



Laura Belin <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Q regarding end to public safety assessment

Laura Belin <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Tue, May 28, 2019 at 10:20 AM

To: "Garrett, Pat" <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>, adam.gregg@iowa.gov, sam.langholz@iowa.gov

Hello Pat,

Any comment from Governor Reynolds, Lieutenant Governor Gregg, or anyone else in your office on the decision to prohibit Iowa judges from using an evidence-based tool designed to reduce racial and economic disparities in decisions on bail and pre-trial detention?

Thanks,

Laura

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Date: Fri, May 24, 2019 at 8:13 AM

Subject: Fwd: Q regarding end to public safety assessment

To: Garrett, Pat <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>, <agregg@iowa.gov>, <sam.langholz@iowa.gov>, <adam.gregg@iowa.gov>

Pat, I'm circling back on these questions. It seems odd that the governor would not allow this program to continue, particular since she works closely with two former State Public Defenders.

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From: **Laura Belin** <desmoinesdem@bleedingheartland.com>

Date: Wed, May 22, 2019 at 12:25 PM

Subject: Q regarding end to public safety assessment

To: Garrett, Pat <pat.garrett@iowa.gov>

Dear Pat,

Last year, Governor Reynolds item vetoed language that would have ended the use of the public safety assessment tool, which judges in other states have found to provide helpful guidance as they make decisions regarding bail and pretrial detention. This year, the governor did not item veto similar language in SF615.

Experts from Harvard concluded in the attached report (submitted in January),

The A2J Lab's evaluation design contemplated two years of randomization followed by a two-year follow-up period, the latter included so that cases could reach disposition and to observe post-disposition recidivism rates. The A2J Lab recommends that the evaluation be permitted to finish so that credible information on the PSA's effects will be available to policy makers who decide whether its use should continue. [...]

The likelihood that statistical results are based on true causal relationships—and not mere chance—is central to any credible program evaluation. The A2J Lab therefore proposed a two-year randomization period. Second, the A2J Lab proposed that each criminal case randomized should be followed for two

years to ensure that it reached disposition and to allow a reasonable time within which to observe arrestees' behavior after release.

Given that the A2J Lab envisioned collecting data on two years of *completed* randomized cases, an evaluation based on shorter time periods is unlikely to produce statistically meaningful answers. [...]

The usefulness of a statistical evaluation rests in part on how closely the cases in the study resemble the typical case in the study location. Researchers refer to this issue as one of "generalizability." A PSA study that is not generalizable is not credible.

Here, the data on which the analysis below rests reflect a particular type of case, one that reached disposition within a few months. These cases likely involve less severe charges, arrestees with relatively light criminal records, and more straightforward fact patterns. These systematic differences mean that the cases on which the analysis below is based are probably not representative of all cases in the two counties.

Without more time, the figures below are not credible. A two-year study with two years of follow-up should provide sufficient case volume and time to encompass both the quick- and slow-disposition cases needed for a credible analysis. The issues of insufficient statistical power, small subgroup sample sizes, and lack of case generalizability hamper our ability to derive meaningful conclusions with any level of confidence from the current data.

Wouldn't it be valuable to all stakeholders to gain a clear picture of whether this tool was effective in several large Iowa counties? Why didn't Governor Reynolds use her veto power to allow this research to continue?

Thanks for any comment or clarification you can provide.

Yours,

Laura

1705 Plaza Circle

Windsor Heights, IA 50324

(515) 276-6971