 1.49 rapes per 1,000 students.¹¹
- In a meta-analysis of 69 sexual assault education programs, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between the length of intervention and positive change in rape attitudes.¹²
- Likewise, risk-reduction and information-based intervention strategies were found more effective in changing rape attitudes than a rape-empathy based approach.¹³

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