



The Roosevelt Institute at Cornell University

ROOSEVELT REVIEW

Issue XVI. Fall 2021.

Cornell University



FALL 2021 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Stella Linardi '22, Co-President

Stella is a senior in the Industrial and Labor Relations School at Cornell University interested in public policy, law, and labor rights. She minors in Law and Society, Inequality Studies, and Business, and hopes to go to law school. In addition to being the Co-President in the Cornell Roosevelt Institute, she is a part of a student advisory board for Cornell administrators, a research assistant for the ILR Workers' Institute, part of the Cornell DREAM Team, is the Director of Student and Campus Life under the Office of the Student Advocate, and is active in a social sorority. Her favorite internship experiences include working against wage theft under the California Commissioner of Labor and doing policy work for former Senator Kamala Harris.

Meera Balaji '23, Co-President

Meera is a junior in the school of Industrial and Labor Relations and the former Editor-in-Chief. Outside of Roosevelt, Meera is also a Project Manager at Cornell Venture Capital and a member of a social sorority. She interned as a Venture Capital intern at SVB Capital this past summer and is a former Research Assistant at the S.C. Johnson College of Business at Cornell.

Viktorija Catalan '22, Editor-in-Chief

Viktorija is a senior majoring in Chemistry & Chemical Biology and minoring in German Studies. She is interested in medicine and public health, healthcare rights, global economic development, and humanitarian relief. Her long-term goal is to address healthcare and education disparities in low-resource communities by reforming policy and improving research-to-practice efficiency. Viktorija is also involved in health and biomedical research, the Cornell Undergraduate Research Board, and the Cornell Institute of Politics and Global Affairs.

Emily Boldt '22, Policy Chair

Emily is a senior in the Dyson School majoring in Applied Economics and Management. She joined Roosevelt in the fall of 2019. Outside of Roosevelt, Emily is a member of the Society of Women in Business, Cornell Value Investing Club, and serves as a Social Media Ambassador for Cornell Undergraduate Admissions.

Riya Patel '24, Director of Internal Affairs

Riya is a sophomore studying Policy Analysis and Management in the College of Human Ecology. She joined Roosevelt in her freshman spring as an analyst in the healthcare center. Riya is passionate about healthcare policy, and she is a part of other health-related organizations on campus such as Cayuga Healthcare Consulting and Ithaca Health Initiative. In her free time, she likes to listen to music, go biking, and play the piano or viola.

Keegan Schicke '23, Director of External Affairs

Keegan is a junior in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations. He is a member of several campus groups and is an avid reader. His professional interests include consulting and trading.

Emily Udagawa '24, Communications Director

Emily is a sophomore in the College of Human Ecology majoring in Global and Public Health Sciences. She is interested in healthcare policy, science communication, and healthcare marketing. Outside of Roosevelt, Emily is also an active member of the Ithaca Health Initiative and is a research fellow at the Health Design Innovations Lab.

Andreas Psahos '24, *Advocacy Director*

Andreas is a sophomore in the College of Human Ecology studying Policy Analysis and Management (PAM). He joined Roosevelt in Spring 2021 as a Domestic Policy Analyst. Apart from being the current Advocacy Director for Cornell Roosevelt Institute, Andreas serves on the PAM Undergraduate Council, is the Executive Secretary for Cornell Phi Alpha Delta, and volunteers for the Parole Preparation Program. He is interested in pursuing a career in law, and he spent this past summer advocating for his local community on the state level through an internship with the NYS Assembly.

FALL 2021 CENTER DIRECTORS

Hannah Ritter '22, *Center Director for Domestic Policy*

Hannah is a senior studying Industrial and Labor Relations with minors in Inequality Studies and Law and Society. She joined CRI in the Spring 2019, and this is her second year as the Domestic Center director. Last summer, Hannah worked at a pro bono law firm assisting clients access their unemployment insurance benefits and representing them in hearings. She is also pursuing an Honor's Thesis studying the gig workers' access to unemployment benefits throughout the pandemic, focusing on on-demand platform and ride sharing drivers.

Garry Blum '22, *Center Director for Economic Policy*

Garry is a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences, where he is pursuing a major in Philosophy and a minor in Public Policy. He has been with the Roosevelt Institute's Center for Economic Policy since he first enrolled and is currently engaged in research regarding American anti-trust policy. Outside of Roosevelt, Garry has held internships at BMW North America's legal department and as an analyst at YD Development. He plans to attend law school after graduation.

Aishani Shukla '23, *Center Director for Environmental & Technology Policy*

Aishani is a Junior in the school of Industrial and Labor Relations pursuing minors in Applied Economics and Psychology. Outside of Roosevelt, she is a Fair Labor Association Student Committee member, a research assistant for UNI Global Union, and an editor for the Cornell Diplomat. This year, she is also interning with the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Javier Vega '24, *Center Director for Foreign Policy*

Javi is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences studying Information Science and Government. He joined the fall semester of his freshman year. He is interested in foreign policy, especially in how nations' environmental and energy policies interact, coalesce, compete, and influence decision making. This summer, Javi interned at a biotechnology startup doing both business and product development. In the future, he hopes to help curb climate change through private sector change.

Rachel Armstrong '21, *Center Director for Healthcare Policy*

Rachel is a senior in the school of Human Ecology at Cornell University, majoring in Human Biology, Health, and Society, and minoring in Health Policy. Rachel joined the Roosevelt Institute in Fall 2018. She enjoys writing about pain management, healthcare in prisons, community health initiatives, and the well-being of the elderly. Outside of Roosevelt, Rachel is an orientation supervisor, a brother of APO, a community service fraternity, and involved in the Cornell Tradition and Science Olympiad.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

The Roosevelt Institute at Cornell University is proud to publish its sixteenth issue of the *Roosevelt Review*.

Our journal compiles the work of thirty-five analysts who have undertaken months of extensive research, policy writing, and a rigorous editorial process. This publication would not be possible without a high level of engagement from our analyst and leadership teams, which consist of students from diverse majors, class years, and political backgrounds. Our members have demonstrated significant reception and incorporation of feedback into their work, the ability to articulate complex policy recommendations, and a dedication to polishing their writing. We look forward to seeing our writers and center directors continue to produce high-quality work during the following semester and throughout their careers in Roosevelt.

I am also excited to share that we have expanded our advocacy efforts, both on campus and throughout the larger Ithaca area. This semester, the Institute launched service projects with the Food Justice Coalition, ICE Out of Cornell, the Women's Opportunity Center, and the Ithaca Free Clinic. In addition to engaging with policy initiatives on paper, analysts had the opportunity to implement their ideas firsthand through community outreach. Students were also able to conduct interdisciplinary research with analysts in other centers, as well as with professionals in their field(s) of interest.

Lastly, I would like to note that Fall 2021 was the Roosevelt Institute's first in-person semester since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This transition encouraged our members to find new ways to connect with one another, whether it be through in-person office hours, joint dinners between different policy centers, or friendly political debates in Olin Library. Not only did these experiences promote a supportive writing environment for all analysts, but they also demonstrated the Institute's commitment to enhancing a culture that encompasses diligent work, professionalism, and community.

One of the most rewarding aspects of serving as Editor-in-Chief of the Roosevelt Institute at Cornell is to observe the policy-writing process across all centers. Doing so has provided me with deep insight into the current events and sociopolitical issues that have mattered most to our cohort this semester. I am confident that the ambition, thoroughness, and drive to create political change that I have seen this fall will carry through beyond students' time at the Roosevelt Institute and Cornell University.

Thank you for taking the time to look through our publication; we hope that you enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

Sincerely,

Viktoria Catalan
Editor-in-Chief

Domestic Policy

Director: Hannah Ritter

Analysts: Alexis Ahn, Jessica Chen, Max Link, Elizabeth Rene,
Julia Temple, Nicholas Weising, Julia Willett

Establishing Public Housing Solutions to Recidivism for the Formerly Incarcerated in Rochester, New York

Alexis Ahn, aja262@cornell.edu

The Rochester Housing Authority should create a Reunification and Reentry Housing Program, providing formerly incarcerated members rehabilitative services and the opportunity to live with their families in public housing for a temporary three-year period.

Background

Across the United States, more than 600,000 individuals are released from state and federal prison annually, and an additional 9 million people cycle through local jails. [1] Millions of those who leave correctional facilities struggle to find stable housing after incarceration. [1]

Formerly incarcerated Americans are nearly ten times more likely to experience homelessness than the general public, due to discrimination from public housing authorities or ineligibility based on their criminal backgrounds. [2] Landlords in cities are also far less likely to accept those with a criminal history, fearing that their tenants would be re-arrested and that landlords would have to search for new ones. [3] Returning citizens are also disproportionately affected by mental health disorders and substance abuse, increasing their likelihood of

recidivism, financial instability, and dependence on public housing options. [4]

Temporary or transitional housing is not enough to reduce recidivism rates; a study showed that over 400,000 formerly incarcerated individuals returning to New York City who entered a homeless shelter within the first two years after release faced a higher risk of re-incarceration. [5] Conversely, securing stable housing significantly reduces the probability that the formerly incarcerated return to correctional facilities. A study investigating men returning to Greater Cleveland found that returning citizens who obtained stable housing within their first month out after their release were less likely to return to prison within a year. [6,7]

Policy Idea

The Rochester Housing Authority should establish a Reunification and Reentry Housing program (RRHP) to aid formerly incarcerated members in reconnecting with their families and securing housing. RRHP would allow eligible formerly incarcerated citizens to live with their families in public housing for a three-year period. Upon successful completion of the program—during which participants would work with organizations to find employment, educational opportunities, and rehabilitative services—the participant could be permanently added to the family's lease.

Policy Analysis

The proposed RRHP is modeled after the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Family Reentry Pilot Program (FRPP). This 2-year pilot program provided formerly

incarcerated individuals with the opportunity to live with their families in public housing. [8] Multiple studies suggest that families can “offer a level of supervision and accountability for released prisoners,” resulting in decreased recidivism. [9] Conversely, individuals with declining familial support face an increase in “offending, substance abuse, and reincarceration risk.” [10] Supporting these findings, FRPP participants found that family responsibilities motivated them by creating a source of purpose in their lives. [11] Additionally, participants stated that living with their respective families was “a safe net against precarious living arrangements and the possibility of homelessness;” almost 50% of interviewed participants stated they would be homeless or living in a shelter/transitional housing if it were not for the FRPP. [11]

With the combined positive effects of stable housing, familial support, and access to various service providers, the RRHP would be an incredibly effective way to reduce recidivism and reunite families. Compared with the national average recidivism rate of 49% of released prisoners within the first 3 years of their release, only one FRPP participant was convicted of a new

criminal charge. [11,12] Because the proposed RRHP would utilize existing housing projects and the services of non-profit organizations, the fiscal cost of this program is, at most, minimal. Regardless, this policy is expected to have significant positive returns on the local economy and the community at large.

Talking Points

- The success of the NYCHA’s FRPP in significantly reducing the recidivism rate of its participants is strong evidence for the potential efficacy of the proposed policy. [11]
- Nearly 50% of interviewed participants revealed that without the FRPP, they would likely be homeless or in shelters/transitional housing and would be more susceptible to recidivism. [9]
- In addition to RRHP’s expected positive returns on the local economy and the community, and because the proposed RRHP would utilize existing housing projects and the services of non-profit organizations, there is a minimal cost to

implement this program.

Key Facts

- With more than 600,000 being released from state and federal prisons each year, and with millions more cycling through local jails, finding stable housing is one of the biggest challenges for returning citizens. [1]
- It is substantially more difficult for returning citizens to secure employment, pursue educational opportunities, and rehabilitate, all of which can be exacerbated by a lack of stable housing. [1]
- Even temporary housing is not effective in reducing recidivism rates. A study of over 400,000 individuals returning to New York City from state prisons found that “individuals who entered a homeless shelter within the first two years after release faced a higher risk of re-incarceration.” [5]

Next Steps

Implementing this policy would have a positive socioeconomic impact in

Rochester. This program would not only provide members with stable housing, but also with a means to access aid with regards to employment, education, rehabilitation, etc. With these combined benefits, formerly incarcerated individuals would be less likely to re-offend, lowering future possible incarceration costs and improving the city's human capital.

After coordinating a collective of organizations to be involved in the proposed Reunification and Reentry Housing program, the Rochester Housing Authority should notify the city council of this project. To maximize the program's efficacy and to spread awareness of this program, the city council should consider appropriating money to launch a city-wide media campaign for the RRHP, in collaboration with the RHA and other involved organizations. This plan could alleviate the misguided distrust that potential applicants and family members may have regarding the RHA's housing reentry program.

Action Plan Snapshot

The Rochester Housing Authority should appoint a project manager for the RRHP. The project manager would oversee the implementation of the project and would be in charge of the

project's staffing. This position is necessary to set goals for the project and to ensure clear communication between involved parties, including non-profit organizations and prison staff.

The RHA's Executive Team and Board of Commissioners should partner with the Center for Community Alternatives' (CCA) Rochester chapter. The CCA provides a variety of services, including substance use treatment, employment coaching, and other forms of reentry support, to promote "reintegrative justice." [13] Both groups should involve other local non-profit organizations that could provide reentry, rehabilitative, and mental health services.

Before any measures are implemented, a study should be conducted to calculate the specific costs of the proposed Reunification and Reentry Housing Program. Additionally, a survey should be conducted to find the number of households in Rochester's public housing with family members who would be released from a correctional facility in the next few years. Once notified of this program, prison staff should work with RRHP-affiliated organizations to aid program

applicants during the application process.

A screening committee made up of representatives from RHA's Compliance, Diversity, and Inclusion Department and the Applications Processing Center should review all applications for the RRHP. This evaluation should be based on a range of factors, including the location of the crime committed, whether the victim(s) are housed in the same area as the applicant's prospective housing, and the financial standings of the applicant's family residing in public housing. [14]

Upon acceptance, a case manager from the CCA or other similar organizations affiliated with the RRHP would be assigned to the RRHP participant and their family. The case manager and the RRHP participant should meet regularly for at least the first two years, which would ensure that the participant is on the path to achieving individual and family goals, as well as the RRHP's requirements. These requirements would include being involved in job training, education, and/or rehabilitation, as well as complying with terms of the participant's parole or probation.

Upon successful completion of the program, the participant could be added to the lease with the

request of the primary leaseholder or the head of the household. Otherwise, the RRHP participant may also request the aid of the CCA and other affiliated organizations to secure separate housing.

Works Cited

- [1] “Incarceration & Reentry.” n.d. ASPE. Accessed November 13, 2021.
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/human-services/incarceration-reentry-0>.
- [2] Couloute, Lucius. 2018. “Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among Formerly Incarcerated People.” August 2018.
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>.
- [3] Clark M. Lynn. “Landlord Attitudes Toward Renting to Released Offenders.” *Federal Probation* 71, no. 1 (2007).
https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/71_1_4_0.pdf.
- [4] Reingle Gonzalez, Jennifer M., and Nadine M. Connell. 2014. “Mental Health of Prisoners: Identifying Barriers to Mental Health Treatment and Medication Continuity.” *American Journal of Public Health* 104 (12): 2328–33.
<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302043>.
- [5] “The Importance of Stable Housing for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals.” *Housing Law Bulletin* 40: 60-62.
<https://nhlp.org/files/Page%20%20Doc%201%20NHL%20Bulletin%20Article%20Reentry.pdf>.
- [6] Burrowes, Kimberly. 2019. “Can Housing Interventions Reduce Incarceration and Recidivism?” *Housing Matters*. February 27, 2019.
<https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/can-housing-interventions-reduce-incarceration-and-recidivism>.
- [7] Visher, Christy, and Shannon M. E. Courtney. 2016. “One Year Out: Experiences of Prisoners Returning to Cleveland.” Urban Institute. June 4, 2016.
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/one-year-out-experiences-prisoners-returning-cleveland>.
- [8] “Family Reentry Program.” n.d. Home. Accessed December 10, 2021.
<https://www.backtonycha.org/family-reentry-program-1>.
- [9] Liu, Lin, and Christy A. Visher. 2021. “Decomposition of the Role of Family in Reentry: Family Support, Tension, Gender, and Reentry Outcomes.” *Crime & Delinquency* 67 (6–7): 970–96.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128720987195>.
- [10] Mowen, Thomas J., Richard Stansfield, and John H. Boman. 2019. “Family Matters: Moving Beyond ‘If’ Family Support Matters to ‘Why’ Family Support Matters during Reentry from Prison.” *The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 56 (4): 483–523.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427818820902>.
- [11] Bae, John, Margaret diZerega, Jacob Kang-Brown, Ryan Shanahan, and Ram Subramanian. 2016. “Coming Home: An Evaluation of the New York City Housing Authority’s Family Reentry Pilot Program.” *Vera Institute of Justice*.
https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/NYCHA_report-032917.pdf.
- [12] Antenangeli, Leonardo, and Matthew R. Durose. (2021). “Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 24 States in 2008: A 10-Year Follow-Up Period (2008–2018).” *Bureau of Justice Statistics*.
https://bjs.ojp.gov/BJS_PUB/rpr24s0810yfup0818/Web%20content/508%20compliant%20PDFs.
- [13] “Mission Statement – Center for Community Alternatives.” n.d. Accessed December 7, 2021.
<https://www.communityalternatives.org/about/mission-statement/>.
- [14] Smith, Lionel, John Bae, Margaret diZerega, Ryan Shanahan, Jacob Kang-Brown, and Ram Subramanian. 2017. “An Evaluation of the New York City Housing Authority’s Family Reentry Pilot Program: Final Report to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.” *Vera Institute of Justice*.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/NYCHAevaluation-Sept-2017-updated.pdf>

Protecting Nevada's Voting Access to 2022 Midterm Elections through a Self-Imposed State Preclearance Policy

Jessica Chen, jyc58@cornell.edu

State-operated preclearance policies are necessary to protect voting access to the 2022 midterm elections for Nevada voters, as well as to shield future voting rights.

Background

Voting rights are a hotly contested subject. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 established preclearance, a process where the Attorney General reviewed changes to voting laws to ensure they were not discriminatory. [1] Section 4 specified that states were reviewed if they 1) determined voter eligibility by a "test or device" and if 2) less than 50% of voting age people were registered or voted in the 1964 presidential election. [10] States were removed from the list after meeting a set of extensive conditions but, in 2013, the Supreme Court case *Shelby County v. Holder* found the selection criteria of Section 4 unconstitutional because the guidelines were outdated, which subsequently ended preclearance. [11]

Despite the 2020 election's record voter turnout, since the start of the year, 19 states have passed 33 laws that have made voting more difficult. [14] Notable

laws include criminalizing giving water to voters in line, outlawing returning ballots on behalf of voters with disabilities, and banning 24-hour and drive-thru voting stations. [3] These regulations add to pre-existing legislation, such as voter ID laws and felony disenfranchisement, which disproportionately affect low-income communities, people of color, and immigrant communities—for instance, 1 in 16 Black Americans are blocked from voting by disenfranchisement laws. [3] More specifically, Nevada has enacted a mix of laws that both increase and decrease access. [17] With the 2022 midterm elections approaching in just over a year, it is pivotal that states protect voting access.

Policy Idea

Nevada ought to establish its own preclearance process. The process should call for the State Attorney General to evaluate proposed voting legislation for

purposeful or de facto barriers for minority groups. It should also involve not only the Attorney General, but also a representative selected from voting rights advocacy groups, such as the Brennan Center. The policy should also enable voters to bring a lawsuit if existing or new legislation are found to be discriminatory, whereby awards would be dedicated towards funding the preclearance process.

Policy Analysis

In determining efficacy, it is important to look at the likelihood of passing this policy in the state legislature. Because the implementation is modeled after Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which was effective prior to *Shelby County v. Holder*, one must assume it would remain effective and target the same groups as the original legislation.

Virginia is the only state to pass self-imposed state preclearance—

California's bill failed in the State Senate. [15] One concern was that the policy only applied to districts where protected classes made up over 20% of the population. [16] The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials was concerned that this implementation did not target counties where laws were most restrictive. [16] This policy would circumvent such a problem because, similar to in Virginia, it would apply to all counties.

Nevada is less diverse than both Virginia and California and just over a third the size of California, meaning its implementation is more comparable to that in Virginia. [12,13,14] As a result, this policy should not suffer from the funding concerns that caused the California Bill to fail. Similar to how the Virginia Act establishes a fund that collects awards from civil suits, this preclearance policy would collect money to fund its own operations. [4] Advocacy representatives should be selected by local district representatives from a list of willing advocacy groups. Every effort should be made to contact groups with a developed network, without barring smaller and more localized groups from offering a representative.

Talking Points

- Preclearance is necessary to prevent discriminatory laws and to protect laws preserving voter access.
- Given the close election in 2020 and the mix of voter access laws since enacted, voting access needs to be preserved for the upcoming midterm elections. [9,14]
- State level policy is more appealing to a more conservative state like Nevada. [6]
- The Attorney General could provide the necessary legal knowledge and should be balanced by an advocacy representative.
- A process that challenges state discriminatory laws in court is needed. Virginia has already spearheaded this process by establishing state preclearance processes. [5]

Key Facts

- Preclearance in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prevented states from passing discriminatory voting laws by requiring the

Attorney General's approval. [1]

- *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013) stripped the Voting Rights Act's preclearance provisions because the state selection criteria were outdated. [11]
- 19 states passed 33 laws since the start of 2021 to make voting more difficult. [16]
- 58.4% of eligible non-white voters voted in the 2020 elections compared to 70.9% of eligible white voters. [18]
- Barriers to voting disproportionately affect low-income communities and people of color; for instance, 1 in 16 black Americans are blocked from voting by disenfranchisement laws. [3]

Next Steps

A bill that establishes a preclearance process in Nevada would be viable, and therefore this policy should be implemented. Nevada currently has a trifecta, and the Democratic Party has control over the governor's office and both halves of the Nevada Legislature, as well as the Office of the Attorney General. [7] When Virginia

successfully passed its bill, Virginia Democrats also had control over the Secretary of the Commonwealth (an equivalent position to a Secretary of State)—however, this control is less important than taking advantage of the current Democrat trifecta. [8] Given the upcoming midterm elections and degree of Democrat control over the state government, Nevada should implement a preclearance policy now.

Action Plan Snapshot

Before a bill is introduced to Nevada’s State Assembly, grassroots organizers should be contacted to garner support. Namely, support from the local chapters of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Brennan Center would be crucial in lending this policy credibility among voters and legislators. Local lawyers in advocacy projects should also be contacted during the drafting process to tailor the policy to Nevada’s existing legislation, as well as to identify the laws that currently prohibit voting access. [2] Local district representatives in both the Assembly and Senate should also be sought during this process to negotiate the terms that should be added or removed, with the ultimate goal of earning their additional support. Only then

should a policy be presented to the Nevada Legislature. Ideally, this process would be implemented before March 2022 to shield against laws that would impact the 2022 midterm election.

Works Cited

- [1] “About Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.” The United States Department of Justice, September 11, 2020. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/about-section-5-voting-rights-act>.
- [2] Barber, Benjamin. “Tram Nguyen on How Virginia Passed Its Own Voting Rights Act.” Facing South, July 21, 2021. <https://www.facingsouth.org/2021/07/tram-nguyen-how-virginia-passed-its-own-voting-rights-act>.
- [3] “Block the Vote: How Politicians Are Trying to Block Voters from the Ballot Box.” American Civil Liberties Union, August 18, 2021. <https://www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/block-the-vote-voter-suppression-in-2020/>.
- [4] Discrimination; prohibited in voting and elections administration, etc., SB 1395. 161st Leg., 1st Special Sess. § 1 (V.A. 2021).
- [5] Epstein, Reid J, and Nick Corasaniti. “Virginia, the Old Confederacy’s Heart, Becomes a Voting Rights Bastion.” The New York Times. The New York Times, April 2, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/us/politics/virginia-voting-rights-northam.html>.
- [6] Hunt, Albert R. “States’ Rights, Depending on the Issue.” The New York Times. The New York Times, June 28, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/29/us/politics/states-rights-depending-on-the-issue.html>.
- [7] “Party Control of Nevada State Government.” Ballotpedia. Accessed November 5, 2021.

- https://ballotpedia.org/Party_control_of_Nevada_state_government.
- [8] “Party Control of Virginia State Government.” Ballotpedia. Accessed November 5, 2021. https://ballotpedia.org/Party_control_of_Virginia_state_government.
- [9] “Presidential Election in Nevada, 2020.” Ballotpedia. Accessed November 5, 2021. https://ballotpedia.org/Presidential_election_in_Nevada,_2020.
- [10] “Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act.” The United States Department of Justice, May 5, 2020. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/section-4-voting-rights-act>.
- [11] “Shelby County v. Holder.” Brennan Center for Justice, August 4, 2018. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/court-cases/shelby-county-v-holder>.
- [12] “U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: California.” U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CA/PST045219>.
- [13] “U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Nevada.” U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/NV>.
- [14] “U.S. Census Bureau Quickfacts: Virginia.” U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/va>.
- [15] “Virginia’s Voting Rights Act Unpacked.” Democracy Docket, November 9, 2021. <https://www.democracymarket.com/news/virginias-voting-rights-act-unpacked/>.
- [16] Voting Rights: preclearance Analysis—Senate Elections And Constitutional Amendments, AB 280, 2013-2014 Regular Session. (CA 2014).
- [17] Waldman, Michael, Pastor Danielle Ayers, Wendy R. Weiser, and Madiba Dennie. “Voting Laws

Roundup: October 2021.” Brennan Center for Justice, October 4, 2021. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-october-2021>.

[18] Wilder, Will. “Voter Suppression in 2020.” Brennan Center for Justice, August 20, 2021. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our->

[work/research-reports/voter-suppression-2020](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voter-suppression-2020).

Rethinking the Utility of Homework for Elementary School Students in the Ithaca City School District

Max Link, mrl248@cornell.edu

Elementary school students in Ithaca City School District (ICSD) are currently assigned after-school homework, which takes time out of valuable activities at home. County leadership should eliminate homework to clear space for cognitively beneficial activities, such as playing and reading.

Background

In the last decade, there has been a growing interest in and debate regarding the relationship between homework for elementary school students and academic achievement, especially since 65% of parents report homework as a stressor on their family dynamic. [6] In addition, most students rate homework as the largest source of stress in their lives, which can generate negative attitudes toward learning and school. [6] Meanwhile, the benefits of early childhood literacy and (preferably, outdoor) play have also been emphasized as useful avenues to advance students' intellect. [4] Literacy is boosted most effectively by *self-selected* literature. [2] Homework takes away time that could otherwise be devoted to these under-recognized but beneficial activities.

Among researchers, two have emerged to represent each pole in the

debate. While Duke Professor Harris Cooper argues strenuously for the continued use of homework in elementary schools, author Alfie Kohn argues for revolutionizing the whole education system, including by eliminating childhood homework. [8] Recently, as a result of academic research, some school systems have decided to rethink the utility of homework in elementary education. For example, Marion School District in Florida, which oversees 42,000 students, banned the assignment of homework for elementary students to instead focus entirely on reading. [5] Acacia Elementary School in Thousand Oaks, CA "requires" that time be spent on activities that elementary school children are passionate about (such as building Legos). [5] The no-homework movement is a budding one, as different institutions seek to reevaluate how children learn.

Policy Idea

The Board of Education of ICSD should pass a policy banning nightly mandatory homework for elementary school students. This proposal would eliminate the requirement that students go home and spend extensive time completing worksheets or interacting with computer screens each night. This policy would not include work at home for class projects or the like, and students would still routinely receive optional worksheets and other assignments. However, students would face no punishment or formal detriment for not completing the assignments. The policy would also only be implemented until the fifth grade.

Policy Analysis

This policy would be aimed at teachers for the ultimate benefit of the students. It would not require

any complex adjudication or implementation, but simply that the current requirement for completion of homework be rescinded. Teachers would still be free to assign special projects in class that have at-home components.

In 2006, Professor Harris Cooper of Duke University conducted a meta-analysis of twenty years' worth of studies on the topic, finding that the link between achievement and homework is inconclusive for elementary schoolers. [1] Meanwhile, spending time outdoors, playing with other kids, reading, and family time is of quintessential and definitive importance for the healthy development of children. [12] These are the types of activities that a policy banning mandatory nightly homework would promote.

Additionally, many parents, including those from low-income families, complain that current policies have unequal benefits because they rely on at-home resources that are not accessible to everyone; this policy therefore includes the implementation of explicitly *optional* nightly homework. [8] Ithaca City School District (ICSD) could later be used as a model for other similar school districts seeking to modernize their elementary education systems. The policy would be

achieved through passage at the city level, instituted by the ICSD School Board and overseen by the superintendent on a day-to-day basis. Principals, teachers, and parents would also all be aware of the policy from ICSD press releases.

Talking Points

- There is no conclusive evidence that homework results in better academic performance. [1]
- With this policy, time may be better allocated towards spending time outdoors, playing with other children, and increasing family time. [12]
- Although the mandate to do homework would be eliminated, teachers could still require specific projects with at-home components.
- Not only would the ICSD School Board pass this policy, but the ICSD superintendent would also monitor its success.

Key Facts

- 65% of parents reported that the stress of homework negatively impacted their family dynamic, and students rate

homework as the largest source of stress in their lives.

[6]

- There is an ongoing debate as to whether or not elementary school homework is productive and/or enhances learning.
- Playtime, downtime, family time, and outdoor time are all beneficial to cognitive development. [12]
- Marion School District in Florida, which oversees 42,000 students, banned the assignment of homework for elementary students to instead focus entirely on reading. [8]

Next Steps

This policy should be implemented in the Ithaca City School District. Upon seeing the results of this policy, ICSD could then be used as a model for other school districts. The policy in ICSD could also be adapted over time, based on what is happening on the ground at these schools. Some modifications in the future could include increasing the number of long-term projects in the class or instituting a formal reading requirement. In order for the removal of homework to take place, the School Board would have to

vote on the policy based on additional research (including from the aforementioned studies) and support garnered from the surrounding community.

Action Plan Snapshot

The most effective method to bring this policy to the attention of Board of Education members would be through town hall meetings. ICSD and its lower-level school districts hold town halls with education leadership. [9] Up to 30 minutes at the beginning of regular Board meetings are allotted for community input, which would be the perfect time to address homework concerns. [9] Attendance and dialogue by no-homework advocates at these meetings would be the most direct way to receive the attention of district leadership.

Another method would be to obtain support at a more local level, which could involve first approaching the parents of elementary school students. As multiple parents have expressed secondhand stress from current homework procedures in elementary school, it is possible that many of them would support the no-homework policy, particularly if they were aware about ongoing research showing inconclusive

benefits from nightly homework. These stakeholders could then raise their concerns to the school principal through petitions, and the principal could bring it to higher levels of power. This plan would take advantage of the democratic system and the education bureaucracy, thus providing legitimacy to this movement in ICSD.

Works Cited

- [1] Cooper, Harris et al. "Does Homework Improve Academic Achievement?" *Review of Educational Research*. Spring 2006.
- [2] Cornwall, Gail. "Studies Show Homework Doesn't Benefit Elementary Students." *Good Housekeeping*, 2 Nov. 2021, <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/a29991004/homework-elementary-school-not-necessary/>
- [3] "Florida School District Bans Homework, Replaces It with Daily Reading." *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 28 July 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/07/28/florida-school-district-bans-homework-replaces-daily-reading/519237001/>.
- [4] Kohn, Alfie. "Rethinking Homework." *Alfie Kohn*. <https://www.alfiekohn.org/article/rethinking-homework/>
- [5] Reilly, Katie. "A Florida School District is Eliminating Homework in Favor of Reading." *Time Magazine*. 19 July 2017. <https://time.com/4864442/florida-school-no-homework-policy/>
- [6] Shumaker, Heather. "Homework Is Wrecking Our Kids:

- The Research Is Clear, Let's Ban Elementary Homework." *Salon*, Salon.com, 6 Sept. 2019, https://www.salon.com/2016/03/05/homework_is_wrecking_our_kids_the_research_is_clear_lets_ban_elementary_homework/.
- [7] Shumaker, Heather. "Why Parents Should Not Make Kids Do Homework." *Time Magazine*. 8 March 2016. <https://time.com/4250968/why-parents-should-not-make-kids-do-homework/>
 - [8] Spencer, Kyle. "Never Mind the Students; Homework Divides Parents." *New York Times*. 25 April 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/25/nyregion/homework-ban-new-york-city-schools.html>
 - [9] "Public Participation at Board Meetings." Ithaca City School District, 9 April 2013. <https://go.boarddocs.com/ny/icsd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=A5S3SZ08587B>
 - [10] Walker, Tim. "The Great Homework Debate: What's Getting Lost in The Hype." *NEA*, <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/great-homework-debate-whats-getting-lost-hype>.
 - [11] "Unified Code of Conduct." Ithaca City School District Board of Education. 10 December 2019. <https://www.ithacacityschools.org/tfiles/folder285/ICSD%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20Adopted%2012.10.2019.pdf>
 - [12] Yogman, Michael et al. "The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children." *American Academy of Pediatrics*. 20 August 2018. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30126932/>

Incentivizing the Establishment of Use-of-Force Databases among Local Police Departments in the United States

Elizabeth Rene, egr48@cornell.edu

Despite efforts by previous administrations, there still remains no national database tracking law enforcement's use of force. [2] Given the inefficacy with which current Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) departments report voluntarily, federal lawmakers should centralize management of policing data under state agencies.

Background

Police brutality primarily takes the form of unjust practices, which primarily entails the unnecessary use of force, racial profiling, and wrongful conviction. Consequently, Black/African American teens are twenty-one times more likely to be killed by policemen compared to white teens. [1] Furthermore, to prevent tragedies such as those involving George Floyd and Michael Brown, there must be structural reform within our nation's policing system.

The aforementioned police practices go unchecked due to internal issues of accountability. Given that the threshold for criminal misconduct is high, police guilty of brutality are rarely ever charged, and complaints about specific police officers typically get processed through departments internally. [1] However, accountability

cannot improve without more transparency in police departments, namely through improved data collection and reporting.

Though there have been multiple attempts throughout the Bush, Clinton, and Obama administrations—as well as congressmen from both parties—to improve this issue, there remains no national database allowing citizens to track those who have been killed or harmed by law enforcement. [2] When police voluntarily report officer-involved fatalities to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program, such data is often incomplete, and the FBI is only allowed to record homicides that police render justified. [2] Even with the FBI's recent establishment of the Use-Of-Force Data Collection program, only 40% of the nation's departments have submitted data as of May 2020. [3]

Policy Idea

It is not partisan gridlock, but rather the nation's inability to compel local police to report, that undermines the creation of a cohesive national database. Therefore, given that states are closer to local law enforcement and the communities that they serve, federal policymakers should pass legislation centralizing the management and incentivization of local departments through state agencies. Specifically, states would be more efficient at analyzing police reports alongside victimization reports and would better incentivize departments to share data through state grants.

Policy Analysis

Within the 21 states that currently require the use-of-force information, data is typically reported by police departments to state agencies, summarized by a state's

legislature or department of justice, and then inputted into an online portal. [4] This process could allow state officials to better manage data reporting compared to federal agencies. For example, when Michigan officials required departments to report to the FBI database, the state experienced reporting use-of-force data increase from 0% to 90% in a matter of 18 months. [3]

However, if state governments were to become the primary agents responsible for monitoring law officials' reporting of data, increased transaction costs must be considered for law enforcement and state officials alike. Transaction costs include both time commitment to complete an FBI report (currently 38 minutes), as well as local police department budgets. [4] As previously mentioned, states could analyze police reports alongside victimization reports in order to limit time burdens posed on local enforcers. Additionally, citizen surveys are both an efficient and cost-effective resource to ensure fewer gaps in overall policing data. [5]

Equity issues must still be considered, whereby smaller departments may have a reduced workforce and lack sufficient resources to report data following every police-civilian interaction.

Therefore, policymakers should also look into state grants as a viable solution in incentivizing departments to share data. Overall, state and local governments spend \$115 billion on police work, while federal grants amount to \$235 million; therefore, federal funds may not be most effective in motivating police participation. [6]

Talking Points

- Michigan witnessed a dramatic increase of 90% in the amount of use-of-force data reported by local police after state officials required local departments to report to the FBI database. [3]
- State governments could analyze police reports alongside victimization reports to limit time burdens posed on local enforcers, whereas citizen surveys would serve as an additional efficient and cost-effective resource to ensure fewer gaps in overall policing data. [5]
- Since state and local governments spend \$115 billion on police work, while federal grants amount to \$235 million, federal funds may not be most effective in

motivating police participation. [6]

Key Facts

- Despite efforts taken by multiple administrations across both political parties, there remains no national database offering lawmakers or citizens information related to the use-of-force conducted by the nation's police departments. [2]
- Given that the use-of-force data currently reported to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program is voluntary, reports on officer-involved fatalities are often incomplete and subjective. [2]
- As of May 2020, only 40% of the nation's police have submitted use-of-force data, despite efforts by the FBI's Use-Of-Force Data Collection program. [3]

Next Steps

To ensure that the data reporting is reliable, states should compare department data alongside that of unbiased actors, namely citizens or certain interest groups. In order to further avoid gaps in data, they might also consider establishing timelines that

agencies report. For example, California currently requires law enforcement to report on an annual basis; Illinois requires these reports monthly, which may be more favorable in terms of accuracy, despite being more time costly. [4]

In terms of accessibility, state laws should require public disclosure of the data. Not only would these reports be disclosed to government entities or legislatures, but also to local communities. To decrease burdens on smaller departments, lawmakers might consider requiring publication of yearly summaries, as opposed to detailed reports of every crime. [3] Additionally, since the primary goal is to make police reporting mandatory and not voluntary, states should discourage departments from choosing which crimes are disclosed by establishing uniform standards on the kinds of crime reported and details involved.

Action Plan Snapshot

Given that greater use-of-force data would ease law enforcement tasks at the federal, state, and local levels—and therefore make it popular among congressmen across partisan lines—the policy is unlikely to encounter much opposition. While state governments

have better resources at their disposal to ensure effective management of local policing agencies, it is important that such data be analyzed on a broader level, so that the federal government can continue to understand the true impact of police brutality within the United States. At the same time, states should also compare their annual reports with those of other states in order to better understand the most effective policing methods, as well as the best de-escalation tactics to be adopted nationwide. Comparing use-of-force data from one state to another would further require that the data reported contain some similar metrics. North Carolina, for example, currently possesses an “open data portal” with a definition for force that is much broader than that of the FBI, meaning the state is able to record the use of force more accurately when it documents the usage of a taser, batons, gunshots, or the threat of a firearm. [7] Therefore, the federal government could step in to standardize the data and ensure its proper accuracy and quality. Specifically, all police departments should be required to record crucial details, including the subject’s race or gender, whether the officer involved was injured, the presence versus absence of use of

force, the type of force involved, etc.

Aside from relying on police departments alone, transparency and accuracy of use-of-force data could also depend on the federal oversight of state agencies, specifically in the facilitation of community outreach and media reports. Researchers at Campaign Zero, an organization formed to track the extent of national police killings, rely on a combination of accessible media and public records, in order to fill in details such as the race of those victimized and/or the names of officers involved. [8] As a result, the organization has accurately recorded an estimated 92% of killings by police as of 2013, including the portion of victims who were Black/African American and whether the police force has been more violent towards minority groups. [8]

Nonetheless, improved data collection is only one of the many steps that governments must take to decrease rates of police brutality against minority groups in the United States, while also facilitating trust between local departments and the communities they serve.

Works Cited

[1] Ray, Rashawn. “How Can We Enhance Police Accountability in the United States?” *Brookings*, Brookings, 11 Nov. 2020,

www.brookings.edu/policy2020/vo-tervital/how-can-we-enhance-police-accountability-in-the-united-states/.

[2] Cusick Director, Julia, et al. “4 Ideas That Could Begin to Reform the Criminal Justice System and Improve Police-Community Relations.” *Center for American Progress*, 2 Dec. 2014, www.americanprogress.org/issues/courts/reports/2014/12/18/103578/4-ideas-that-could-begin-to-reform-the-criminal-justice-system-and-improve-police-community-relations/.

[3] Bergengruen, Vera. “Inside the Long Effort to Create a Use-of-Force Database.” *Time*, Time, 30 June 2020,

time.com/5861953/police-reform-use-of-force-database/.

[4] L Vasquez, Amber Widgery. *Use of Force Data and Transparency*,

www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/use-of-force-data.aspx.

[5] *National Data Collection on Police Use of Force*.

bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndcopuf.pdf.

[6] James, Nathan, and Kristin Finklea. *Programs to Collect Data on Law Enforcement Activities* .

Mar. 2021, crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46443.

[7] “APD Use of Force 2018-2020 Data.” *City of Asheville Open Data*,

data-av1.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/7bc4d78e6bc64f2c9ca02fb2486aad0f_0/data?selectedAttribute=type_force_used.

[8] “About the Data.” *Mapping Police Violence*,

mappingpoliceviolence.org/aboutthedata.

Implementing KIPP's Leadership Competency Model into New York City to Improve Teacher Application Requirements

Julia Temple, jgt55@cornell.edu

Improving the competency of teachers in New York City (NYC) Public Schools through the Knowledge is Power Program's (KIPP) Leadership Competency Model, as well as offering better professional development opportunities for teachers, would increase student achievement.

Background

The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) began in 1994 as a nonprofit foundation that recruits and trains high quality school leaders who are devoted to helping every student succeed. [13] It is now a publicly funded charter school program that has expanded to 270 schools across the country, serving early childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school students. [14] There is no application process for students to attend KIPP schools, as long as students meet the residency requirements, and their parents enroll them in the school they are selected to attend. [18] However, when parent demand exceeds enrollment capacity, students are selected based on a blind lottery system. [18] Therefore, not every child whose family wishes to send them to KIPP schools is granted access. [14]

KIPP schools recruit and train effective teachers using the KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching (KFET). [4] The four core elements of this teaching framework are: self and others, classroom culture, the teaching cycle, and knowledge. [4] A 2017 study investigating KFET's influence on new science teachers' pedagogical content knowledge shows that teachers' knowledge increased over time through this program. [11] Moreover, KFET offers mentorship and experiential learning for teachers through coaching. [4] Coaches are hired by KIPP schools to work individually with teachers on a weekly basis, in order to oversee teachers' utilization of the framework and to offer advice for improvement. [15]

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) does not currently require its teachers in regular public schools to follow KFET, creating a

large disparity in learning outcomes between students who attend KIPP and those who remain in regular NYC public schools (including low-income students). [2,3]

Policy Idea

To mitigate education disparities across all public elementary school students in NYC, KFET should be implemented into the teacher requirements for NYC Public School teachers. More specifically, completion of the basic KFET training should be required in the NYC public school teacher application. Teachers must also meet with a coach once a week to ensure that they are meeting the standards outlined in the framework. This policy would increase professional development within and competitiveness of NYC public schools, thereby improving learning rates for low-income students.

Policy Analysis

This policy is intended to reach highly effective teachers, who are held to high professional standards, as well as all students in the NYC Public School district, rather than only to those who are granted the opportunity to attend KIPP schools. If all teachers were required to meet these standards and were afforded the same professional development opportunities as KIPP teachers, then there would likely be an increase in NYC student achievement rates.

There are significant disparities in performance among KIPP students and NYC public school students. In 2013, 26% of all public elementary schools and 43% of all public middle schools in NYC were failing their students on NYS exams in English and mathematics, meaning that pass rates were 10% or lower. [9] In 2018, despite the city offering SAT/ACT tests for free, just 78% of NYC public school students took a standardized test in high school, compared to 97% of KIPP students. [14,16] Another study found that KIPP middle schools boost college enrollment by 12.9 percentage points. [6] This evidence supports the idea that students who attend KIPP schools have a better chance at a brighter future.

Requiring completion of KFET training in the NYC teacher application has the potential to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of students in NYC's public schools. While there is ample evidence to support the success of the KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching, an important consideration is that implementing this policy may be contentious, since the NYC DOE would need to fund the training program in order to hire coaches for new teachers.

Talking Points

- In 2013, 26% of all NYC public elementary school, and 43% of all NYC public middle school, students failed their NYS English and Math exams. [9]
- KIPP boosts college enrollment rates by 12.9 percentage points; in 2017, 52% of students who attended KIPP enrolled in a 4-year college program within two years after college graduation, compared to 39% of those who did not enroll in KIPP. [6]
- Students who attended KIPP middle schools completed their first two years of college at higher rates

than students who did not attend a KIPP middle school. [6]

Key Facts

- KIPP's Framework for Excellent Teaching and the coaching aspect of KFET is a primary contributor to KIPP schools' success. [4]
- Based on empirical evidence, both the core elements and the coaching aspect of KFET lead to significant gains in teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. [11]
- Currently, NYC public schools do not offer coaching for teachers, nor a clear framework like KFET, to follow. [2,3] This lack of resources likely inhibits NYC public school teachers' professional development, consequently harming students' learning opportunities and academic achievements.

Next Steps

This policy would be implemented in two stages. First, the DOE's application requirements for NYC public school teachers would need to include the completion of a

government-subsidized leadership competency training program, whereby teachers are taught how to implement KFET in their work. Second, the NYC DOE would hire coaches with ample experience with KFET to oversee new teachers who have undergone KFET training. Hired teachers would experience weekly evaluations by their coaches, in which they would be given advice on their performances and how to better implement KFET for student learning. The combination of these two facets would provide teachers with beneficial development opportunities and further strengthening of their status as professionals. The framework would also benefit the students academically, as they would be taught by better trained and more qualified professionals.

Action Plan Snapshot

Prior to implementation, this policy would first need to obtain the right amount of support from policymakers. Supporters of the policy would need to lobby the NYC Public School Chancellor Meisha Porter, who would add the competency model training to NYC's teacher application.

Implementation of this policy would require two separate efforts. First, the NYC DOE should create a

teacher training program for applicants to gain experiential learning from teachers already incorporating the competency model in their work. The DOE would also need to fund a Leadership Competency training program for new teachers to satisfy the appropriate certification requirements under New York State law. The teacher application would then require the completion of this additional leadership competency training. Second, the NYC DOE should commission the American Institutes for Research to carry out a longitudinal study, specifically investigating how teachers' receipt of competency model training and coaching affects students' educational outcomes. Specific metrics of student educational outcomes could include graduation rates from elementary school, the percentage of students graduating high school, and the percentage of students taking the SAT. Should this new programming be deemed effective from this research, the policy should be further implemented across public schools in New York State.

Works Cited

[1] Darling-Hammond, Linda, Barnett Barry, and Amy Thoreson. "Does Teacher Certification Matter? Evaluating the Evidence." Accessed November 5, 2021. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245970278_Does_Teacher_

[Certification_Matter_Evaluating_the_Evidence.](#)

[2] How to apply. Apply to Teach in New York City Public Schools. (n.d.). Retrieved December 22, 2021, from <http://teachnyc.net/how-to-apply/application-and-hiring-process>.

[3] Getting started. Apply to Teach in New York City Public Schools. (n.d.). Retrieved December 22, 2021, from <http://teachnyc.net/getting-started/requirements-in-new-york-state>.

[4] "Leadership Framework and Competency Model - Kipp." Accessed November 5, 2021. https://www.kipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/KIPP_Leadership_Competency_Model.pdf

[5] "National Results." KIPP Public Charter Schools, October 29, 2021. <https://www.kipp.org/results/national/>.

[6] "Results: KIPP Public Charter Schools Independent Reports." KIPP Public Charter Schools, July 20, 2021. <https://www.kipp.org/results/independent-reports/#mathematica-2019-report>.

[7] "Information and Data Overview." Information and data overview. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/school-quality/information-and-data-overview>.

[8] "DOE Data at a Glance." web. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance>.

[9] "The Forgotten Fourth - Families for Excellent Schools." Accessed November 5, 2021. http://www.familiesforexcellentschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TheForgottenFourth_V4.pdf.

[10] Edge, Learners. "CTLE Courses for NY Teachers – Online Classes." CTLE Courses for NY Teachers – Online Classes.

Accessed November 5, 2021.

https://www.learnersedge.com/ctle-online-continuing-education-courses?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=EST+N+_+State+Req+-+NY+-+CTLE&utm_term=ctle+hours&gclid=CjwKCAjwiY6MBhBqEiwARFSCPpkRTvEocJTXoQgIDJ6dvltemwcmwV0hPc8qwL4ghL7BWVwHWNorZhoCetQQAvD_BwE.

[11] Hampton, L. K. (n.d.). A study on the impact of the teaching cycle element of the KIPP framework for excellent teaching on the development of the pedagogical content knowledge of science teachers. *Esploro.lib.uga.edu*. Retrieved November 8, 2021, from <https://esploro.lib.uga.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/A-study-on-the-impact-of/994933471770295>.

[12] Arnold Ventures. (2019, October). Evidence Summary for KIPP Charter Schools. *evidencebasedprograms.org*. Retrieved December 2021, from

<https://evidencebasedprograms.org/document/kipp-charter-schools-evidence-summary/#:~:text=Student%20achievement%20in%20reading%20and,on%20reading%20and%20math%20achievement>.

[13] Kipp Network Our Results. (n.d.). Retrieved December 18, 2021, from

<http://www.kipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/KIPP-Press-Kit.pdf>.

[14] KIPP's structure: Learn how KIPP public charter schools are structured. KIPP Public Charter Schools. (2021, August 5). Retrieved December 18, 2021, from

<https://www.kipp.org/schools/structure/>.

[15] Excellent teaching at Kipp: Learn more about our effective teachers. KIPP Public Charter Schools. (2021, August 2). Retrieved December 18, 2021, from

<https://www.kipp.org/approach/highly-effective-teachers-and-leaders/teaching/>.

[16] Wall, P. (2018, January 12). Record number of New York City students take SAT after city offers test for free. *Chalkbeat New York*. Retrieved December 19, 2021, from

<https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2018/1/11/21104123/record-number-of-new-york-city-students-take-sat-after-city-offers-test-for-free>.

[17] KIPP National Results. (n.d.). *Kipp 17-18 NATL results 062819*. *kipp.org*. Retrieved December 19, 2021, from

<https://www.kipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/KIPP-2017-18-National-Results-and-Appendix.pdf>

[18] *FAQ: Kipp Public Charter Schools' frequently asked questions*. KIPP Public Charter Schools. (2021, September 16). Retrieved December 22, 2021, from <https://www.kipp.org/faq/>.

Introducing Opioid Fatality Harm-Reduction Methods in West Virginia

Nicholas Weising, ngw34@cornell.edu

To prevent opioid overdose deaths, West Virginia should establish supervised drug consumption sites in rural areas statewide, as well as provide resources for long-term care.

Background

The opioid epidemic runs rampant across the United States, leading to a high prevalence of opioid overdose deaths. Such deaths in the United States have increased by almost 5% from 2018 to 2019 and quadrupled since 1999. [1] Furthermore, over 70% of the 70,630 drug overdose deaths in 2019 involved opioids. [1] 2021 has seen an especially high number of drug overdose deaths, with over 100,000 being recorded nationwide. [2]

Prior policy efforts to ameliorate this crisis have not been sufficient. For example, removing addictive qualities from the prescription drug Oxycontin only led to an increase in heroin usage. [5] In addition, fentanyl is currently the most popular and most lethal synthetic opioid, as well as responsible for an estimated 100,306 drug deaths nationwide (from April of 2020 to April of 2021), which is a 29% increase from the number of deaths in the previous year. [6]

West Virginia has been the hardest-hit state, having over 41.5 opioid deaths per 100,000 people in 2015. [2] Consequently, the per-capita total cost of the opioid epidemic in West Virginia was \$4,378 in 2018, which includes mortality costs. [3] Additionally, West Virginia leads the nation in Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), a withdrawal syndrome caused by prenatal exposure to illicit and prescribed drugs; in 2018, almost 5% of West Virginian infants had NAS. [14] These disparities are particularly visible in rural areas in West Virginia, due to relatively higher accessibility to opioids but lower accessibility to healthcare services. [4]

Policy Idea

Policymakers in West Virginia should prioritize reducing morbidity among substance abusers by establishing and managing supervised drug consumption sites, also known as safe injection sites, in high-need rural areas. The sites would

not only medically prevent overdoses but also provide counseling and social services resources for drug users to overcome their addictions.

Policy Analysis

The target demographic of this policy is rural West Virginian opioid users. A multi-year study published in 2008 found that between 6% to 37% of injections would have been fatal had they occurred outside a safe consumption site. [8] Safe injection sites are shown to have significant benefits, including preventing heroin-related deaths, freeing up local hospital rooms, providing clean needles to prevent the spread of HIV, and reducing medical costs. [9,10] In fact, an additional study found that Montreal, Canada saved CDN\$1.486 million from HIV and HCV costs per supervised injection site every year. [10] This state-wide policy would empower the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources to receive bids from counties and

municipalities for safe consumption sites. Staff of sites, including nurses, drug counselors, and social workers, would be employed by the state and hired locally. Additionally, naloxone (the primary medication used to treat drug overdoses) and clean needles would also be stocked at these facilities. [7]

A public relations campaign would need to be established by the Department of Health and Human Resources to assuage local government officials of potential faults of the program. More specifically, emphasizing the life-saving capabilities of safe consumption sites would be required in the campaign. County officials would also be more receptive to studies that show no increase in numbers of relapses among site users, as well as an increase in addiction treatment services from these sites. [11,12] There is strong evidence to suggest that drug users in rural West Virginian communities are receptive to instituting these sites: in a 2019 survey, nearly 80% of West Virginians responded that they would “likely” or “very likely” use such facilities if they were available. [13]

Talking Points

- This proposal saves lives by preventing overdoses on fentanyl

and other opioids and by suppressing HIV exchange/transmission. [8,9]

- Safe injection facilities decrease the prevalence of public injection and injections with contaminated needles, thereby suppressing HIV exchange/transmission. [9]
- As a result of decreasing HIV transmissions and overdoses in fentanyl and other opioids, the sites are both cost-effective and free up hospital rooms for other patients. [10]
- There is no evidence that safe injection sites increase drug usage among visitors. [12]

Key Facts

- Over 100,000 drug overdoses were recorded nationwide in 2021, the vast majority of which involved opioids. [2]
- West Virginia had experienced over 41.5 opioid deaths for every 100,000 people in 2015. [2]
- Rural West Virginia has a higher accessibility to opioids but lower accessibility to

healthcare services and social services, which increases fatalities among its opioid-using denizens. [4]

- Fentanyl has caused over 100,000 drug deaths nationwide in just one year, representing an increase of 29% from the previous year. [6]

Next Steps

As it is in the best interest of West Virginia to prioritize harm reduction in its drug policy, the aforementioned policy idea should be implemented. Safe consumption sites do not primarily function to wean addicts off substances, yet they are a necessary step in solving the drug epidemic through additional counseling and recovery services. [8] The West Virginia state government should issue debt to finance the construction of safe injection sites in the state, as well as begin the bidding process for construction companies interested in contracting the establishment of safe injection site infrastructure.

Action Plan Snapshot

Efforts should first be directed toward the Legislature of West Virginia. Local groups such as the West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute have

educated the public on how to mitigate drug harms and have collaborated with agencies on drug response. [15] Such organizations would likely be in favor of this policy, as would the much larger National Harm Reduction Coalition, which focuses on harm reduction policies and has a history of related public policy work. [16]

These groups, alongside individual supporters, should begin lobbying Matthew Rohrbach, Chairman of the House of Delegates' Health and Human Resources Committee, and Senator Michael J. Maroney, and Chairman of the Senate Health and Human Resources Committee. [17,18] The former might be more receptive, as his district consists mainly of Cabell County, which was ranked as the single country most vulnerable to overdose deaths in the entire state; in 2017, the overdose rate was 156.6 per 100,000 people in Cabell County. [19]

Another reason for requiring a robust lobbying effort is because the appropriation of funds for safe consumption centers is unlikely to pass through the Republican-held West Virginia Legislature. [20] Many in the socially conservative state would not feel sympathy for drug

addicts and would not want taxpayer money to be spent to mitigate opioid overdose deaths in rural areas statewide. [21] However, with enough education and campaigning through the aforementioned grassroots organizations, this policy could still save lives in the Mountain State.

Works Cited

- [1] "Understanding the Epidemic." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 17, 2021.
<https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/basics/epidemic.html>.
- [2] Coustasse A; Merino R; Bowden N; Katamneni S; . "The Opioid Epidemic in West Virginia." *The health care manager*. U.S. National Library of Medicine. Accessed October 27, 2021.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30920991/>.
- [3] Brill, Alex, and Scott Ganz. "The Geographic Variation in the Cost of the Opioid Crisis." *American Enterprise Institute*, 2018.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24596>.
- [4] Benson, William, Kendra Kuehn, and Mandy Weirich. "Why Are Rural Older Adults Turning to Opioids?" *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging* 43, no. 2 (2019): 55–61.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26760115>.
- [5] Alpert, Abby, David Powell, and Rosalie Liccardo Pacula. "Supply-Side Drug Policy in the Presence of Substitutes: Evidence from the Introduction of Abuse-Deterrent Opioids." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 10, no. 4 (2018): 1–35.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26529052>.
- [6] Kamp, Jon, and Julie Wernau. "Drug Overdose Deaths, Fueled by Fentanyl, Hit Record High in U.S." *The Wall Street Journal*. Dow Jones & Company, November 17, 2021.
<https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/drug-overdose-deaths-fueled-by-fentanyl-hit-record-high-in-u-s-11637161200>.
- [7] (DCD), Digital Communications Division. "How to Respond to an Opioid Overdose." HHS.gov.
<https://plus.google.com/+HHS>. Accessed November 11, 2021.
<https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/treatment/overdose-response/index.html>.
- [8] Milloy M-JS, Kerr T, Tyndall M, Montaner J, Wood E (2008) Estimated Drug Overdose Deaths Averted by North America's First Medically-Supervised Safer Injection Facility. *PLoS ONE* 3(10): e3351.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0003351>
- [9] Ingrid van Beek , Jo Kimber , Andy Dakin & Stuart Gilmour (2004) The Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre: reducing harm associated with heroin overdose, *Critical Public Health*, 14:4, 391-406, DOI: 10.1080/09581590400027528
- [10] Jozaghi, E., Reid, A.A. & Andresen, M.A. A cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness analysis of proposed supervised injection facilities in Montreal, Canada. *Subst Abuse Treat Prev Policy* 8, 25 (2013).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/1747-597X-8-25>
- [11] Kerr, Thomas, Jo-Anne Stoltz, Mark Tyndall, Kathy Li, Ruth Zhang, Julio Montaner, and Evan Wood. "Impact Of A Medically Supervised Safer Injection Facility On Community Drug Use Patterns: A Before And After Study." *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 332, no. 7535 (2006): 220–22.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25455980>.

- [12] Kora DeBeck, Thomas Kerr, Lorna Bird, Ruth Zhang, David Marsh, Mark Tyndall, Julio Montaner, Evan Wood, Injection drug use cessation and use of North America's first medically supervised safer injecting facility, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, Volume 113, Issues 2–3, 2011, Pages 172-176, ISSN 0376-8716, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2010.07.023>.
- [13] O'Rourke, A., White, R.H., Park, J.N. *et al.* Acceptability of safe drug consumption spaces among people who inject drugs in rural West Virginia. *Harm Reduction Journal* 16, 51 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-019-0320-8>
- [14] *A Public Health Emergency: West Virginia's Efforts to Curb the Opioid Crisis, Before the The House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations*, 116th Congress, 1-14 (2020) (Christina Mullins, Commissioner Bureau for Behavioral Health West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources)
- [15] "What We Do." *Wvdii*. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://www.wvdii.org/what-we-do>.
- [16] "Policy & Advocacy Work." National Harm Reduction Coalition. National Harm Reduction Coalition, May 24, 2021. <https://harmreduction.org/our-work/policy-advocacy/>.
- [17] "House of Delegates Health and Human Resources Committee." House Health and Human Resources Committee. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/committees/house/HouseCommittee.cfm?Chart=hhr>.
- [18] "Committee Members." Senate Health and Human Resources Committee. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/committees/senate/SenateCommittee.cfm?Chart=hhr>.
- [19] "County-Level Vulnerability to Overdose Deaths in West Virginia," 2019, 1–3.
- [20] Ondocsin, J., Mars, S.G., Howe, M. *et al.* Hostility, compassion and role reversal in West Virginia's long opioid overdose emergency. *Harm Reduction J* 17, 74 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-020-00416-w>
- [21] Adams, Steven Allen. "From Red to Redder: GOP Gains in West Virginia Legislature about More than Trump, Leaders Say." *weirtdailytimes.com*, November 7, 2020. <https://www.weirtdailytimes.com/news/local-news/2020/11/from-red-to-redder-gop-gains-in-west-virginia-legislature-about-more-than-trump-leaders-say/>.

Establishing New York State's Leading Role in Initiating a Federal Congressional Term Limit Amendment

Julia Willett, jaw496@cornell.edu

New York State should initiate a Congressional Term Limit Amendment that limits U.S. Senators to no more than two terms and that limits House members to six terms, in order to reduce congressional corruption and the influence of Political Action Committee (PAC) money and lobbyists.

Background

Americans are unhappy with Congress but are unable to change it; the approval rate for politicians is 15%, yet there is a 91% reelection rate. [1] Incumbent candidates have an advantage over challengers, making it extremely difficult to vote them out of office. [2] However, instead of serving their communities, Congressional representatives are diverted by raising money for their re-elections over the phone. [3]

Term limits could help to solve this problem, and they have overwhelming support: 82% of Americans support a Congressional term limits amendment, with 89% being Republicans, 83% being Independents, and 76% being Democrats. [3] Without the possibility of re-election, members of Congress could focus on the promises that they have made to voters, rather than updating their platforms to increase their chances of re-election. [4]

Instituting term limits would also reduce corruption and the influence of Political Action Committee (PAC) money. With term limits, PACs would no longer be able to perpetually finance congressional campaigns and influence the decision-making of members of Congress. [5] Therefore, term limits would provide voters with candidates who are more aligned with their values.

In 1997, H.J. Res. 2 proposed to amend the Constitution to limit the number of terms U.S. Congressmen could serve. [7] In *U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton*, the Court established that a constitutional amendment was necessary to secure Congressional term limits. [6] Therefore, this change must be federal; it cannot occur on a state-by-state basis. [7]

Policy Idea

New York State Congressmen should reintroduce the Congressional

Term limit amendment proposed in 1997, under which Senators would be limited to no more than two full terms (12 years), and House members would be limited to no more than six terms (12 years). [7] If an amendment does not pass, then New York State should reimpose restrictions on Congressmen and senators, forcing the Court to challenge *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Ray Thornton et al.*

Policy Analysis

As public confidence in U.S. Congress remains at an all-time low (below 20%), now is the time for New York State to reintroduce a Constitutional Term Limit Amendment. [8] A term limits amendment was unsuccessful in 1997, but the amendment has a stronger chance of passing today and has been initiated by Representative Ralph Norman. [9] This amendment would mitigate many of the major problems facing the

U.S. government. Initiating term limits would increase congressional turnover and lessen the need for campaign finance reform while increasing trust between the people and the government.

The Amendment has a strong chance of passing since 82% of Americans support a Congressional Term Limits Amendment, and this issue extends beyond party lines—a concept that is rare in this age of political polarization. [10] Although the Amendment would have to be approved by three-fourths of the states, 15 states have proven to support term limits; they imposed term limits for their state legislators before the ruling in *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Ray Thornton et al.* [11] If the amendment does not pass, then New York state could reimpose restrictions on Congressmen, forcing the Court to challenge *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Ray Thornton et al.* [12]

Talking Points

- 97% of corporate PAC money goes to incumbents, but term limits would break the hold of lobbyists/special interest groups. [13]
- Term limits would allow for people with real-world experience to enact laws and force members of

Congress to return to living under the laws they support. [1]

- Amendment needs approval by three-fourths of the states; 15 states currently term-limited their legislators. [11]

Key Facts

- The approval rate of Congress is often below 20%, yet there is a 91% re-election rate, suggesting that electoral processes strongly favor incumbents. [14]
- 82% of Americans support a Congressional Term Limits Amendment, with 89% being Republicans, 83% being Independents, and 76% being Democrats. [15]
- Members of Congress spend 30-70% of their time on the phone raising money for their respective reelections, rather than helping constituents. [16]
- 1997 H.J. Res. 2 proposed a Congressional Term Limits Amendment following *U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton*, 115 S. Ct. 1867 (1995), where the Court established that the only way to secure

limits on the terms of Congressional service was to amend the United States Constitution. [17]

Next Steps

New York State Congressmen should reintroduce the Congressional Term limit Amendment proposed in 1997. Fifteen states support the amendment, but the amendment needs three-fourths of the states to pass; New York should weaponize its political leverage to garner support in other states for the policy. [18]

In *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Ray Thornton et al.*, the Court decided that the only way to secure limits on the terms of Congressional service was to amend the United States Constitution. [19] However, the case was closely decided, and two-thirds of the justices have left the Supreme Court. [20] Therefore, if the Amendment fails to pass, there is still a chance to obtain term limits if New York reimposes restrictions on its own Congressmen. With such a restriction, the court would likely make a Congressional challenge, opening the door for the Court to overturn the ruling. [21]

Action Plan Snapshot

Since this plan is directed towards the federal

government but led by New York State, advocacy should be split between the state government and the national level. First, it is important that support for the term limit amendment be garnered in New York State, and therefore support for the amendment must be established in tandem with existing statewide organizations, such as the New York state branch of *U.S. Term Limits (USTL)*. Alongside this existing advocacy, supporters of the policy must lobby for the amendment with members of the New York State legislature who are in key positions to influence the reintroduction of term limits. Supporters could lobby State Senator Joseph Griffo or Republican State Senator Patrick Gallivan, who have expressed support for this issue in the past by introducing a term limit measure on the state level. [22] If they are able to garner support within the state, then they would be more likely to gain support for a Court challenge by the state, lest the amendment pass.

It is also imperative that national support for this issue be established, since the amendment needs three-fourths of the states to pass. [23] Therefore, support must be established within New York State, so that its legislators could use their

political leverage to amass support for the amendment. Such support could be gained by supporting organizations such as *USTL* and *Term Limit Pledge*, which would use their lobbying power to promote the term limit amendment. It could also be bolstered through campaigns sent out to various state governments, which could help build bipartisan support and endorsement for the bill. Since there would likely be enormous opposition from lobbyists, it is only through this communal momentum that the amendment would be able to pass.

Works Cited

- [1] Cillizza, Chris. "People Hate Congress, but Most Incumbents Get Re-Elected. What Gives?" *The Washington Post*. WP Company, November 26, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/05/09/people-hate-congress-but-most-incumbents-get-re-elected-what-gives/>.
- [2] Johnson, Gary. "The Common Sense of Term Limits for Congress." *The Washington Times*. *The Washington Times*, June 28, 2016. https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jun/28/the-common-sense-of-term-limits-for-congress/?utm_source=GOOGLE&utm_medium=cpc&utm_id=chacka&utm_campaign=TWT%2B-%2BDSA&gclid=CjwKCAiA4veMBhAMEiwAU4XRr7ds_4fzIUeUP3xFoZKBMoIRYphVyfe_oXZGAFRmZQVA97c7uJrj3BoC6LwQAVD_BwE.
- [3] "Suggestions on the Benefits of Term Limits." *U.S. Term Limits*, August 5, 2021.

<https://www.termlimits.com/suggestions/>.

[4] Johnson, Gary. "The Common Sense of Term Limits for Congress." *The Washington Times*. *The Washington Times*, June 28, 2016.

https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jun/28/the-common-sense-of-term-limits-for-congress/?utm_source=GOOGLE&utm_medium=cpc&utm_id=chacka&utm_campaign=TWT%2B-%2BDSA&gclid=CjwKCAiA4veMBhAMEiwAU4XRr7ds_4fzIUeUP3xFoZKBMoIRYphVyfe_oXZGAFRmZQVA97c7uJrj3BoC6LwQAVD_BwE.

[5] Frenzel, Bill. "Limiting Terms of Office for Members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives." *Brookings*. *Brookings*, July 28, 2016.

<https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/limiting-terms-of-office-for-members-of-the-u-s-senate-and-u-s-house-of-representatives/>.

[6] Senate Report 104-158. "CONGRESSIONAL TERM LIMITS." Senate report 104-158 - Congressional term limits. From the U.S. Government Publishing Office. Accessed November 25, 2021.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-104srpt158/html/CRPT-104srpt158.htm>.

<https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/105th-congress/house-report/2>.

[7] "U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton, 514 U.S. 779 (1995)." *Justia Law*. Accessed November 25, 2021.

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/514/779/>.

[8] Cillizza, Chris. "People Hate Congress, but Most Incumbents Get Re-Elected. What Gives?" *The Washington Post*. WP Company, November 26, 2021.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/05/09/people-hate-congress-but-most-incumbents-get-re-elected-what-gives/>.

- [9] Congress.gov. "H.J.Res.12 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to limit the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve." March 4, 2021.
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-joint-resolution/12>.
- [10] "M&A Poll: Voters Overwhelmingly Support Term Limits for Congress." McLaughlin Associates. Accessed December 23, 2021.
<http://mclaughlinonline.com/2018/02/08/ma-poll-voters-overwhelmingly-support-term-limits-for-congress/>
- [11] Wendy Underhill, Deb Parker. "The Term-Limited States." The term-limited states, December 11, 2020.
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/chart-of-term-limits-states.aspx>.
- [12] Greenberg, Dan. "Term Limits: The Only Way to Clean up Congress." The Heritage Foundation. Accessed November 25, 2021.
<https://www.heritage.org/political-process/report/term-limits-the-only-way-clean-congress>.
- [13] "Suggestions on the Benefits of Term Limits." U.S. Term Limits, August 5, 2021.
<https://www.termlimits.com/suggestions/>.
- [14] Cillizza, Chris. "People Hate Congress. but Most Incumbents Get Re-Elected. What Gives?" The Washington Post. WP Company, November 26, 2021.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/05/09/people-hate-congress-but-most-incumbents-get-re-elected-what-gives/>.
- [15] "M&A Poll: Voters Overwhelmingly Support Term Limits for Congress." McLaughlin Associates. Accessed December 23, 2021.
<http://mclaughlinonline.com/2018/02/08/ma-poll-voters-overwhelmingly-support-term-limits-for-congress/>
- [16] O'Donnell, Norah. "Are Members of Congress Becoming Telemarketers?" CBS News. CBS Interactive, April 16, 2014.
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/60-minutes-are-members-of-congress-becoming-telemarketers/>.
- [17] "U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton, 514 U.S. 779 (1995)." Justia Law. Accessed November 25, 2021.
<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/514/779/>.
- [18] Wendy Underhill, Deb Parker. "The Term-Limited States." The term-limited states, December 11, 2020.
- [19] "U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton, 514 U.S. 779 (1995)." Justia Law. Accessed November 25, 2021.
<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/514/779/>.
- [20] "Current Members of SCOTUS." Home - Supreme Court of the United States. Accessed December 23, 2021.
<https://www.supremecourt.gov/about/biographies.aspx>.
- [21] Bandow, Doug. "How to Term-Limit Congress." Cato.org. Cato Institution, 2019.
<https://www.cato.org/commentary/how-term-limit-congress>.
- [22] Amedore, George A. "Legislators Advocate for Term Limit Legislation." NY State Senate, June 15, 2018.
<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/george-amedore-jr/legislators-advocate-term-limit-legislation>.
- [23] "Constitutional Amendment Process." National Archives and Records Administration. National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed December 23, 2021.
[https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/constitution#:~:text=A%20proposed%20amendment%20becomes%20part,\(38%20of%2050%20States\)](https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/constitution#:~:text=A%20proposed%20amendment%20becomes%20part,(38%20of%2050%20States)).

Economic Policy

Director: Garry Blum

Analysts: Grace Chen, Clare Della Valle, Ari Dev Rangarajan, Luke Hartigan,
Nathan Lesser, Scott Siegel, Sahil Venkatesan, Nguyen Vo

Improving COVID-19 Relief for Small Businesses in Tompkins County, New York

Grace Chen, glc84@cornell.edu

Tompkins County has experienced some of the worst economic hardships in New York during the COVID-19 pandemic. [4] The Tompkins County Economic Recovery Strategy provides loans for small businesses, and it should be amended to provide an outreach and workforce development program. [9]

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused multiple economic disruptions and hardships worldwide: businesses have shut down, employees have been laid off, and production and consumption of goods and services have decreased. However, at the local level, Tompkins County has experienced some of the most difficult economic disruptions in New York, including the largest decrease in tax revenues. [4] Tompkins County experienced a 10.4% drop on sales tax revenue in 2020, and unemployment and office vacancies reached all-time highs. [4] According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Ithaca's unemployment rate skyrocketed at the beginning of the pandemic and peaked at 11% in April 2020. [10] Additionally, unemployment insurance claims have increased by 880% since 2019. [10]

Despite COVID-19 workplace restrictions

becoming more lenient, employers are struggling to hire and retain workers because of lower wages and pandemic-related health concerns. [7] The rate of participation in the labor market has declined 2.5% since the pandemic, where 2,200 employees are no longer working or searching for employment. [7] Therefore, there is a need for policy to guide recovery for Tompkins County and to ensure economic success.

Policy Idea

The Tompkins County Economic Recovery Strategy has focused on providing immediate assistance for businesses that have been negatively impacted during the first three to six months of the pandemic. [9] Businesses would be regularly surveyed to assess their needs and to determine the support they need. [9] The Emergency Relief Loan Fund would distribute five loans to traded sector businesses. [9] The Small Business Resiliency

Fund would distribute 117 forgivable loans to small businesses. [9] Additionally, the Recovery Strategy should be amended to include outreach to businesses and workforce development.

Policy Analysis

The Tompkins County Economic Recovery Strategy would be evaluated based on its prevention of business closures and on decreasing unemployment. [3,2,12] The Urban Affairs Review conducted a survey with over 8 million small businesses and found that the 23% of businesses that received some sort of government assistance were more viable and less likely to shut down compared to their counterparts. [3] Additionally, a study by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America found that businesses experiencing higher hiring and employee retention rates after the pandemic were those that increased their wages. [2] For example, Amazon

added 500,000 employees in 2020 after its wage floor increased to \$25 per hour. [8]

Government loan programs are one of the most efficient ways to aid small businesses. [12] However, additional tools are needed to help small businesses recover outside of a loan program. [12] A study by Tourism Recreation Research observed that the smallest tourism-related businesses, which were offered COVID-19 recovery funds, were not aware of government loans and did not apply for them. [12] Therefore, open communication is necessary when providing aid to small businesses, and governments should therefore aim to increase the visibility and awareness of their aid programs. [12]

The Tompkins County Economic Recovery Strategy prevents business closures and decreases unemployment. [3,2,11] This policy is also economically feasible because Tompkins County Legislature recently approved \$7 million of the county's unassigned fund balance for community recovery. [9]

Talking Points

- The Tompkins County Economic Recovery Strategy would be evaluated on preventing business closures and

decreasing unemployment. [3,2,12]

- Studies have found that monetary government assistance makes small businesses more viable and less likely to shut down. [3]
- Providing government assistance to businesses allows them to hire more employees. [2]
- Government loan programs are the most efficient way to help businesses for COVID-19 recovery, yet these loans are not enough for small businesses to fully recover from the pandemic. Open communication to businesses is necessary for distributing loans. [12]

Key Facts

- In 2020, Tompkins County's sales tax revenue decreased by 10.4%, the steepest decline in tax revenue of any county in the state of New York. [4]
- Unemployment skyrocketed to 11% in April 2020, and unemployment claims increased by 880%

throughout the pandemic. [4,10]

- Participation rate in the workforce has declined by 2.5% since the pandemic, where around 2,200 employees are no longer looking for work. [7] Employers are unable to recruit and keep employees because of lower wages and health concerns. [7]

Next Steps

The Tompkins County Economic Recovery Strategy should be implemented because it would prevent small business closures and increase employment. [3,2,12] However, additional measures should be taken to ensure that the policy is effective. Tompkins County should implement an outreach program to notify small businesses about the loan programs available to them and inform them about the most effective ways to use such funding. Additionally, Tompkins County should determine the qualifications of the loan program, such as the definition of a "small business."

Although the pandemic has amplified economic hardships across New York State, minority workers have been more

negatively impacted. [7] People of color have disproportionately held jobs that laid off workers or had lower pay during the pandemic. [7] Tompkins County should implement recovery policies that aim to reduce racial/ethnic disparities and that wage inequalities post-pandemic. Therefore, the suggested outreach program should include workforce development to encourage workforce participation, especially for minority workers.

Action Plan Snapshot

Once Tompkins County appropriates its funding, it should determine the qualifications for its small business loan program. For example, Tompkins County could adopt and adjust the New York State COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program qualifications to fit more towards local businesses. New York state defines a small business as an independently owned and operated business that is not dominant in its field and that employs one hundred or fewer persons. [8] Additionally, the business must have gross receipts of between \$25,000 and \$2,500,000 in 2019 or 2020, have a positive net profit on the 2019 Business Return, demonstrate at least a 25%

loss in annual gross receipts between 2019 and 2020, and demonstrate that the business's total expenses are greater than grant amount. [8] Tompkins County should define these requirements immediately in order to administer the loan as soon as possible.

After legislators define the requirements, they should implement an outreach program to ensure that small businesses are aware of this loan program. Tompkins County should especially target businesses with low profits and large numbers of minority employees. The outreach program could also offer assistance to businesses for determining the most effective way to use the loan, whether it be funding payroll, rent, or utility costs. In addition, it could include a workforce development program that provides services, such as resume building, hard skill training, and job searching. [11] Therefore, people who cannot find employment would be assisted, and those who are uneasy about reentering the workforce would receive support. [11] This educational aspect of the outreach program should also target lower-income and minority workers who are unable to find employment. [11]

Works Cited

- [1] Baker, Todd H., and Kathryn Judge. "How to Help Small Businesses Survive COVID-19." SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, April 10, 2020. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3571460>.
- [2] Bartik, Alexander W., Marianne Bertrand, Zoe Cullen, Edward L. Glaeser, Michael Luca, and Christopher Stanton. "The Impact of COVID-19 on Small Business Outcomes and Expectations." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117, no. 30 (July 28, 2020): 17656–66. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2006991117>.
- [3] Bates, Timothy. "Small Businesses Appear to Benefit from State or Local Government's Economic Development Assistance." *Urban Affairs Review* 31, no. 2 (November 1, 1995): 206–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107808749503100205>.
- [4] "IAED Releases Economic Recovery Strategy for Tompkins County | Ithaca Area Economic Development." Accessed November 23, 2021. <https://ithacaareaed.org/iaed-releases-economic-recovery-strategy-for-tompkins-county/>
- [5] Nurunnabi, Mohammad. "Recovery Planning and Resilience of SMEs during the COVID-19: Experience from Saudi Arabia." *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change* 16, no. 4 (January 1, 2020): 643–53. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAOC-07-2020-0095>.
- [6] Primeau, Amy. "State of New York Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program." New York State COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program, May 24, 2021. <https://nysmallbusinessrecovery.com/>.
- [7] Cornell Chronicle. "Report: Ithaca Economy Shouldn't Return

to Business as Usual.” Accessed November 23, 2021.
<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2021/06/report-ithaca-economy-shouldnt-return-business-usual>.
[8] Tankersley, Jim, Alan Rappoport, and Jeanna Smialek. “Biden and Republicans Spar Over Unemployment as Job Gains Disappoint.” *The New York Times*, May 7, 2021, sec. Business.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/07/business/biden-republicans-jobs.html>.
[9] “Tompkins County Economic Recovery Strategy.” May 2021.
<https://ithacaareaed.org/content/upl>

[oads/2021/06/TC-Recovery-Strategy_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cornell.edu/press-communications/2021/06/TC-Recovery-Strategy_FINAL.pdf).
[10] “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Tompkins County, New York.” Accessed November 23, 2021.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/tompkinscountyny>.
[11] Weaver, Russel, Greer Ian , Belot Michele , Lewis Eric, Jautz Alec , Kalmyka Yana , Rosin Mitch , Wang Linda, and Branosky Natalie. “THE NEW POSSIBLE Innovative Workforce Development and Skills Maps for Tompkins County.” Cornell University , February 2021.

<https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files-d8/2021-06/wd%20report%20may%202021.pdf>.
[12] Yeh, Shih-Shuo. “Tourism Recovery Strategy against COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Tourism Recreation Research* 46, no. 2 (April 3, 2021): 188–94.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2020.1805933>.

Removing the Five Percent Sales Tax on Menstrual Products in Wisconsin

Clare Della Valle, ccd74@cornell.edu

To address the economic hardship created by taxing medically necessary products, the state of Wisconsin should eliminate the five percent sales tax on menstrual products.

Background

Period poverty is defined as the lack of access to menstrual products, which leads to multiple economic and sociopolitical issues. [7] A study conducted in St. Louis found that 46% of low-income women could not afford both food and period products in the past year. [6] Due to this lack of access, menstruators were found to use dangerous alternatives such as “toilet paper, tissue, or paper towels but also [...] kids’ diapers, old socks, ripped T-shirts or rags.” [6] The use of make-shift products may lead to serious health complications, including dangerous infections and mental health issues. [6]

Currently, 11.6% of women in Wisconsin live in poverty, meaning that approximately 339,880 women make less than \$12,880 a year. [8] Women experiencing financial distress are further burdened by a luxury tax placed on medical necessities and find difficulty in buying menstrual products. [14] Furthermore,

since menstrual products are needed on a monthly basis, menstruators are feeling the economic burden of this tax very frequently. [14]

In Wisconsin, there is a 5% sales tax on “the purchase price of tangible personal property...or taxable services that are used, stored, or consumed within Wisconsin.” [10] In Milwaukee County, for example, it costs the average menstruator between \$3.92 and \$6.72 in taxes for period products. [14] However, there are exemptions for other medically necessary products, such as bandages and gauze, which perform the same function as menstrual products. [11]

States politically similar to Wisconsin, such as Pennsylvania and Michigan, have removed the tampon tax. [15,16,17] Although there has been a movement to remove the tax in Wisconsin in recent years, no bill has been introduced. [3]

Policy Idea

To increase accessibility to menstrual

products and to alleviate associated monetary stress, the state of Wisconsin should eradicate the five percent sales tax on all menstrual products, including pads, tampons, liners, and period cups.

Policy Analysis

Although current research describes how period poverty affects women, not only is it false that all women menstruate, but it is also true that not all menstruators are women. [18] Therefore, as there is limited research available regarding all menstruators, this policy analysis utilizes research that pertains primarily to women.

Currently, Wisconsin collects about \$19.6 billion in tax revenue and has a budget of approximately \$87.5 billion. [12,13] Menstruators contribute an estimated \$3.6 million in sales tax from the purchase of menstrual products each year. [5] Their contribution accounts for less than 0.02% of annual tax revenue and less than 0.004% of Wisconsin’s budget. [12] Eliminating the tax on

products would be extremely small on the state budget and could be offset by increases in taxes elsewhere.

Research has also shown that two-thirds of low-income women in St. Louis could not afford period products in the past year, and twenty-one percent could not afford products on a monthly basis. [6] While there is no specific research investigating how menstruators in Wisconsin are affected by period poverty, it is likely that menstruators experiencing poverty or who are low-income have similar difficulties purchasing products. Although this amount appears insignificant, it accounts for a significant part of a low-income or impoverished menstruator's budget and accumulates over the years.

Talking Points

- A sales tax on period products places an unfair economic burden on menstruators that non-menstruators currently do not face.
- Two-thirds of low-income women in St. Louis could not afford period products in the past year. [6]
- Removing the sales tax would improve accessibility of medically necessary

products for low-income and impoverished menstruators.

- Abolishing the sales tax on menstrual products would have very little effect on the Wisconsin state budget. [12,13]

Key Facts

- 11.6% of women in Wisconsin live in poverty, and 46% of low-income women could not afford both food and period products in the past year. [6,8]
- In Milwaukee County, it costs the average menstruator between \$3.92 and \$6.72 in taxes for period products per year. [14]
- Utilizing make-shift products may lead to serious health complications, including dangerous infections and mental health issues. [6]

Next Steps

Any representative in the Wisconsin General Assembly or senator in the Wisconsin State Senate should introduce a bill amending the Wisconsin state tax code for menstrual hygiene products. The amendment should be moved through the Wisconsin

legislature and signed into law as quickly as possible. The amount that menstruators spend on this tax, however little, accumulates and could be allocated instead for other necessary goods. Representative Melissa Sargent previously pushed for the removal of the sales tax on menstrual products but was unsuccessful getting the legislation pushed through. [14] However, she tried to pass this legislation in 2017, when there were far fewer states that had removed the tax. [14]

Action Plan Snapshot

Wisconsin is a swing state with a currently split state government. Its State Assembly and Senate is Republican controlled, while its governor (Tony Evers) is a Democrat. However, many swing states have eliminated the tampon tax, such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and most recently Michigan. [5] Therefore, because removing the tampon tax is not a bipartisan issue, this type of legislation should not receive significant opposition. Such a sales tax has been removed in both Democrat- and Republican-controlled legislatures.

Furthermore, in order for the tax to be removed in Wisconsin, there would need to be some grassroots organizing, so that the bill would be introduced and then

passed. Multiple menstrual equity and women’s organizations—such as Period: The Menstrual Movement and Period Equity—and activists should work together to set up meetings with legislators to have the bill be introduced. As Representative Melissa Sargent has previously supported removing the tampon tax, organizers should contact her first to begin organizing. After the introduction of the bill, the organizations and activists would need to use grassroots campaign strategies such as phonebanks, rallies, and petitions to put pressure on the Wisconsin legislature to pass this legislation.

Works Cited

[1] “2021 Poverty Guidelines.” ASPE. Accessed November 6, 2021.
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines/prior-hhs-poverty-guidelines-federal-register-references/2021-poverty-guidelines>.

[2] Cardoso, Lauren F., Anna M. Scolese, Alzahra Hamidaddin, and Jhumka Gupta. “Period Poverty and Mental Health Implications among College-Aged Women in the United States.” *BMC Women's Health*. BioMed Central, January 6, 2021.
<https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5>.

[3] Gass-Poore, Jordan. “Citing Gender Bias, State Lawmakers Move to Eliminate 'Tampon Tax'.” *NPR*. NPR, March 6, 2016.
[\[lawmakers-move-to-eliminate-tampon-tax\]\(https://www.npr.org/2016/03/06/467377295/citing-gender-bias-state-lawmakers-move-to-eliminate-tampon-tax\).

\[4\] Kilpatrick, Ashley Rapp and Sidonie. “Changing the Cycle: Period Poverty as a Public Health Crisis.” *U. University of Michigan School of Public Health*, February 4, 2020.
<https://sph.umich.edu/pursuit/2020-posts/period-poverty.html>.

\[5\] “Period Equity.” *Period Equity*. Accessed November 6, 2021.
<https://www.periodequity.org/>.

\[6\] “SLU Study Spotlights Low-Income Women's Menstrual Product Access Issues.” *SLU*, January 10, 2019.
<https://www.slu.edu/news/2019/january/menstrual-products-access-research.php>.

\[7\] “State of the Period The Widespread Impact of Period Poverty on US Students.” *Thinx & PERIOD*, 2019.
\[https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788\]\(https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf?455788\).

\[8\] “Women's Issues in Wisconsin.” *NWLC*. Accessed November 6, 2021.
<https://nwlc.org/state/wisconsin/>.

\[9\] Initiative, T. B. \(2021, November 24\). *Period poverty - alliance for period supplies*. Alliance for Period Supplies - It's that time. *. Retrieved November 30, 2021, from <https://allianceforperiodsupplies.org/period-poverty/>.

\[10\] *Tax rates*. DOR Tax Rates. \(n.d.\). Retrieved November 30, 2021, from <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/FAQS/pcs-taxrates.aspx#txrate2>.

\[11\] State of Wisconsin . \(2020\). *Hospital and Medical Clinics* . Department of Revenue . Retrieved from <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb248.pdf>.

\[12\] Wojcik, Marisa. “Evers Signs Wisconsin's 2021-23 Budget with 50 Partial Vetoes.” *PBS Wisconsin*. Accessed December 1, 2021.](https://www.npr.org/2016/03/06/467377295/citing-gender-bias-state-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

<https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/evers-signs-wisconsins-2021-23-budget-with-50-partial-vetoes/>.

[13] White, Laurel. “‘Unprecedented’ Wisconsin Tax Revenues Continue to Exceed Expectations.” *Wisconsin Public Radio*, September 4, 2021.
<https://www.wpr.org/unprecedented-wisconsin-tax-revenues-continue-exceed-expectations>.

[14] Jones, Meg. “Wisconsin Legislator Aims to Get Rid of State's 'Tampon Tax'.” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, March 26, 2017.
<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2017/03/25/wisconsin-legislator-aims-get-rid-states-tampon-tax/99222076/>.

[15] “Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics.” *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, September 9, 2020.
<https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/pennsylvania/party-affiliation/>.

[16] “Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics.” *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, September 9, 2020.
<https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/wisconsin/party-affiliation/>.

[17] “Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics.” *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*, September 9, 2020.
<https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/michigan/party-affiliation/>.

[18] Bell, Jen. “Talking about Periods beyond Gender.” *Clue Period & Ovulation Tracker with Ovulation Calendar for iOS, Android, and watchOS*. Clue, August 10, 2021.
<https://helloclue.com/articles/cycle-a-z/talking-about-periods-beyond-gender>.

Creating Worker Cooperative Growth in New York Through a State-Backed Loan Program

Ari Dev Rangarajan, adr72@cornell.edu

The unique structure of worker cooperatives facilitates a great number of positive economic and social benefits. However, difficulties accessing capital prevent significant growth. Through a state-backed lending scheme, worker cooperatives could grow and greatly benefit the State of New York.

Background

Worker cooperatives are organizational structures in which a firm is wholly owned and governed by its workers. In practice, this type of cooperative can take numerous forms, whether it be through full employee stock ownership or through full distribution of firm income. [10] Another key component, worker governance, can be practically executed through democratic election of board members, greater worker input in strategic decisions, or numerous other methods. [10]

This organizational structure comes with benefits related to productivity and worker well-being. In a Brookings case study of lumber mills in the Pacific Northwest, researchers found worker cooperatives to be 7-14% more efficient than traditional firms. [3] Moreover, the researchers found that, when economic conditions turned sour, worker cooperatives were able to reduce wages without

significant difficulty. [3] However, traditional firms were forced to lay off workers, which allowed the worker cooperatives to maintain peak production, while the traditional firms were forced to make production cuts. [3]

Furthermore, the worker cooperative model encourages a maximization of worker well-being through enhancements in quality wages, employment security, and working conditions. [6] At the current moment, only 77 registered worker cooperatives exist in New York State. [8] The combination of the aforementioned advantages, both in terms of economic productivity and worker well-being, create a strong case for growing this sector.

Policy Idea

New York State should operate a system of guaranteed capital loans to finance specific growth objectives for worker cooperatives. The cooperative would undergo a

detailed analysis and meet specific risk requirements to participate. The State would also collaborate with private lenders to ensure low interest rates and equity in lending.

Policy Analysis

The main barrier to worker cooperative growth is difficulty accessing capital. [1] The cooperative model prevents share liquidation in the open market, and traditional lenders are unused and often unwilling to deal with the mass of workers—instead of a single owner or board of directors—as financial agents. [1] This lack of access to capital prevents worker cooperatives from taking advantage of their comparative advantages in production. [1]

There is much historical precedent for state loan markets to address these capital funding shortfalls. The California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank, for example, operates a “loan guarantee program designed to assist small businesses that experience

capital access barriers.” [2] Critically, the State of California includes worker cooperatives in this program. [2] The relatively similar political landscapes of California and New York make such a policy politically feasible in New York State. [7]

The New York State government stands to greatly benefit from such a proposal. The typical U.S. worker co-op maintains a 3.7% profit margin, meaning it is in a position to repay the loans. [8] The Spanish government, for example, has reaped great benefits from the Mondragon Corporation, a worker cooperative that generates 12 billion euros annually and provides 70,000 jobs. [5] Such an addition to the New York economy would bring tremendous benefits to living standards and taxation revenues for the state. Furthermore, once the production advantages of the worker cooperative model are demonstrated, banks would be more willing to provide private financing, and the government program could be phased out.

Talking Points

- Since worker cooperatives are more productive and resilient than traditional firms, beneficial for worker well-being, have

strong profit margins, and provide large benefits to other regions, New York State should increase its role in the economy. [3,5,6]

- The difficulties accessing capital that currently hinder worker cooperative growth could be overcome by a state-backed, low interest loan program.
- The typical United States worker cooperative has a 3.6% profit margin, meaning that it has the capability to pay back the state-backed loans. [8]
- Success of this policy would make traditional lenders more comfortable dealing with worker cooperatives, which would eventually lead to state backing being unnecessary, and the program would be phased out.

Key Facts

- Worker Cooperatives are an organizational structure of a firm, in which workers hold both ownership and power over strategic decisions. [10]
- Worker cooperatives are 7-14% percent more effective than

traditional companies in terms of production, and they are more resilient (both in terms of maintaining output and unemployment levels) in the face of economic headwinds. [3]

- There are currently only 67 registered worker cooperatives operating in New York State, and government support could increase this quantity significantly. [8]

Next Steps

Taking into account fiscal benefits and political feasibility, this policy should be implemented. First, the details of the financial infrastructure underpinning the policy (risk requirements, interest rates, state guarantee) would need to be agreed upon with major private lenders and political leaders. After these groups come to agreement, the legislation would have to be drafted and undergo the legislative process. Under the New York system, a fiscal policy proposal would need to be first proposed by the Governor before being enacted by the state legislature. [9] Every 10 years, the Governor's office should review economic data concerning the policy and

recommend whether it should be continued or discontinued.

Action Plan Snapshot

The first step towards implementing this proposal would be to form a lobbying organization to coordinate overall efforts, as well as find a suitable source of funding for the organization. The United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives should be approached, as it might be in a position to provide funding and would certainly assist in connecting the lobbying organization with numerous worker cooperatives in the state. A few of the numerous New York State left-wing political action committees could also be in a position to provide funding.

After the funding phase, the organization should approach the Governor's office and present the proposal. The left-wing nature of the proposal means it would be much more likely to find success in a democratic political context. Luckily, the current governor, Kathy Hochul, is a Democrat, and Democrats hold supermajorities in both houses of the legislature. However, Hochul is a more

centrist Democrat, which could present issues. [4] If the Governor were interested, the major commercial banks would be approached, and agreeable terms for all parties involved would be negotiated. If resistance were encountered, a lobbying campaign would need to take place, or the policy would have to be abandoned until political conditions change. Should all parties prove amicable to the proposal, continuous monitoring and lobbying would need to take place to ensure that the proposal makes its way through the Governor's office, the state House, and the state Senate, before being enacted into law.

Works Cited

- [1] Bowles, Samuel, and Herbert Gintis. 1993. "The Revenge of Homo Economicus: Contested Exchange and the Revival of Political Economy." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*.
- [2] California, State of. n.d. "Loan Guarantees." *California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank)*. Accessed November 7, 2021. <https://ibank.ca.gov/small-business/loan-guarantees/>.
- [3] Craig, Ben, John Pencavel, Henry Farber, and Alan Krueger. 1995. "Participation and Productivity: A Comparison of Worker Cooperatives and Conventional Firms in the Plywood Industry." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*. *Microeconomics* 1995: 121. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2534773>.
- [4] Cussac-Smith, Tiffany. 2021. "Kathy Hochul's political views: How New York's next governor rose to power." USA Today. "https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.usatoday.com/amp/5555352001"
- [5] Goodman, Peter. 2020. "Co-Ops in Spain's Basque Region Soften Capitalism's Rough Edges." *The New York Times*, December 29, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/29/business/cooperatives-basque-spain-economy.html>.
- [6] Jossa, Bruno. 2020. *Managing the Cooperative Enterprise*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- [7] "Political Ideology by State." 2020. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/compare/political-ideology/by/state/>.
- [8] "State of Worker Cooperatives in the US." 2018. US Federation of Worker Cooperatives.
- [9] "The Budget Process | Citizen's Guide." n.d. New York State Department of Budget. Accessed November 7, 2021. <https://www.budget.ny.gov/citizen/process/process.html>.
- [10] "What Is a Worker Cooperative? | Democracy at Work Institute." n.d. US Federation of Worker Cooperatives. Accessed November 7, 2021. <https://institute.coop/what-worker-cooperative>.

A New Age of Finance: Revolutionizing the NYC Economy through a Central Bank Digital Currency

Luke Hartigan, lsh78@cornell.edu

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York should issue a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) to streamline the efficiency of retail and wholesale payments, to expand access to financial institutions for previously unbanked individuals, and to modernize monetary policy and maintain the relevance of the central bank.

Background

New York City's economy was hit especially hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, as thousands fled the city, transit revenues plummeted, and thousands of people lost their jobs. [1] Prior to the pandemic, more than half of New York City residents had inadequate emergency savings, and nearly a third felt that they had too much debt and were financially unstable. [2] These figures were double in the Bronx, and the pandemic only deepened them. [2]

In addition to the financial instability experienced before the pandemic, the fiscal response from the central government has been flawed. Several rounds of stimulus payments failed to reach the intended recipients, as people waited for months for payments to be distributed. [3] This period highlighted the glaring weaknesses of the United States' financial system, as

well as the particularly weak digital infrastructure. Additionally, as nationwide demand has become higher compared to before the pandemic, fiscal stimuli are no longer needed to strengthen the economy. [4] Policies should not be aimed at spurring demand but should instead target the groups in dire need of help before, during, and after the pandemic.

Private sector digital currencies have also arisen during the pandemic. [5] Underwritten by volatile assets or public sentiment, these digital currencies are not especially safe assets and may provide more risks than benefits to consumers. [3]

Policy Idea

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York should issue a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), which would provide a safe and secure alternative to existing retail digital currencies—

such as from Amazon or Facebook—and would provide the same ease of transfer as Bitcoin without any volatility risks. A CBDC would provide unbanked individuals access to digital payment platforms and loans that may have been previously out of reach. Private vendors would also benefit from the ease of transaction and, perhaps most importantly, the Federal Reserve would have a new outlet through which it could control monetary policy.

Policy Analysis

In 2019, New York City's retail sector accounted for 344,600 jobs and approximately one third of all sales within the city. [6] Establishing a CBDC would revolutionize retail payments by expanding financial inclusion, ease and security of payments, and the ability for retailers to greatly expand their consumer bases.

Additionally, previously unbanked and underbanked individuals in New York City are perhaps the largest beneficiaries of the CBDC. Fiscal stimuli, such as expanded unemployment insurance and direct payments, have provided immediate short-term relief, and consumer demand has now returned to pre-pandemic levels. [4] As a result, policies must now seek to benefit the unemployed and those without access to financial services. Stimulus payments, delayed by weeks during the pandemic, could be transferred instantaneously with a CBDC, and workers paid in cash would be better able to safely store their money. [3]

Finally, issuing a CBDC would allow the Federal Reserve to modernize monetary policy and maintain the relevance of central bank currency. It is increasingly difficult to predict the effects of monetary policy decisions, especially as the private sector begins to develop its own digital currencies. When the underlying asset for these currencies fails, the Federal Reserve would not have the necessary tools to stabilize the economy. With a CBDC, however, the benefits from innovation are still recognized, and monetary policy would still have a predictable effect on loans,

interest rates, and commercial bank activity. [3]

Talking Points

- The retail sector in New York City accounted for 344,600 jobs and contributed \$55 billion in taxable sales in 2019. [6]
- Although the private sector has already developed a number of digital currencies, a CBDC is safer and more reliable, just as the USD is safer and more reliable than other alternatives. [3]
- In a world without digital currencies, monetary policy is extremely influential in directing the economy. However, central banks are limited when volatile private sector currencies become mainstream. [5] A CBDC would ensure the benefits of digital currencies with the stability provided by influential monetary policy.

Key Facts

- More than one third of New York City residents felt financially unstable prior to the pandemic, and more than a half claimed to have

inadequate emergency savings. [2]

- The United States' economic response to the pandemic has been flawed—inadequate stimulus payments highlighted both the fiscal inefficiencies and the lack of digital infrastructure necessary to effectively distribute them. [3]
- A number of digital currencies have been developed by the private sector, though they are often underwritten by unsafe and risky assets. [3]

Next Steps

Given the seismic changes that a CBDC would usher in, its implementation requires an extended timeline. The Federal Reserve would need significant coordination with the federal government to adjust monetary and fiscal policy and to ensure a smooth introduction of the digital currency. With the current inflationary concerns, a CBDC should not seek to increase the money supply. Rather, the digital currency would provide the opportunity to transfer cash into a digital wallet and would serve as a means of retail payments. In countries

that have issued digital currencies, weak digital infrastructure has led to immediate failures, as millions of people have lost access to their money and have had their apps collapse. [3]

Action Plan Snapshot

Unlike some economic movements, issuing a CBDC would likely not arise from a grassroots movement. Instead, economists, central bankers, and academics would be the driving force behind any movement for its adoption. Academic publications and books detailing the potential benefits of a CBDC are a primary method of swaying public opinion on a matter about which few people have prior knowledge. As a result, the fate of a CBDC would lie in the hands of the bureaucrats and technocrats in New York and Washington DC with the power to implement it. If the U.S. economy were to continue recovering slowly, with high levels of inflation and a tight job market, a CBDC would continue to look like an effective alternative in the short-term.

If the Federal Reserve were to introduce a digital

currency, it must focus on a slow, controlled rollout. Instead of introducing this currency to the nation in its entirety, it should be introduced to New York City first. After a given test period—whereby the perceived benefits for retailers, consumers, and the central bank are all recognized—the Federal Reserve could shift focus to the rest of the country. With a detailed, long-term plan, the central bank could start rolling out the currency into different states over the span of several days. This plan would allow for any technical and infrastructure issues to be remedied before the CBDC is accessible to 330 million people.

Although this rollout may seem to be a drastic change in a short window of time, drastic change is needed. High inflation and stagnant wage growth have threatened the economic security of millions, and the potential benefits of a CBDC would be recognized nationwide. Before private companies' digital currencies become too popular and the effects of monetary policy are dampened, the Federal Reserve must act to implement a CBDC.

Works Cited

- [1] Nelson. "New York Faces Lasting Economic Toll Even as Pandemic Passes." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, June 20, 2021.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/20/business/economy/new-york-city-economy-coronavirus.html>.
- [2] Ratchliffe, Caroline. "How Do New Yorkers Perceive Their Financial Security?" Urban Institute. Accessed December 2, 2021.
<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/71506/2000429-How-Do-New-Yorkers-Perceive-Their-Financial-Security.pdf>.
- [3] Prasad, Eswar. *The Future of Money: How the Digital Revolution Is Transforming Currencies and Finance*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2021.
- [4] Barua, Akur. "A Spring in Consumers' Steps: Americans Prepare to Get Back to Their Spending Ways." Deloitte Insights. Deloitte, October 22, 2021.
<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/economy/us-consumer-spending-after-covid.html>.
- [5] Carstens, Agustin. *Digital currencies and the future of the monetary system*. Bank for International Settlements, 2021.
- [6] "The Retail Sector in New York City: Recent Trends and the Impact of Covid-19." Office of the New York State Comptroller, December 2020.
<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/osdc/retail-sector-new-york-city-recent-trends-and-impact-covid-19>.

Utilizing Local Urban Planning and Economic Innovation to Solve Westchester’s Affordable Housing Issue

Nathan Lesser, nbl28@cornell.edu

Westchester County’s affordable housing market has nearly evaporated under the prioritization of luxury developments. Innovative city-led initiatives, including affordable housing funds and tax breaks for energy-efficient urban housing projects, would induce long-term investments in equitable public housing.

Background

Over the last decade, housing costs have skyrocketed in the dense suburban Westchester County. In 2021, single-family housing prices rose 17.7% while housing sales increased by over 50%. [1] Rent is also rapidly rising beyond affordability for low-to-moderate wage workers, about half of whom are “housing cost burdened.” [2] Westchester has expanded luxury housing while exhausting its affordable housing stock, evident through low vacancy rates. Currently, the county needs over 82,451 low-cost units to replace its unsafe units and satisfy market demand. [2] Westchester’s affordable housing issue was first addressed by its 1974 Emergency Tenant Protection Act (EPTA), which allowed localities to adopt rent stabilization for privately owned buildings of 6 or more units. [3] However, because of the EPTA’s narrow scope,

landlord loopholes, and non-universal adoption, these rent reform policies have failed to maintain affordability. [2] Consequently, prohibitively high rents have priced immigrants, minority groups, and average wage-earners out of these urbanized areas. [2] In fact, housing segregation was the subject of a 2008 anti-discrimination lawsuit, which forced the county to build 750 affordable units in its most white areas. [4] Though Westchester has attempted policies centered around rent control, property taxes, and the retrofitting of existing buildings as property, it has not invested in the requisite research and development or long-term urban planning to appropriately address its affordable housing shortage. [2]

Policy Idea

For Westchester to best expand its housing stock, it must subsidize developers for renovating and

maintaining new properties. The county should relax structural housing constraints, fast track housing approval applications, offer refunds for administrative fees incurred by developers, and remove exclusionary zoning laws that prohibit dense buildings. The county should then institute a sustainable development fund—such as a pooled community housing fund via local bond sales or a county-owned urban wealth investment fund—that would incentivize other counties to continuously create long-term housing infrastructure.

Policy Analysis

Housing developments can potentially increase the standard of living for neighborhoods, including by reducing crime rates and diversifying surrounding towns. [5] Westchester could tailor this revitalization effect for its lower-income minority neighborhoods, notably

Mount Vernon, Yonkers, and Port Chester, where affordable developments are in highest demand. A Harvard University study—aptly titled “The Rent Eats First” —argues that housing interventions may also compensate for low wages. [6] Essentially, converting housing choice vouchers and project-based subsidies into entitlements for residents below a certain income threshold may greatly reduce income inequality. [6] Likewise, Westchester could strategically expand its Emergency Rental Assistance Program and Housing Settlement Program to job networks and public transportation, which would also solve the issue of transit being inaccessible to impoverished workers. Additionally, a plethora of studies indicate many residual benefits of increasing and improving affordable housing supply. For instance, adults worrying about paying rent have reported triple the mental stress and 50% more sleeping issues than adults unconcerned about their rent. [7] Furthermore, children living in subsidized housing have reported lower rates of food insecurity and overall better health compared to children in families that are wait-listed for housing. [7] Newer housing has greatly reduced asthma among

children, thereby improving their educational outcomes and lowering their families’ healthcare burdens. [7] Moreover, energy efficiency retrofits have been found to save tenants \$300 in annual utilities, while Low Income Housing Tax Credit apartment residents have generated millions in retail income and thousands of jobs. [7] Overall, Westchester should focus on lower-income neighborhood development, where new housing projects would best reduce income inequality, improve public health, and invigorate the job market.

Talking Points

- Low-income residents are most greatly harmed by current restrictive housing and zoning regulations because their occupational opportunities depend on access to local affordable housing. [7]
- While welfare programs improve quality of life for certain residents, appropriate urban housing developments would benefit surrounding areas as well, particularly through reduced housing inequality and crime. [5,6]

- Maintaining an adequate supply of rental units presents numerous residual advantages to the mental and physical health of renters. [7]
- Tax credits, housing entitlements, and environmental energy improvements are viable policy solutions to stimulate job creation and improve economic efficiency. [7]

Key Facts

- In no municipality can the \$14 minimum wage afford 2-bedroom rent. The affordability gap between market rent and renter wage rate is \$1,578 a month. [2]
- Half of owner households earning 30-50% of the high Area Median Income (AMI) are “housing cost burdened”, plus a quarter of those earning 80-100% of the AMI. [2]
- From 2019-20, average rent increased an astounding 6.23%, while the housing vacancy rate declined to 2.77%, less than half the national average. [8,9]
- With 22% of the existing housing stock

being overcrowded or unsafe, Westchester needs 82,451 affordable units, including 11,703 new ones. [2]

Next Steps

To implement sustainable housing policies, policy analysts must first quantitatively analyze its zoning and building restrictions to determine if feasible changes to the county's developmental laws would incentivize construction of affordable housing complexes. Next, through the state budget process, county legislators should introduce tax breaks for economically and environmentally efficient housing, which would encourage dense urban developments with renewable energy sources. Lastly, over five to ten years, Westchester Council committees should research the feasibility of establishing sustainable housing funds by gathering data from county house-seekers and U.S. cities. Solutions could range from a housing trust fund—which is instituted in Nashville, Charlotte, and other major cities—to an ambitious redistributive wealth fund, to a practical partnership fund with real estate developers, in order to collaboratively plan large-scale housing projects

and revitalize the construction job market. [10]

Action Plan Snapshot

The most challenging yet potentially rewarding solution is the creation of a permanent community housing funding model. Since dozens of cities and several states have established an Affordable Housing Trust Fund or real estate housing tax via legislation or ballot initiative, it is certainly feasible for Westchester to do the same. To initiate a long-term community funding project, county legislators must speak with its various stakeholders, including current tenants, prospective tenants, real estate developers, landowners, and local businesses. Westchester should deliberate using economic modeling, election referenda, and communication with domestic and international cities that have instituted sustainable housing funds. If attainable, the county can establish an urban wealth fund, inspired by Hamburg's successful model, in which local governments transfer their publicly owned assets into a county-owned but independently managed investment fund. Once these assets generate cash flow, their dividends would be proportionally paid to localities, who in turn reinvest their earnings into

community developments and housing projects. In contrast to the current private management of public housing, a property wealth fund would incentivize local construction of dense public housing, since cities would no longer bear the property tax burden of their developments. Alternatively, Westchester could establish a smaller-scale yet more practical community housing fund to support housing investments by pooling residents' funds received from locally sold bonds. In return, local cities selling the bonds would receive state or federal government contributions for developing new housing infrastructure. Alternatively, Westchester may take a safer and more private approach of teaming with mid-sized developers and corporate employers to create jobs and finance new projects in return for using new land for construction.

Works Cited

- [1] "Quarterly Indicators-Westchester County." One Key MLS. ShowingTime. Accessed November 29, 2021. <https://www.hgar.com/content/uploads/2021/07/2021-Q2-Westchester-County.pdf>.
- [2] "Westchester County Housing Needs Assessment." Westchestergov. Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress. November, 2019. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>.

[3] “Rent Stabilization and Emergency Tenant Protection Act.” Homes and Community Renewal. New York State. Accessed November 29, 2021. <https://hcr.ny.gov/rent-stabilization-and-emergency-tenant-protection-act>.

[4] Roberts, Sam. “Westchester Adds Housing to Desegregation Pact.” *The New York Times*. August 10, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/11/nyregion/11settle.html>.

[5] Lynch, Shana. “Is Affordable Housing Good for the Neighborhood?” Stanford Graduate School of Business, September 15, 2015. <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/affordable-housing-good-neighborhood>.

[6] Airgood-Obrycki, Whitney, Hermann, Alexander, and Weeden, Sophia. “The Rent Eats First: Rental Housing Unaffordability in the US.” Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. January 13, 2021. <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/research-areas/working-papers/rent-eats-first-rental-housing-unaffordability-us>.

[7] “Impact of Affordable Housing on Families and Communities.” Enterprise Community Partners. Home for All. 2014. <https://homeforallsmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Impact-of-Affordable-Housing-on-Families-and-Communities.pdf>.

[8] “Westchester County Rental Housing Statistics.” Census American Community Survey. LiveStories. 2019.

<https://www.livestories.com/statistics/new-york/westchester-county-rental-housing>.

[9] “Westchester County New York Residential Rent and Rental Statistics.” Census American Community Survey. Department of Numbers. 2019. <https://www.deptofnumbers.com/rent/new-york/westchester-county/>.

[10] Anderson, Michael. “State and Local Housing Trust Funds.” Housing Trust Fund Project of Community Change. National Low Income Housing Coalition. 2019. https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/AG-2019/05-09_State-Local-Housing-Trust-Funds.pdf.

Empowering the U.S. Labor Inspectorate by Increasing the Number of Inspectors

Scott Siegel, sws226@cornell.edu

The growing United States workforce and new complexities in employment have made wage theft the largest form of theft in the country. The Federal Government should respond by hiring more inspectors in the Department of Labor's Wages & Hours Division (DOL WHD).

Background

Wage theft is the largest form of theft in the United States, with potentially over \$15 billion in minimum wage violations, as well as additional billions of dollars lost from overtime violations, rest break violations, and off-the-clock violations. [1,2] This issue is centered around “low-wage workers, especially women, minorities, non-U.S. citizens, and nonunion workers,” exacerbating inequality in the workplace. [3]

Approximately 16.9% of low-wage workers experience a minimum wage violation, with an average underpayment of approximately \$3,300. [1,3] For full-time workers making the federal minimum wage (\$7.25), this underpayment represents 22% of their yearly income (\$15,080). [4] With further discussion of federal policy and a recent surge of state legislation to increase minimum wages across the nation, the incentive for employers to

commit minimum wage theft increases as well. [5]

While each state has its own department to investigate wage theft, the Federal government's Department of Labor's Wages and Hours Division (DOL WHD) is tasked with enforcement of the federal minimum wage. [6] While the number of workplaces has more than doubled in the past three decades, the number of DOL WHD inspectors has stagnated (1,700 staff members and 1,340 inspectors), spreading inspector resources extremely thin. [7,8,9] As a result, even as workers complain about wages being stolen, the government has not been able to remedy this issue.

Policy Idea

Before attention is paid to raising the minimum wage, the U.S. Federal Government must first prioritize enforcement of its existing wage laws. The DOL WHD must significantly expand its inspectorate to account for the larger and

more complex workforce. This expansion must be proportional to future increases in the workforce, with its growth paid for by an increase in the payroll tax. Doing so would give the DOL WHD the personnel to properly enforce federal employment law.

Policy Analysis

Since the Carter Administration, enforcement in the DOL has taken a backseat to other federal labor policy priorities. [10] As a result, the WHD has seen a decrease in the number of cases pursued, even though its efficiency in examining such cases has increased. [10] The understaffing of inspectors would continue the multi-billion-dollar wage theft issue.

Historically, the WHD has had significantly more inspectors, and the department should return to this policy. In 1948, the WHD employed 1,000 investigators for 22.6 million workers, spread across nine

regional offices and 39 area offices; today, there are 1,340 investigators for over-153 million employed Americans, spread across 95 area and district offices. [11,12,13] Thus, the ratio of workers per inspector has increased six-fold, from 22,600 workers per inspector in 1948 to 114,180 workers per inspector in 2021. [11,12,13] Additionally, part-time, contingent, and seasonal employees, as well as independent contractors, make enforcement and investigations exponentially more difficult. [10] Adjusting the number of inspectors to the size of the workforce would ensure that a booming economy does not come at the expense of the working class. With a fixed ratio of 30,000 workers per inspector, the DOL WHD would employ over 5,100 inspectors (as of September 2021). [14]

An expansion of the DOL WHD would dramatically expand the agency's payroll, from \$242 million in inspector payroll (FY 2020) to over \$920 million. [8] With the U.S. Payroll growing to \$8.905 trillion in 2020, this \$920 million policy would constitute 0.01% of national wages, making an equivalent increase in the payroll tax necessary. While this would cost the average American around \$4.15 per year, the possibility of recovering

north of \$15 billion in stolen wages per year is well worth this distributed cost. [2,15,16]

Talking Points

- Establishing a ratio of 30,000 employees for each inspector would grow the Wages and Hours Division to over 5,100 inspectors, vastly increasing their enforcement capabilities. [14]
- Increasing the number of inspectors would allow greater enforcement for part-time, contingent, and seasonal employees, as well as independent contractors.
- The cost for an expanded DOL would amount to \$4.15 for the average American, while the amount recovered would greatly outweigh the costs. [15,16]
- Increased enforcement could help recover up to \$15 billion in stolen wages, mostly on behalf of underrepresented minorities and low-wage workers. [2,3]

Key Facts

- Wage theft is the largest form of theft in the United States,

with minimum wage, overtime, rest break, and off-the-clock violations all accounting for well over \$15 billion in stolen wages, and upwards of \$35 billion. [1,2]

- One in six low-wage workers experience minimum wage violations, with the average violation totaling \$3,300 over a year—22% of yearly income. [1,3,4]
- The U.S. Department of Labor Wages and Hours Division, which enforces wage theft laws, has not grown significantly over the past 80 years, and there remains around 1,340 inspectors for the 153-million-person workforce. [8,11,12]

Next Steps

The Federal Government should expand the size of the DOL WHD—ensuring at least one inspector per 30,000 workers—as well as fund this policy through a 0.01% payroll tax. While the Biden Administration has taken steps to increase the number of inspectors (proposing 175 new inspectors in the coming year), this number is nowhere close to that needed to match workforce growth. [8]

Therefore, Congress should look to enact this policy as a part of the coming federal budget cycle.

Enactment would fall on the shoulders of the DOL, which would see its largest expansion in modern history. The DOL WHD would shoulder the brunt of this change, with required hiring and training, alongside office space and funds for investigations.

Action Plan Snapshot

Through the Trump Administration, the DOL WHD saw funding slashed as the number of inspectors fell from 1,404 in FY 2017 to 1,340 in FY 2021. [8] The Biden Administration has worked to reverse course, requesting funding for 175 additional inspectors and staff members. [8] While this number is well-below the that presented in this plan, it nonetheless shows that the administration's priorities are aligned with those required to combat wage theft.

The largest hurdle presented is a payroll tax increase of 0.01%, which amounts to \$4.15 for the average American. [16] While miniscule, this increase would likely lose the support of many members of Congress. Passage would require vocal support from the House Committee on Education and Labor and the Senate Committee on Health,

Education, Labor, and Pensions, as well as pro-labor members in both chambers. [17,18] However, with the current partisan breakdown of Congress, there is a slight chance of this proposal's passage. The slim Democratic majority, along with probable Republican opposition to the plan, means that the plan might have to wait for a more worker-friendly Congress.

Following passage, and assuming the support of President Biden, DOL Secretary Marty Walsh, and DOL WHD, Acting Administrator Jessica Looman would be tasked with overseeing this expansion. Both Secretary Walsh and Acting Administrator Looman have advocated for expansion of the WHD inspectorate and would likely be on board with this plan. [19,20]

Works Cited

[1] Cooper, David, and Teresa Kroeger. 2017. "Employers steal billions from workers' paychecks each year." *Economic Policy Institute*. May 10. Accessed November 1, 2021. <https://www.epi.org/publication/employers-steal-billions-from-workers-paychecks-each-year/>.
[2] Tompkins County Workers' Center. 2018. "Wage Theft vs. Other Forms of Theft in the U.S." *Tompkins County Workers' Center*. September 13. Accessed November 1, 2021. <https://www.tcworkerscenter.org/2018/09/wage-theft-vs-other-forms-of-theft-in-the-u-s/>.

[3] Galvin, Daniel. 2017. *Policies to Protect Workers from Wage Theft*. Policy Research Brief, Evanston: Institute for Policy Research.

[4] University of California, Davis. 2018. "What are the annual earnings for a full-time minimum wage worker?" *Center for Poverty and Inequality Research*. January 12. Accessed November 2, 2021. <https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/faq/what-are-annual-earnings-full-time-minimum-wage-worker>.

[5] Soergel, Andrew, and Sara Clarke. 2021. "24 U.S. States Will See a Minimum Wage Increase in 2021." *U.S. News & World Report*. August 2. Accessed November 2, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/best-states/minimum-wage-by-state>.

[6] U.S. Department of Labor. n.d. "Major Laws Administered/Enforced." *Wage and Hour Division*. Accessed November 3, 2021. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/laws-and-regulations/laws>.

[7] Schieder, Jessica. 2015. "To Better Protect Workers, We Need More Wage Inspectors and Stronger Enforcement." *Center for Effective Government*. June 12. Accessed November 1, 2021.

<https://www.foreffectivegov.org/blog/better-protect-workers-we-need-more-wage-inspectors-and-stronger-enforcement>.

[8] U.S. Department of Labor. 2021. *FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification Wage and Hour Division*. Congressional Budget Justification, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

[9] Levine, Marianne. 2018. "Behind the minimum wage fight, a sweeping failure to enforce the law." *Politico*. February 18. Accessed October 31, 2021. <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/18/minimum-wage-not-enforced-investigation-409644>.

[10] Weil, David. 2010. *Improving Workplace Conditions Through*

Strategic Enforcement. Report to the Wage and Hour Division, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

[11] Nordlund, Willis J. 1997. *The Quest for a Living Wage*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

[12] Glavin, Daniel J. 2016. "Deterring Wage Theft: Alt-Labor, State Politics, and the Policy Determinants of Minimum Wage Compliance." *Perspectives on Politics* 324-350.

[13] U.S. Department of Labor. 2021. "Local Offices." *Wage and Hour Division*. September 1. Accessed November 4, 2021. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/contact/local-offices>.

[14] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2021. *Table A-1. Employment stat U.S. of the civilian population by sex and age*. November 5. Accessed November 6, 2021.

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/mpsit.t01.htm>.

[15] U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. 2021. "Total wages and salaries, BLS [BA06RC1A027NBEA]." *FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis*. August 6. Accessed November 6, 2021.

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/BA06RC1A027NBEA>.

[16] Shrider, Emily A., Melissa Kollar, Frances Chen, and Jessica Semega. 2021. "U.S. Census Bureau." *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020*. September 14. Accessed November 4, 2021.

<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2021/demo/p60-273.html>.

[17] House Committee on Education and Labor. n.d. *House Committee on Education and Labor*. Accessed November 6, 2021.

<https://edlabor.house.gov/about/history>.

[18] Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. n.d. *Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions*. Accessed November 6, 2021.

<https://www.help.senate.gov/>.

[19] Penn, Ben. 2021. *Biden Acting Wage Chief Looman Steers Agency to Enforcement Mode*. April 21. Accessed November 7, 2021.

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/biden-acting-wage-chief-looman-steers-agency-to-enforcement-mode>.

[20] Penn, Ben. 2021. *Walsh Pitches Planned Hiring Spree for Wage, Safety Inspectors*. July 14. Accessed November 5, 2021.

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/walsh-pitches-planned-hiring-spree-for-wage-safety-inspectors>.

Reimbursing Low-Income Families in New York State for Sending Their Children to High Quality Pre-K

Sahil Venkatesan, sjv46@cornell.edu

Sub-par education is a key component of the poverty cycle in the U.S. To help families break this cycle, New York State should provide reimbursement checks to all parents below the poverty line who are enrolling their children in Pre-K.

Background

The poverty cycle describes the inability of families, over the course of generations, to rise above the poverty line. A significant factor of the poverty cycle is education: growing up in a low-income family harms a student's likelihood to go to college, ultimately dampening income potential. [1] Furthermore, impoverished children who live in low-income neighborhoods attend underfunded schools and have fewer resources to pay back loans. [1]

Research has shown that education is highly impactful in breaking the poverty cycle. A single year of primary school can increase future wages anywhere from 5%-15% for boys, and the percentage is higher for girls. [2] In addition, the Perry Project of the 1960s randomly selected a group of African American children born into poverty and enrolled them in high-

quality preschool. [3] The project found that these children were more likely to hold a job and break the poverty barrier as adults compared to another group that did not attend preschool. [3] However, many parents' inability to pay for preschool or childcare—as well as systemic factors leading parents to quit their jobs or drop out of school to care for their families—prevents their children from obtaining a primary education. [4] As a result, such parents and their children face difficulty in building wealth and breaking the poverty cycle. [4]

Policy Idea

New York State must start an initiative to reimburse all parents who enroll their children in Pre-K and who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. Each parent enrolling their child in a Pre-K program that costs up to 20% more than the average New York State private preschool should receive a

check that reimburses the total cost of Preschool tuition.

Policy Analysis

Educators typically identify Preschool as starting two years before Kindergarten, beginning at age 4. [5] The average cost of a private Preschool in New York is around \$14,750. [6] Thus, the average total cost for two years would be around \$29,000. [6] Should a parent at or below 200% of the federal poverty line choose to enroll their child in Pre-K, this policy would pay for both years of schooling.

This proposal uses direct deposits and checks as a means of distribution. In contrast to tax credits, which require complex filings, this method makes the program far more accessible to low-income families. Preschools would help the state identify the families enrolled, further easing the burden on families. This proposal also circumvents NYC's universal

Pre-K program's flaws by enabling parents to choose which schools their children attend. This characteristic is key, as demonstrated by the education quality gaps among African American and Latinx children in NYC's universal Pre-K program. [7] Pre-K centers primarily serving minority students suffer from having fewer qualified teachers, crammed classes, and sub-par instruction materials. [8]

Similar proposals to use education to push families out of the poverty line have been levied by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's and Cory Booker's baby bond initiatives. [9,10] However, both of their plans have only focused on higher education, while 21.2% of New York students did not graduate high school in 2020. [11] Such policies would not help students who are unable to graduate high school. Preschool could make inroads in helping students achieve success. An analysis of 22 experimental Preschool studies conducted between 1960 and 2016 concluded that Preschool can decrease a child's chances of being held back in school by 8.3% and can improve their chances of graduating from high school by 11.4%. [12]

Talking Points

- If parents enroll their child in Pre-K, this

proposal would reimburse those parents for both years of Preschool.

- This policy is more accessible for low-income families and less complex than tax credits.
- Pre-K can reduce a student's probability of being held back in school by 8.3% and can improve their high school graduation chances by 11.4%. [12]

Key Facts

- Children living in low-income neighborhoods attend underfunded schools and are less capable of paying back student loans. [1]
- One year of elementary school can increase future wages for boys by 5%-15% and can impact girls to an even greater extent. [2]
- Children who attend preschool are more likely to hold a job and break the poverty line as adults compared to children who do not attend preschool. [3]

Next Steps

New York State should implement this proposal because it would

allow parents to enroll their children in Preschool without impacting their financial status. In order for this proposal to be passed, it must be introduced to the Governor's office to be submitted to the New York State Legislature. Under the New York Constitution, the State Governor Kathy Hochul must submit an Executive Budget to the Legislature by mid-January. [13] In January 2023, the proposal should be included in the Governor's submission. This plan would give parents, private Pre-K proponents, and minority advocacy groups ample time to gather support and to introduce the proposal to the Governor's office. Interest groups must then continue lobbying by contacting representatives in the State legislature in support of the proposal.

Action Plan Snapshot

Currently, the state's program does not reach numerous districts or give parents enough choice when considering where to enroll their children. [14] At the same time, high quality private schools cost more money than many low-income parents can afford. This proposal gives parents the flexibility to enroll their

children in high-quality private preschools that are shown to have smaller classes and increased educational benefits. [15] The proposal must first obtain enough support from interest groups and stakeholders in the state, which can be done through grassroots organizations focused on faults within New York State's universal Pre-K program. For example, The Parents League of New York is a nonprofit company that represents parents in favor of independent and private schools. [16] The Parents League would support this proposal because this policy makes private schools more accessible to all parents.

The New York Constitution requires funding and fiscal proposals to come from the Governor's office. [17] For the Governor's office to include this proposal in its budget review, it must garner significant popularity in New York State. The Parents League of New York would be able to hold public meetings, distribute pamphlets, and raise awareness about the proposal. The League must also create a coalition of low-income parents who advocate for the proposal. Additionally, funding for this policy would be provided by the Build Back Better Act, allowing New York communities to raise more revenue for public services. [18] With The

Parents League creating a coalition and the funding for the proposal being secured if the Build Back Better Act passes, this proposal could receive enough support to pass in order to mitigate education disparities among low-income families in New York State.

Works Cited

- [1] Quillian, Lincoln. 2017. "Neighborhood and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty," 7.
- [2] "Why Education Is The Key To Breaking The Cycle Of Poverty – Lumiere D'Education." n.d. *Lumiere D' Education* (blog). Accessed October 18, 2021. <https://lumierededucation.org/why-education-is-the-key-to-breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty/>.
- [3] Semuels, Alana. 2014. "A Different Approach to Breaking the Cycle of Poverty." *The Atlantic*. December 24, 2014. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/a-different-approach-to-breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty/384029/>.
- [4] "NASFAA | GAO: More Than Half of Student Parents Drop Out, Data Is Lacking on the Program That Helps Them." n.d. Accessed December 21, 2021. https://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/19436/GAO_More_Than_Half_of_Student_Parents_Drop_Out_Data_Is_Lacking_on_the_Program_That_Helps_Them.
- [5] Rock, Amanda. 2021. "How to Know If Your Child Is Ready to Start Preschool." *Verywell Family*. January 13, 2021. <https://www.verywellfamily.com/is-your-child-ready-to-start-preschool-2764924>.
- [6] "New York Private Preschools By Tuition Cost (2021-22)." n.d. Accessed November 22, 2021. <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/tuition-stats/new-york/pre>.
- [7] Veiga, Christina. 2021. "Racial, Economic Gaps Are Widening among NYC's Free Pre-K Programs." *Chalkbeat New York*. April 9, 2021. <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2021/4/9/22376026/racial-economic-gaps-nyc-prek>.
- [8] Affairs, Public. 2021. "Despite New York City's Ambitious Experiment in Pre-K Education, Racial Gaps Continue to Grow, Berkeley Study Finds." *Berkeley News*. April 6, 2021. <https://news.berkeley.edu/2021/04/05/despite-new-york-citys-ambitious-experiment-in-pre-k-education-racial-gaps-continue-to-grow-berkeley-study-finds/>.
- [9] "Baby Bonds and Intergenerational Wealth Inequality?: How federal funds could be used to address the wealth gap." n.d. *Investopedia*. Accessed October 18, 2021. <https://www.investopedia.com/can-baby-bonds-fix-intergenerational-wealth-inequality-5096825>.
- [10] "Mayor de Blasio Announces First Community Scholarship Donation for NYC's Universal Baby Bonds." 2021. *The Official Website of the City of New York*. November 18, 2021. <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/776-21/mayor-de-blasio-first-community-scholarship-donation-nyc-s-universal-baby-bonds>.
- [11] Veiga, Christina. 2021. "NYC Graduation Rates Tick Upwards in 2020 - Chalkbeat New York." *Chalkbeat New York*. January 14, 2021. <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2021/1/14/22230843/nyc-graduation-rates-up-2020>.
- [12] Mahnken, Kevin. n.d. "Early Education Is a Game Changer: New Report Shows That Reaching Infants and Toddlers Reduces Special Education Placement, Leads to Soaring Graduation Rates." Accessed November 22, 2021.

<https://www.the74million.org/early-education-is-a-gamechanger-new-report-shows-that-reaching-infants-and-toddlers-reduces-special-education-placement-leads-to-soaring-graduation-rates/>.
[13] “How a Bill Becomes a Law.” 2009. NY State Senate. March 25, 2009.
<https://www.nysenate.gov/how-bill-becomes-law-1>.
[14] Silberstein, Rachel. 2021. “Dozens of Local Districts to Get Pre-K Funds for First Time.” Times Union. April 8, 2021.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Dozens-of-local-districts-will-get-pre-K-funding-16087078.php>.
[15] Parents Corner. 2021. “Private Preschool vs. Public Preschool: Does It Matter? - Cadence Education.” May 21, 2021.
<https://www.cadence-education.com/blog/parents-corner/private-preschool-vs-public-preschool/>.
[16] “About the Parents League of New York.” 2016. Parents League of New York. May 6, 2016.

<https://www.parentsleague.org/about>.
[17] “The Budget Process | Citizen’s Guide | NYS DOB.” n.d. Accessed November 22, 2021.
<https://www.budget.ny.gov/citizen/process/process.html>.
[18] “Governor Hochul Highlights Benefits of Build Back Better Act for New Yorkers.” 2021. November 19, 2021.
<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-highlights-benefits-build-back-better-act-new-yorkers>.

Subsidizing Naturalization Applications to Encourage Citizenship in New York City

Nguyen Vo, ntv4@cornell.edu

To improve the livelihood of its lawful permanent residents, New York City should encourage citizenship through eliminating financial barriers to naturalization applications. The city should establish a tax rebate equivalent to the amount the applicant spends on their naturalization application, after accounting for fee waivers and reductions.

Background

Naturalization conveys many direct and indirect economic benefits for legal permanent residents (LPRs). Among other advantages, naturalized Americans can work more federal jobs, vote, run for office, be protected from deportation, use an American passport, sponsor family members to immigrate more easily, and be eligible for Supplemental Security Income. [5,6]

Despite these benefits, only 60% of eligible LPRs in the U.S. become U.S. citizens. [5] While the naturalization rate in NYC (71%) is higher than the national average, there remain roughly 622,000 LPRs in the city who can apply for American citizenship but have not. [5,6] In 2019, this group's official poverty rate (19.6%) was higher than the NYC rate (16%). [6,16]

Application costs contribute to LPRs' delay and avoidance of citizenship

applications. [9,11] Under current policy, applicants with household incomes at or below 150% the federal poverty level can file for a waiver. [1] However, applicants between 150% and 200% of the federal poverty level face \$405 in fees, and those above 200% of the level must pay \$725. [1,10] Applicants over 75 years of age are exempt from the \$85 biometrics fee, and those applying for citizenship based on military service are exempt from all fees. [2]

Policy Idea

New York City should introduce a tax rebate that fully compensates the processing fees borne by NYC residents who file for naturalization, verified through income data from the last year's tax filings. The rebate could appear as an item on New York State's Form IT-201 (Resident Income Tax Return), with its calculated benefit included in the "New York City and Yonkers taxes, credits,

surcharges, and MCTMT" section. [8] Part-year residents would earn a rebate based on the number of days spent residing in the city.

Policy Analysis

While a more sweeping policy would be to remove citizenship application fees, fees currently form a large and self-adjusting portion of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) revenue. Furthermore, the service is required by Congress to be primarily self-funded. [17] Thus, it is more feasible to apply the policy in NYC, which already supports some measures to promote citizenship. [12,13]

Since the applicants would always only receive rebates after they have paid the fee, LPRs with insufficient savings may opt to not apply or to only apply near when they file for taxes. Nevertheless, this downside is offset by the rebate's universality, simplicity, and

resistance to fraud (citizenship applications are non-refundable), which could help the policy garner more political support and encourage more applications.

Naturalization increases former LPRs' individual wages by 6.8% and earnings by 8.9%. [5] It also raises their employment level by 2.6%—despite reducing self-employment by 2.3%—reflecting a shift towards salaried work as job opportunities improve. [5] In NYC specifically, LPRs' earnings would increase by 6.1%-10.1%. [15]

If all eligible residents in NYC were to naturalize, the city's aggregate income would rise by \$15.5 billion, resulting in a net annual fiscal gain of \$823 million for the U.S. and at least \$68 million for NYC. [5] As funding all current eligible LPRs' applications once would cost \$279 million based on eligible LPRs' income data, the city could expect a fiscal benefit in five years. [6] While this scenario is unrealistic, these figures indicate that the program would most likely pay for itself over time.

Talking Points

- A tax rebate equivalent to the amount spent by each applicant on a naturalization application could

increase naturalization rates among New York City residents, paying for itself through higher tax revenues and reduced benefits claims from new citizens' higher incomes.

- In New York City, citizenship increases earnings by 6.1%-10.1%. [15] If all eligible LPRs in the city were to attain citizenship, aggregate income would rise by \$15.5 billion, and total annual fiscal benefits would rise by \$823 million. [5]
- If all eligible LPRs in the city applied for naturalization once while making use of fee waivers and reductions, they would have to pay a combined maximum of \$279 million. [6]

Key Facts

- Roughly 622,000 legal permanent residents in New York City have not applied for American citizenship despite being eligible, making up 29% of those who can obtain citizenship. [5]
- Eligible LPRs in New York City suffer a poverty rate of 19.6%,

which is higher than the citywide rate of 16%. [6,16]

- The cost of applying for naturalization, which can be as high as \$725, prevents many permanent residents from pursuing citizenship. [11]

Next Steps

To become law, the rebate must first be included in the Mayor's Preliminary Budget and survive the budget process. While NYC's budget is required by law to be balanced, this policy would have only a minor impact on the city's budget, which is currently \$98.7 billion for FY2022. [7,14] Thus, there is no need to counteract the policy with tax increases, especially while federal aid remains mostly unused. [4]

Once the policy is enacted, the city should conduct a study analyzing rebate's effects on naturalization applications and aggregate income every two years. The data would be used to identify areas of improvement, estimate the extent to which citizenship application hesitancy could be attributed to non-financial factors, and heighten the impetus for USCIS funding to be provided through federal taxes (instead of through fees) by showing the

benefits of higher naturalization rates.

Action Plan Snapshot

Since the policy could only come to fruition with the support of both the Mayor and a substantial fraction of the NYC Council, a coalition of stakeholders who can communicate with the city government should first be constructed. The core of this alliance should consist of immigrant advocacy groups from both inside and outside NYC, with a potential collaboration between the New York Immigration Coalition and self-affiliated NYC community-based immigrant organizations.

The coalition should raise the issue of citizenship in NYC and propose the policy to the next NYC Mayor Eric Adams, who has the authority to propose the program in his Preliminary Budget. Members of the NYC Council should also be presented with the same information, in order to gauge their responses and build political support for the policy. Sympathetic Council Members should be pressed to endorse the policy and to indicate their desire to approve this budget item, should Adams adopt the program. Additionally, the coalition should court the support of NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio. Despite no longer being

Mayor by the time any future budget is discussed, de Blasio would be running for New York Governor and would thus remain an influential voice on NYC policy for at least another year. [3] He also has a history of supporting citizenship initiatives such as Cities 4 Citizenship and NYCitizenship. [12,13] Furthermore, as a gubernatorial candidate, de Blasio could even propose an upscaled, state-level version of the policy, which would elevate discourse surrounding the city-level policy regardless of election results.

At the same time, a social media campaign aimed towards NYC residents should be initiated. The campaign should stress on the ability of citizenship to empower new citizens with new rights and provide a sense of belonging and unity among the NYC community.

Works Cited

- [1] "Additional Information on Filing a Fee Waiver | USCIS," February 1, 2021. <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/additional-information-on-filing-a-fee-waiver#Eligibility>.
- [2] "Application for Naturalization | USCIS," November 12, 2021. <https://www.uscis.gov/n-400>.
- [3] Banjo, Shelly. "Bill de Blasio Files Paperwork to Run for New York Governor in 2022 - Bloomberg." Bloomberg Politics, November 2, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-02/nyc-mayor-bill-de-blasio-files-paperwork-for-n-y-governor-run>.
- [4] Byerly-Duke, Alan Berube and Eli. "Cities Are Taking It Slow with American Rescue Plan Funds." *Brookings* (blog), September 7, 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2021/09/07/cities-are-taking-it-slow-with-american-rescue-plan-funds/>.
- [5] Enchautegui, María E, and Linda Giannarelli. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute, December 9, 2015. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/economic-impact-naturalization-immigrants-and-cities>
- [6] "Fact Sheet: Eligible to Naturalize New Yorkers." Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, December 2019. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/Elig-to-natz-fact-sheet-2019-12-18.pdf>.
- [7] "Financial Plan." Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, June 2021. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/omb/publications/finplan06-21.page>
- [8] "Form IT-201 Resident Income Tax Return Tax Year 2020." Department of Taxation and Finance, May 2021. https://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/it/it201.pdf
- [9] Hamblin, Haley. "What Is Stopping Millions of Legal Permanent Residents From Naturalizing?" Niskanen Center, July 22, 2021. <https://www.niskanencenter.org/what-is-stopping-millions-of-legal-permanent-residents-from-naturalizing/>.
- [10] "Request for Reduced Fee | USCIS," February 19, 2021. <https://www.uscis.gov/i-942>.
- [11] Taylor, Paul, Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Mark Hugo Lopez. "IV. Reasons for Not Naturalizing." *Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project* (blog), November 14, 2012. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispa>

nic/2012/11/14/iv-reasons-for-not-naturalizing/.

[12] The official website of the City of New York. "Mayor de Blasio Announces the Launch of the National 'Cities for Citizenship' Effort with Mayors Emanuel and Garcetti," September 17, 2014.

<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/444-14/mayor-de-blasio-the-launch-the-national-cities-citizenship-effort-mayors>.

[13] The official website of the City of New York. "Mayor's Office Announces Partnership with City Libraries to Develop 'NYCitizenship' Initiative, Kicks Off Week of Events to Help New

Yorkers Become Citizens," September 17, 2015.

<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/623-15/mayor-s-office-partnership-city-libraries-develop-nycitizenship-initiative>.

[14] "Understanding New York City's Budget." New York City Independent Budget Office, July 2021.

<https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/understandingthebudget.pdf>

[15] USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, The Center for Popular Democracy, & The National Partnership for New Americans. *Citizenship: A Wise Investment for Cities*. USC Center

for the Study of Immigrant Integration, September 2014.

<https://dornsife.usc.edu/csii/citizenship-wise-investment-for-cities/>

[16] U.S. Census Bureau. *American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table DP03*, accessed November 23, 2021.

https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?tid=ACSDP1Y2019.DP03&g=040000US36_1600000US3651000.

[17] "USCIS Adjusts Fees to Help Meet Operational Needs | USCIS," July 31, 2020.

<https://www.uscis.gov/news/news-releases/uscis-adjusts-fees-to-help-meet-operational-needs>.

Environmental & Technology Policy

Director: Aishani Shukla

Analysts: Macy Berryman, Navya Chamiraju, Dana Gong, Madeline Lei,
Samuel Nichols, Audrey Noziere, Abraham Reiss, Franklin Zhang

Implementing California's Proposition 12 in New York State to Protect Animal and Human Health

Macy Berryman, mnb68@cornell.edu

To protect the health and welfare of farm animals and consumers, New York (NY) should enact a modified version of California's Proposition 12, which prohibits the sale of veal and dairy cows that are contained in a cruel manner. [7]

Background

New York (NY) currently does not have any farm animal containment legislation. Without this legislation, factory farms flourish, and animals are contained in deplorable conditions. Due to these poor practices, factory farms also put human health at risk by increasing susceptibility of disease spread, water contamination, and exposure to toxic bacteria buildup. [8] There are over 600 sanctioned factory farms in NY, most of which focus on cattle or dairy cows, totaling to over 33,000 cows. [8] Holding large numbers of cows in confined spaces leads to severe environmental concerns for surrounding communities because of manure output. [8] This manure releases toxins into water, can carry and spread harmful bacteria (such as *E. Coli*), and releases pathogens, exacerbating health problems that stem from already

disease-ridden animal quarters in these spaces. [3]

Aside from being committed to public safety, 77% of American consumers care about the wellbeing of animals they consume. [5] On factory farms, dairy cows are slaughtered after 3-4 years, as opposed to a 25-year lifespan when raised humanely. In recent years, there has been both a strong push to reduce factory farming and a commitment to increasing the welfare of animals bred for human consumption. [5] Introducing a modified Proposition 12 would substantially increase bovine welfare on New York State farms and manage manure output, causing factory farms to maintain a workable herd number and to provide the space and safety that animals and humans deserve. [7]

Policy Idea

The New York Department of Agriculture should adopt a modified

version of California's Proposition 12 farm animal welfare legislation. This policy bans the holding of or sale of animals that have been cruelly confined. New York's version would protect dairy and beef cows, along with veal calves, from inhumane containment and feeding practices. Individuals or companies found to be violating this law would be subject to a fine of up to 1,000 dollars per animal found in inhumane conditions. [7]

Policy Analysis

The New York dairy and cattle industry generates over \$3 billion a year for the state and is the third largest supplier of dairy products nationwide. [6] Enacting a modified version of Proposition 12 would allow a significant sector of the national agriculture industry to adapt to growing concern for animal welfare on farms, as well as set a standard of humane treatment for other

markets. The policy would protect public safety by preventing animals that are ultimately consumed from transmitting certain diseases, including Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), Mad Cow Disease, and *E. Coli*. In addition, with more space needed for each cow, it is reasonable to assume that herd totals would shrink, alleviating manure reservoir concerns. California's cost estimates were no more than \$10 million a year in oversight for a full proposition 12 implementation, and NY would pay even less as a smaller state. [7] Additionally, inspections would be simple: regulators would measure stalls and distribute fines for those who do not comply (\$1,000 per animal). [7] Such repercussions would help offset oversight costs and incentivize factory farms to comply. [7]

Critics argue that expanding space or decreasing herd numbers may cause product prices to increase. However, most farms could utilize existing outdoor spaces for cows which, unlike chickens, do not need specialized housing. The only anticipated production cost increase would be lost revenue through decreasing herd numbers, which is necessary

to promote natural farm animal behaviors. However, consumers would likely only see a small price increase as a result, since subsidization could be adjusted to offset increased costs. Overall, consumers would likely be willing to pay this added price as reassurance that their animal products are humanely produced. [5]

Talking Points

- As the third largest supplier of dairy products in the United States, New York has a responsibility to set the standard for humane farming practices. [6]
- Allowing animals more space would reduce the spread of diseases, such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), Mad Cow Disease, and *E. Coli*, while increasing welfare. [3]
- Implementing higher welfare for dairy cows is more feasible than creating new space for chickens, as cows are primarily raised outdoors. [3]

Key Facts

- New York State has no active protective farm animal containment laws. [6]

- Manure buildup from factory farms can pollute water and air supplies, as well as allow the mass growth of harmful bacteria. [8]
- Dairy cows on factory farms are typically slaughtered after 3-4 years, when they can live to be up to 25 years old when granted pastoral conditions. [2]
- 77% of consumers care about the wellbeing of animal products they consume. [5]

Next Steps

This policy should be implemented to protect animals and consumers. By passing this act through the New York State Legislature, factory farms would begin to be held accountable for their livestock and be forced to treat their cows more humanely. New York's Department of Agriculture could begin requiring these standards to be met by registered farms after a 1-2-year grace period to make these modifications, and a new oversight committee could be made in the Department. This act may be challenged in court based on interstate commerce effects. However, a similar case questioning California's act, *Missouri v California*, was

dropped by the court and could be used as precedent.

Action Plan Snapshot

The first step in the process of implementation is to get the act passed. With the legislature being a democratic majority, and with Republicans from farming communities being hurt by factory farms, these votes should not be difficult to acquire. Once the act has been passed, a grace period must be established to allow farms to make necessary modifications. Two years is likely a feasible and satisfactory time period, as California enacted the veal aspect of its law within this amount of time. As farms would make their adjustments, the municipalities of NY would create committees or assign existing oversight committees to oversee these changes. [1] Once the grace period is over, enforcement of the policy

would begin. Using California's model, fines would begin at \$1,000 per animal. Funds raised from these fines would be used to maintain enforcement resources and contribute to the subsidization of the affected products.

Works Cited

- [1] "Animal-Related Complaints." New York Agriculture and Markets. Accessed November 6, 2021. <https://agriculture.ny.gov/animals/animal-related-complaints>.
- [2] AWI Staff. "Cattle." Animal Welfare Institute. Accessed November 6, 2021. <https://awionline.org/content/cattle#dairy-cows>.
- [3] AWI Staff. "Inhumane Practices on Factory Farms." Animal Welfare Institute. Accessed November 6, 2021. <https://awionline.org/content/inhumane-practices-factory-farms>.
- [4] "Exposure to Pig Farms and Manure Fertilizers Associated with MRSA Infections." Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, September 16, 2013. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2013/casey-schwartz-mrsa>.

- [5] Kelso, Alicia. "Consumers Are Willing to Pay a Premium for Animal Welfare Certifications." Grocery Dive, July 17, 2018. <https://www.grocerydive.com/news/grocery--consumers-are-willing-to-pay-a-premium-for-animal-welfare-certifications/533852/>.
- [6] "New York Agriculture." Farm Bureau New York. Accessed November 6, 2021. <https://www.nyfb.org/about/about-ny-ag>.
- [7] "Proposition 12." California Legislative Information. Accessed November 6, 2021. https://leginfo.ca.gov/fares/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&division=20.&title=&part=&chapter=13.8.&article=.
- [8] Sierra Club, and Citizens' Environmental Coalition. "The Wasting of Rural New York State." Sierra Club, 2005. https://atlantic2.sierraclub.org/sites/newyork.sierraclub.org/files/conservation.issues/Wasting_NYS_Report.pdf.

Reducing Plastic Waste and Carbon Emissions in Ithaca through Chemical Recycling

Navya Chamiraju, nc548@cornell.edu

Each year, scientific laboratories worldwide produce millions of metric tons of plastic waste, specifically through the utilization of single use materials. [5] As this accumulation of waste exacerbates climate change, Cornell University should establish facilities that more efficiently recover materials throughout the Ithaca area, as well as facilitate chemical recycling of these materials within Cornell laboratories.

Background

Scientific laboratories generate large amounts of plastic waste via their heavy usage of single-use materials, including petri dishes, pipette tips, and beakers. The annual amount of plastic waste produced globally has been estimated to be about 5.5 million metric-tons, according to the University of Exeter, whose labs alone are responsible for producing 1.8% of global plastic waste. [4]

In the United States, only 9% of plastic is recycled, and much of this plastic often becomes trashed. [5] Cornell University attempts to mitigate its own environmental harm through recycling sorting centers, which send recyclables to the larger Tompkins County recycling facility. [6] However, this facility implements single stream recycling, meaning that all recyclables are collected together and sorted at a later time, resulting in greater

contamination and a lower quality of recycled materials. [7] Furthermore, despite the recycling facility's goal of achieving an overall 85% waste diversion by 2030, recycled materials are still currently being sent to landfills. [7]

An often-overlooked solution is chemical recycling, a process capable of increasing the amount of plastic that can be recycled. This form of recycling involves the breakdown of polyesters and polystyrene into raw materials, a process also known as depolymerization. [4] Rather than breaking down the size of the material, chemical recycling involves the breakage of the material itself, thus making the conversion to new polymers more efficient and materials easier to reuse. [4]

Policy Idea

Cornell University should allocate more funds towards scientific research that investigates chemical

recycling, as well as establish its own efficient material-recovery facilities, in order to help reduce the amount of plastic waste on campus. This investment would also help develop chemical recycling protocols for plastic reuse in the Tompkins County's recycling facility and in the broader Ithaca area.

Policy Analysis

Cornell's goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2035 is currently impeded by different unsustainable practices, including using single-use plastics in scientific labs. The adoption of this policy would reallocate resources to better meet carbon neutrality. By funding recycling initiatives on campus and environmental research to make chemical recycling more feasible, efficient chemical recycling centers would be established, leading to the sustainable reduction of waste on campus. More specifically, recycling of single-use plastic through

chemical recycling would decrease carbon dioxide emissions, since less material would be incinerated and fated for landfills. [10] In Turkey, for example, a 14.22% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions was observed when this type of switch was made. [4] The recycled plastics could then either be sold to the Greater Ithaca area or be reused within Cornell and/or other local laboratories.

The transition to chemical recycling would initially increase carbon emissions and costs; however, it would ultimately lead to less contamination and a greater production of recyclables. [7] Single-stream systems' processing costs are 10% higher on average compared to those of multi-stream systems, meaning that individual sorting and chemical processing of single-use plastics at Cornell would be more cost-effective. [7] Furthermore, implementing chemical recycling in Ithaca would enable a greater turnover rate for recycling plastic, especially in laboratories that tend to overuse plastic equipment and supplies.

Talking Points

- In a 2021 study based in Turkey, there was a 14.22% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and a

60.37% reduction of photochemical oxidant formation as a result of implementing chemical recycling. [4]

- Processing costs for single stream systems were 10% higher on average when compared to multi-stream systems in 2007, meaning that chemical processing on single-use plastics and other types of recyclables is more cost-effective. [7]
- Transitioning to chemical recycling would ultimately lead to the generation of more recyclables, particularly those that are less contaminated. It would also lead to a greater turnover rate for recycling plastic within Cornell University and the greater Ithaca area.

Key Facts

- Each year, 5.5 million metric tons of plastic waste are produced worldwide, and only 9% of the United States' plastic originally intended for recycling ends up being recycled. [5]
- Chemical Recycling is an alternative to single-stream

recycling of single-use plastics, the latter process of which is currently used in Ithaca. [7]

- The Tompkins County's recycling facility aims to achieve 85% waste diversion by 2030, yet factors such as contamination cause recyclables to remain in landfills. [6]

Next Steps

This policy should be implemented, beginning with Cornell University. First, a select group of students from the Sustainability Office should reach out to Environment and Sustainability majors, classes, and campus organizations, including the Environmental Law Society, Climate Justice Cornell, and the Cornell Sustainability Consultants. Such student organizations could collectively allocate their resources towards this mission, as well as collaborate with the Tompkins County Recycling Facility.

After gaining the student body's interest, the Sustainability Office would submit a letter to The Budget Office, allocating about one percent more resources and funding towards recycling activities on campus. As The Budget Office already invests in multiple on-campus

initiatives related to the environment and sustainability, increasing funding for research in chemical and multi-stream recycling would ultimately lead to the establishment of more energy-saving and cost-efficient facilities in Ithaca. [8]

Action Plan Snapshot

First, the course leads for ENV5 2000: Environment and Sustainability Colloquium should be contacted to discuss presenting the policy in their seminar. Students in ENV5 2000 could then sign a petition to show support for the policy. The recruited group of students could communicate the policy and conduct general outreach, specifically via collaborations and petitions with the aforementioned sustainability organizations. The select group of students would also submit budget reform applications to the Cornell Budget Office. After a response from the Office, the Sustainability Office would then be contacted for further assistance and resources, while the student team would continue researching and reaching out to different laboratories on campus specializing in chemical recycling (for example, Dr. Fengqi You's laboratory).

Furthermore, the Tompkins County's recycling

facility would be contacted in order to propose replacing single-use recycling with chemical recycling. After this contact, the Chief of Staff and Special Counsel to President Pollack, Kelly E. Cunningham, should also be contacted to bring the action plan to the university as a whole. Based on the President's approval, within the next year, the plan would be implemented in collaboration with chemical recycling-focused laboratories and initiatives on campus, specifically to increase the production of materials and equipment that would better facilitate chemical recycling on campus and in Ithaca.

Works Cited

- [1] Zhao, Xiang, and Fengqi You. "Consequential Life Cycle Assessment and Optimization of High-Density Polyethylene Plastic Waste Chemical Recycling." *ACS Sustainable Chemistry & Engineering* 9, no. 36 (2021): 12167–84. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acssuschemeng.1c03587>.
- [2] Thompson, Richard C, Charles J Moore, Frederick S vom Saal, and Shanna H Swan. "Plastics, the Environment and Human Health: Current Consensus and Future Trends." *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences*. The Royal Society, July 27, 2009. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2873021/>.
- [3] OA, Alabi. "Public and Environmental Health Effects of Plastic Wastes Disposal: A Review." *Public and Environmental Health Effects of*

Plastic Wastes Disposal: A Review. *clinmed journals*. Accessed December 1, 2021.

<https://clinmedjournals.org/articles/ijtra/international-journal-of-toxicology-and-risk-assessment-ijtra-5-021.php?jid=ijtra>.

[4] Tullo, Alexander H. "Plastic Has a Problem; Is Chemical Recycling the Solution?" *Cen.acs.org*, October 7, 2019.

<https://cen.acs.org/environment/recycling/Plastic-problem-chemical-recycling-solution/97/i39>.

[5] Urbina, Mauricio A., Andrew J. Watts, and Erin E. Reardon. "Labs Should Cut Plastic Waste Too." *Nature* 528, no. 7583 (December 23, 2015): 479–79.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/528479c>.

[6] "Ithaca Campus Waste Metrics: Facilities and Campus Services." *Ithaca Campus Waste Metrics | Facilities and Campus Services*. Accessed December 1, 2021.

<https://fcs.cornell.edu/departments/facilities-management/r5-operations/ithaca-campus-waste-metrics>.

[7] Lakhan, Calvin. "A Comparison of Single and Multi-Stream Recycling Systems in Ontario, Canada." *Resources* 4, no. 2 (2015): 384–97.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/resources4020384>.

[8] "University Budget Office." *Division of Budget and Planning*. Accessed December 1, 2021.

<https://dbp.cornell.edu/home/offices/university-budget-office/>.

[9] "Climate Action Plan." *Sustainable Campus*. Accessed December 1, 2021.

<https://sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/our-leadership/cap>.

[10] Genc, Ayten, Ozgur Zeydan, and Selin Sarac. "Cost Analysis of Plastic Solid Waste Recycling in an Urban District in Turkey." *Waste Management & Research* 37, no. 9 (2019): 906–13.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734242x19858665>.

[11] Zhao, Xiang, and Fengqi You. "Consequential Life Cycle

Assessment and Optimization of
High-Density Polyethylene Plastic
Waste Chemical Recycling.” *ACS*
Sustainable Chemistry &

Engineering 9, no. 36 (August 9,
2021): 12167–84.
[https://doi.org/10.1021/acssuschem
eng.1c03587](https://doi.org/10.1021/acssuschemeng.1c03587).

Funding Private-Public Broadband Services in New York State

Dana Gong, dg588@cornell.edu

With the growing importance of broadband as an essential utility, New York State should provide municipal funding to develop balanced private-public partnerships that increase broadband access in both urban and rural low-income areas.

Background

The introduction of high-speed internet has induced a long-term shift to online work, education, and life, one that has recently been hastened by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has amplified the importance of access to broadband services, a term that broadly describes stable high speed Internet connection and access. In 2020, the Federal Communications Commission found that 18.3 million Americans still lack access to broadband internet. [2] However, because of the overgeneralization of access in census blocks (i.e., when one household has access, the whole block is defined as having access), the actual number may be closer to 42 million Americans. [2] In addition, low income and elderly populations, people of color, and those who live in rural and tribal areas disproportionately lack broadband access. [2] In particular, equipping rural and remote areas is often

more costly, since these regions are difficult to reach geographically. Although the percentage of households lacking access is higher for rural households, about three times as many households without broadband are in urban areas. [2] Moreover, restrictions on the creation of local broadband are high, as 26 states either restrict or prohibit towns and cities from building their own broadband networks. [5] According to a large nationwide survey of households, high costs are the primary constraint preventing people from having broadband access at home. [1] Based on a literature review, five main factors were found to impact the affordability of broadband: geographic disparities, competition, profit-based discrimination, technology deployment cost, and socio-economic factors. [13]

Policy Idea

New York State should fund the formation of public-private partnerships to

improve broadband affordability and to stimulate long-term competition in broadband employment, which would increase broadband access opportunities for low-income and underserved communities. This policy would also help equalize geographical disparities and decrease profit-based discrimination in low-income urban areas, ultimately supporting the growth of small broadband providers.

Policy Analysis

In general, broadband expansion is capable of providing a wide array of health, social, and economic benefits to communities. [2] For example, a cost-benefit analysis of rural broadband installation in Indiana observed three to four-fold returns on its investment into the state. [2] However, many states either restrict or prohibit local communities from building their own broadband networks, forcing households to adopt the high market price or to remain

disconnected. [5] With 13.8% of its households still lacking access, New York State has an imperative to increase the accessibility and affordability of its broadband services. [11] A commonly cited reason for high broadband costs is lack of competition among Internet Service Providers (ISPs), which decreases any pressure of lowering costs and allows ISPs to block or slow users' access; it also gives preferential treatment to services that only provide financial benefit, leading to more costly and discriminatory access to broadband. [10,14] Funding the development of private-public partnerships that provide broadband access would tackle the aforementioned digital divide, specifically by increasing competition and driving down costs for consumers. [10] Case studies of private-public partnerships in cities, such as Westminster and Ting in Maryland, as well as UC2B and LeverettNet in Massachusetts, have shown that they often offer higher speed, lower prices, and greater privacy regulations compared to incumbent ISPs. [6,9] The implications of this policy are far reaching and would increase the visibility of public discussion on community broadband beyond New York State,

setting a foundation for new avenues of antitrust and privacy policy in the telecommunications industry. [12]

Talking Points

- Broadband expansion is important for improving job searches, education, health outcomes, social networks, civic engagement, and economic growth. [8]
- Many states either restrict or prohibit local communities from building their own broadband networks, meaning that households must choose between adopting the high market price and remaining disconnected. [5]
- Internet Service Providers have financial incentives to block or slow users' access, or they give preferential treatment to services that only provide financial benefit, thereby increasing costs of and discriminatory access to broadband. [10]
- Private-public partnerships tackle the digital divide by reducing broadband prices and by helping

protect consumer privacy. [9,10]

Key Facts

- In 2020, 18.3 million Americans still lacked access to broadband internet. [2]
- 26 states either restrict or prohibit towns and cities from building their own broadband networks. [5]
- Despite rural areas being geographically more difficult to reach, urban areas also still face many barriers to broadband access. [2]
- According to a large nationwide survey, cost is the most important reason cited by households for not having broadband access at home. [1]
- Geographic disparities, competition, profit-based discrimination, technology deployment cost, and socio-economic factors impact broadband's affordability. [13]

Next Steps

Based on public support, a favorable cost-benefit analysis, and the ever-growing importance of broadband access, New York State should provide

subsidies to governments at the municipal level to fund the development of private-public partnerships, which would promote affordable and locally regulated broadband access, as well as expand the accessibility and adoption of these services. New York State should first place efforts on the most disadvantaged areas and work with local governments to develop community guidelines with a partnering company that focuses on privacy and affordability.

Action Plan Snapshot

Under its new administration, New York is already directing efforts towards examining broadband access across the state, with the launch of a Broadband Mapping Consumer Survey to identify the availability, reliability and cost of high-speed broadband services across New York. [7] Its emphasis on transparency of broadband access at a smaller-scale level indicates that New York State is in a critical position to take action. Taking into consideration the variance in broadband access across the state, New York should first direct funding towards the region with the greatest percentage of households lacking access to broadband—North County (19.3%)—as well as towards the region with the highest absolute

number of households lacking access—New York City (513,812). [11] While private-public partnerships entail mostly private, large-corporation driven efforts, this policy would encourage partnerships with smaller, local ISPs that could allow communities to hold more power and a greater say in regulation. Prime examples of private-public partnerships to model include asTing, a wireless service provider that has purchased ISPs in towns in Virginia, Idaho, and North Carolina; and iTV-3, a smaller fiber-optic broadband service based in Illinois. Looking to smaller but faster, more reliable, more affordable, and more responsive companies would help increase competition in the telecommunications industry, lower prices, and diversify consumer data collectors and holders. [6] These steps would lead to an increase in broadband affordability and accessibility, greater recognition of broadband as an essential household utility, and broader initiatives to reform antitrust laws in the current digital age.

Works Cited

[1] *Availability, Access and Affordability: Understanding Broadband Challenges in New York State*. (2021, September). Office of the New York State Comptroller. <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/availability-access-and->

[affordability-understanding-broadband-challenges-new-york-state/#idTextAnchor003](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/affordability-understanding-broadband-challenges-new-york-state/#idTextAnchor003).
[2] Campbell, S. (2021, November 9). *The benefits and costs of broadband expansion*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/08/18/the-benefits-and-costs-of-broadband-expansion/>.
[3] Cohen, J. (2017, April 20). *Tennessee Bills Send Message on Municipal Broadband*. <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/entry/tennessee-municipal-broadband-bills>.
[4] Mitchell, C. (2015, January 20). *Most Municipal Networks Built in Conservative Cities*. Community Broadband Networks. <https://muninetworks.org/content/most-municipal-networks-built-conservative-cities>.
[5] Cooper, T. (2021, November 5). *Municipal Broadband Is Restricted In 18 States Across The U.S. In 2021*. BroadbandNow. <https://broadbandnow.com/report/municipal-broadband-roadblocks/>.
[6] Lucey, P. & Mitchell, C. (2016, July) *Successful Strategies for Broadband Public-Private Partnership*. Institute For Local Self Reliance. <https://ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2016/08/PPP-Report-2016-1.pdf>
[7] Governor Hochul announces launch of mapping survey to examine quality and availability of broadband across the State. (2021, September 27). Governor Kathy Hochul. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-launch-mapping-survey-examine-quality-and-availability-broadband>.
[8] Tomer, L. (2019, August 14). *Broadband is too important for this many in the US to be disconnected*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/08/14/broadband-is-too-important-for-this-many-in-the-us-to-be-disconnected/>.
[9] *Eshoo, Golden, Booker Introduce Bill to Expand Internet*

*Access and Protect Local
Communities' Broadband
Networks.* (2021, March 9).

Congresswoman Anna Eshoo.
<https://eshoo.house.gov/media/press-releases/eshoo-golden-booker-introduce-bill-expand-internet-access-and-protect-local>.

[10] Sheard, N. (2018, January 16). *Community Broadband: Privacy, Access, and Local Control*. Electronic Frontier Foundation.
<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2018/01/community-broadband-privacy-access-and-local-control>.

[11] *DiNapoli: Over One Million New Yorker Households Are Not Connected to Broadband.* (2021, September 14). Office of the New York State Comptroller.

<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/2021/09/dinapoli-over-one-million-new-yorker-households-are-not-connected-broadband>.

[12] Zuboff, S., & Schwandt, K. (2019). The age of surveillance capitalism: the fight for a human future at the new frontier of power.

[13] Reddick, C. G., Enriquez, R., Harris, R. J., & Sharma, B. (2020). Determinants of broadband access

and affordability: An analysis of a community survey on the digital divide. *Cities (London, England)*, 106, 102904.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102904>.

[14] Brake, D., & Atkinson, R. D. (2019, September 3). *A Policymaker's Guide to Broadband Competition*. ITIF.

<https://itif.org/publications/2019/09/03/policymakers-guide-broadband-competition>.

Speaking of Shapes: Establishing a Spatial Language Exhibit for Early STEM Development in Ithaca's Sciencenter

Madeline Lei, mzl22@cornell.edu

The use of spatial language is crucial for early scientific achievement because it can help increase children's participation in STEM fields. Therefore, Ithaca's Sciencenter should enact an open-access spatial play exhibit to meet children's needs for spatial interaction.

Background

“Spatial skills” refers to a set of skills used to navigate daily life, particularly with regards to movement, coordination, and the visualization of relations between objects. [1] These skills have been rising in importance over the past 50 years, specifically in their critical role in developing strong STEM abilities. [1,8] Previous research supports the importance of spatial abilities in determining success in STEM fields—for example, those with high spatial ability have had a higher probability of achieving educational success in STEM, with 45% of STEM PhD recipients testing within the top percentage of spatial skills, as well as only 10% testing below the top quarter. [8]

One specific path to developing spatial skills is the use of spatial language during parent-child play—i.e., parents incorporating shape names such as triangle,

square, and rectangle. [3] This spatial language can serve as a critical parenting method to aid in STEM success later in life. [2] However, there are currently no federal or local education policies implemented to recognize, measure, or further develop children's spatial abilities. [9] This absence is especially significant, as women, Black populations, and Hispanic populations are underrepresented in STEM fields: men are employed at twice the rate of women, and less than 10% of those in STEM are Black or Hispanic. [10] As such, forming accessible forms of spatial education is fundamental to improving education disparities and ensuring continued STEM participation from disadvantaged groups. [6,9]

Policy Idea

Given the significance of spatial language in STEM skill

development, Ithaca's Sciencenter must consider broadening its curriculum to establish diverse forms of shape-play between child and parent. Such curricula must introduce traditional toys, which would both allow for motor play and offer children freedom and creativity. Perhaps most critically, these programs must center the need for parent-child interaction through hands-on exhibits, in order to encourage skills learned in the program to be adapted at home.

Policy Analysis

While Ithaca Sciencenter offers hands-on programs that allow for active participation, there are currently no programs that emphasize shape-play and spatial ability. [7] The implementation of a spatial program centered around interactive parent-child shape-play would be effective, as its importance is well-established by previous

research. In a study looking into the effects of spatial play from *Mind, Brain, and Education*, parents that were in a guided shape-play condition—in which they were advised to discuss certain topics with their children—produced significantly higher proportions of spatial talk compared to parents in other play conditions. Children in this condition also spoke and engaged with significantly more spatial words and utilized more spatial language as they played with spatial toys. [3] In particular, blocks were observed to “naturally elicit elevated levels of spatial language,” demonstrating the importance of parent-child interactions in strengthening spatial skills during play. [3] Additionally, a study published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine analyzing spatial-mathematical connections shows that spatial skills enhance the critical development of basic mathematical skills among children from kindergarten to sixth grade. [1] Expanding current Sciencenter programs to emphasize spatial education would effectively encourage parents to prioritize spatial language and to further aid in their child’s healthy spatial skill development.

Talking Points

- Ithaca Sciencenter’s interactive programs should be broadened to include exhibits that incorporate and encourage spatial play among peers and parents.
- Such programs would consider and emphasize the importance of spatial language in developing early STEM skills, as measured by various research studies.
- As many parents overlook the importance of spatial language while playing with their child(ren), these programs would address how parents currently view spatial language in play.
- Ultimately, this proposed program aims to have parents continue using spatial language outside of the exhibit to increase its normalcy in parent-child interactions.

Key Facts

- The use of spatial language in childhood is strongly linked to the development of spatial skills, which strongly predict

superior abilities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. [1,8]

- Parents can have a significant impact on the amount of spatial language their child learns and are therefore critical in spatial skill development. [3]
- A focus on traditional toys, which emphasize interaction between parent and child, are most conducive to developing strong spatial skills, including guided play situations that result in greater spatial language use between both parent and child. [3]

Next Steps

A necessary first step to implementing this proposal includes reaching out to the Ithaca Sciencenter’s educational program coordinators, Annie Gordon (agordon@sciencenter.org), Alyssa Johnson (Ajohnson@sciencenter.org), and Peter Leipzig (pLeipzig@sciencenter.org) to discuss the need for a new program that incorporates spatial play. Speaking to the Executive Director of Sciencenter Michelle Kortenaar

(mkortenaar@sciencenter.org) and Director of Programs & Partnerships Ali Jackson (ajackson@sciencenter.org) would also be essential to understanding the feasibility of implementing a new program centered around spatial play. Moreover, it would be beneficial to reach out to Sciencenter's Exhibit Fabricator, Kathy Kraft (kkrafft@sciencenter.org), to discuss how such a program would look if and when implemented. Ithaca families and Cornell students/educators must also support this exhibit to emphasize its urgency and to begin mobilizing further outreach for this program.

Action Plan Snapshot

The spatial play program is a social justice issue: creating equitable play spaces creates more equitable STEM career outcomes for all those involved. As such, support must frame this issue not only in an academic light, but as an issue that affects the livelihoods of children who are most disadvantaged. First, developing proper materials is necessary: a concise email template emphasizing the impact of spatial abilities during childhood and the need for Sciencenter outreach, along with a family-friendly graphic flyer, would be necessary for outreach.

Support must first occur within the Ithaca community itself, particularly in the form of newspapers, email listservs, and Facebook groups. Publishing an article, along with a flyer, about the importance of spatial language in "The Ithaca Journal" would also allow the program to gain more traction by reaching more Ithaca-based parents. Such a flyer could be published in Ithaca Facebook groups to reach the community. Further, the Tompkins Cornell Cooperative Extension, which emphasizes research-based solutions to the parenting methods they teach, could be contacted to speak about the importance of spatial language within their parenting listservs and/or through already-existing play programs. Policy-supporters could also reach out to students working in Cornell Infant Studies laboratories (or the laboratories could be contacted more generally through cisl@cornell.edu), in order to educate parents and other study participants on the importance of spatial language. Furthermore, individual student support—perhaps first by students who work with young children in College Mentors for Kids and Big Red Buddies—could also share spatial-play graphics within their networks on social media

until wider awareness and support for a spatial play program is reached.

Works Cited

- [1] Christopher, Susan, and Kelly Mix. "The Connection Between Spatial and Mathematical Ability Across Development." June 4, 2018. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9: 755.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5994429/>
- [2] David, Nathaniel, Elizabeth, Linda, Alison, Christopher, and Nora Newcombe. "The malleability of spatial skills: a meta-analysis of training studies." March 2013. *Psychol Bull.*, 139(2):352-402.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22663761/>
- [3] Katrina, Kathy, Nora, Roberta, and Wendy Lam. "Block Talk: Spatial Language During Block Play." August 10, 2011. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, 5(3): 143-151.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1751-228X.2011.01122.x>
- [4] Alex, Katie, Andrew, Michael, and Emily Farran. "Spatial cognition and science achievement: The contribution of intrinsic and extrinsic spatial skills from 7 to 11 years." December 2018. *Br J Educ Psychol.*, 88(4):675-697.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29359476/>
- [5] David and Scott Johnson. "Mental Rotation of Dynamic, Three-Dimensional Stimuli by 3-Month-Old Infants." July-August 2011. *Infancy*, 16(4):435-445.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26312057/>
- [6] Katherine, Michelle, Daniel, Elsie, and Olzem Equils. "Factors influencing participation of underrepresented students in STEM fields: matched mentors and mindsets." April 21, 2020. *IJ STEM Ed*, 7(16).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-020-00219-2>

[7] “Sciencenter, Ithaca NY | Hands-on Museum and Programs.” www.sciencenter.org.
<http://www.sciencenter.org/>
[8] Wai, Jonathan, David Lubinski, and Camilla P. Benbow. 2009. “Spatial Ability for STEM Domains: Aligning over 50 Years of Cumulative Psychological Knowledge Solidifies Its Importance.” *Journal of*

Educational Psychology 101 (4): 817–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016127>.
[9] Jonathan and David H. Uttal. “Why Spatial Reasoning Matters for Educational Policy.” *American Enterprise Institute*. October 2019.
<https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Why-Spatial-Reasoning-Matters-for-Education-Policy.pdf?x91208>

[10] Bureau, US Census. n.d. “Disparities in STEM Employment by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin.” The United States Census Bureau.
<https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2013/acs/acs-24.html>.

Instituting a Federal Green Bank to Promote Renewable Energy Development

Sam Nichols, spn38@cornell.edu

The institution of a federal Green Bank could help develop the United States' renewable energy infrastructure through a combination of public and private investment, allowing for a more flexible dispersion of funds.

Background

The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) describes a necessity for “immediate, rapid, and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions” to avoid catastrophic global warming. [1] The effects of global warming include increasing temperatures (particularly in urban areas), rising of sea-levels and associated weather events, changes in precipitation patterns, and glacier melting. [1] As we approach irreversible and dangerous levels of warming, it is important to consider that the effects of climate change will be felt more intensely by the most vulnerable populations. [2] In the United States, socially vulnerable populations are 50% more likely to live in an area highly impacted by climate change. [2]

In 2011, the Connecticut General Assembly established the nation's first Green Bank. [3]

Green Banks are financial institutions that accelerate renewable energy products by utilizing limited public funds, alongside private capital investments, with the goal of making green energy financing more affordable for consumers and businesses. [3] Green Banks could have the capacity to finance the infrastructure that helps prevent climate change's most catastrophic effects and that supports underfunded communities. [3]

Policy Idea

The federal government should found a federal Green Bank, either through the establishment of a new independent agency or through integration with the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The bank, administered independently, should be responsible for developing programs that finance and support renewable energy and infrastructure development nationwide, as well as stimulate the demand and deployment of renewable

energy. The bank should garner substantial private investment from large institutional investors to meet these goals.

Policy Analysis

Historically, renewable energy installations in consumer and business contexts have been backed by robust public subsidies, tax credits, and rebates. [9] While installing and utilizing alternative energy sources is becoming cheaper, the cost is still a barrier for many. [5] Installing solar panels can cost 2-3x the amount of constructing a natural gas plant, which would produce the same amount of electricity. [5] Green Banks help mitigate this funding issue in a few different ways. First, Green Banks are funded using a limited amount of public capital as a starting point, which usually means that they could accept a lower rate of return than a private investor could. [10] These public funds are often acquired through revenues

from energy taxes or carbon pricing. [10] They also often supplement this public capital with private co-investors and traditional fundraising. [6] The New York Green Bank started with \$49 million in public funds to leverage over \$314 million in its first private capital raise. [6]

A federally chartered Green Bank could operate with a relatively small amount of public capital and, due to its broader scale, could acquire significantly more funding through private capital raises. It would have the capacity to complete larger-scale projects that go beyond the confines of a singular state. For instance, offshore wind farms would benefit from the support of a federal Green Bank because of their high up-front costs and the complex regulations that govern their construction, both of which push investors away.

Talking Points

- In 2017, the cost of installing solar panels was \$2000-3700 per kilowatt compared to a cost of \$1000 per kilowatt to install a new natural gas plant. [5]
- With only \$49 million in public funds, the New York Green Bank was able to raise over \$314 million in private capital during

its first round of funding. [6]

- Green Banks could acquire seed capital from both energy taxes and private sources.

Key Facts

- The consensus of the world's climate scientists, found in the IPCC's most recent report, states that global warming is accelerating, and temperatures will continue to increase at an alarming rate. [1]
- Socially vulnerable groups within the United States disproportionately bear the impacts of climate change, as they are up to 50% more likely to live in an area that would likely be highly impacted by sea-level rise and other effects of climate change. [2]
- Green Banks have the capital and backing to provide climate-resilient infrastructure. [3]

Next Steps

This policy should be implemented by the federal government. Due to the ability of Green Banks to seek and raise private funding, the necessary public

funding would be relatively low. The Green Bank's start-up capital could come from something as far-reaching as carbon taxation to something as small as utilizing a portion of oil-drilling profits. Following the initial public capital raise, the newly established federal Green Bank would likely have to make a number of profitable project investments, which could be achieved by working with other firms prior to receiving a private capital raise. The Bank could also partner with existing state-level Green Banks on some of these early projects. Providing that it is successful in achieving these steps, the federal Green Bank would likely be able to attract private capital from institutional investors and operate relatively independently of public funds.

Action Plan Snapshot

The American Green Bank Consortium and advocacy organizations such as the Coalition for Green Capital, which are centered around the proliferation of energy financing institutions, would likely be in support of mobilizing in favor of these policy institutions. Grassroots organizations, such as the Sunrise Movement, and other progressive organizations that have been mobilized by the Green New Deal may also

offer support towards this policy. In addition, alternative energy development tends to be popular with the general public, with 77% preferring it to expanding fossil fuels. [8] Even among voters who either vote or lean toward Republican candidates, 62% support the development of alternative sources of energy. [8] Majorities in both parties also tend to favor the construction of more solar and wind panel farms, regardless of political affiliation. [9] Furthermore, most of the hesitancy that comes with building these farms is the perceived cost, which could be mitigated with the Green Bank's public-private model, in which the majority of the capital is from private sources. [9] As such, a federal Green Bank has the possibility of being supported by a large portion of the American voting population, irrespective of party, as well as several lobbyist and advocacy organizations.

Works Cited

- [1] "Climate Change widespread, rapid, and intensifying - IPCC." Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Accessed November 22, 2021. <https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/>.
- [2] *Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impacts*. Environmental Protection Agency. https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-09/climate-vulnerability_september-2021_508.pdf.
- [3] "About Us - Making Green Energy Accessible: CT Green Bank." Connecticut Green Bank. Connecticut Green Bank. Published August 30, 2021. <https://www.ctgreenbank.com/about-us/>.
- [4] "Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions." Environmental Protection Agency. Accessed November 22, 2021, <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.
- [5] "Barriers to Renewable Energy Technologies." Union of Concerned Scientists. Last modified December 20, 2017. <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/barriers-renewable-energy-technologies>.
- [6] "NY Green Bank Announces Completion Of First Private Capital Raise And Largest By A Green Bank In The U.S." New York Green Bank. Published August 2, 2021. <https://greenbank.ny.gov/News-and-Media/In-The-News/2021-08-02-NY-Green-Bank-Private-Capital-Raise-Fund-Largest>.
- [7] Funk, C., Hefferon M. "U.S. Public Views on Climate and Energy." Pew Research Center. November 25, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2019/11/25/u-s-public-views-on-climate-and-energy/>
- [8] Kennedy B., Spencer A. "Most Americans Support Expanding Solar and Wind Energy, but Republican Support Has Dropped." Pew Research Center. June 8, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/06/08/most-americans-support-expanding-solar-and-wind-energy-but-republican-support-has-dropped/>.
- [9] "What rebates and incentives are available for solar energy?" Solar Energy Industries Association. <https://www.seia.org/initiatives/what-rebates-and-incentives-are-available-solar-energy>
- [10] "New York Green Bank." Green Bank Network. Last modified June 2, 2020. <https://greenbanknetwork.org/ny-green-bank/#:~:text=The%20USD%201.0%20billion%20state,pillars%20of%20Governor%20Andrew%20M>.

Implementing Exploratory Modeling into The Colorado River Basin's Water Management Decisions

Audrey Noziere, aln57@cornell.edu

From megadroughts on the West Coast to major flooding and storms in the east, extreme weather events continue to pose a major threat to communities and water resources around the world. The need for more informed and intensive water management policies at the state level, such as implementation of exploratory modeling for the Colorado River Basin, is imperative to minimizing these impacts and increasing the reliability of water accessibility.

Background

Studies have estimated that the Colorado River Basin provides \$1.4 trillion of economic revenue per year, 16 million jobs across 7 states, and water to 25 million people. [1] For states such as New Mexico and Nevada, it represents more than two thirds of their annual GDP (65% and 87%, respectively). [1] On August 21, 2021, the U.S. federal government declared its first-ever water cuts on the basin, due to its ongoing megadrought. The basin is estimated to be filled to 35% of its full capacity and has suffered a 20% decrease in inflow in the last century. [2] Inevitably, climate change impacts the water supply of the river basin, but water management policies are currently insufficient for mitigating these changes. Researchers worldwide, such as the Reed Research Group at Cornell, have focused on utilizing algorithmic

modeling to create robust policies for water resources. These studies consider the complexity of the water system as it applies to multiple sectors, including infrastructure and farming.

Current laws governing water resource allocation in Colorado are based on a system of “prior appropriation,” which prioritizes those who have had water rights for a longer time over those who have only recently gained their rights (senior water rights holders versus junior water rights holders, respectively). [3] This system is rooted in a historic “first come first serve” structure, creating a major obstacle for productive water management policies. [4]

Policy Proposal

Water management policy in the Colorado River Basin should use exploratory modeling, coupled with the

StateMod database that is already in place. While the StateMod simulation system is limited to helping make year-by-year decisions with water flow rate, water delivery, and infrastructure that is in contact with water, exploratory modeling aims to better assess long-term risk. [3,5] This policy would therefore lead to more effective policies for statewide reallocation of water and prevent water shortages in Colorado.

Policy Analysis

The implementation of exploratory modeling for the Colorado River Basin would help state policymakers shift away from an outdated first-come first-serve system and towards increasing productivity and equity when it comes to water reallocation. Rather than eliminating the currently limited water resources entirely, this policy would

efficiently manage the water that is available.

This policy would challenge senior water rights holders, who would likely lose their priority access to water in times of drought, as well as increase water accessibility for junior water rights holders. The major beneficiary of this policy would be the greater Colorado community, as it would gain a more resilient water system.

Unfortunately, exploratory modeling is not an easy task to achieve, particularly because of the notable amount of computational power and data management required for these long-term simulations. Moreover, some researchers have experienced difficulties in implementing exploratory modeling within the StateMod system. [3] Their studies show some situations in which junior water rights holders have gained more rights, while in other cases they have experienced worse outcomes. [6] To mitigate these obstacles, more time and money should be spent in studying exploratory modeling in this context, so that computational difficulties can be reduced.

Talking Points

- This plan aims to better optimize water management policy to

better manage the limited water resources rather than depleting it.

- This policy would likely challenge the unique water rights law in the region to be allocated based on beneficial use.
- The computational power needed to implement exploratory Modeling in the Colorado River basin is the main obstacle of this policy.

Key Facts

- The Colorado River Basin provides water to 25 million people and jobs to 16 million people across 7 states. [1]
- Increasing drought in the region adds major stress to the water supply of the Colorado River Basin, reducing maximum water capacity to 35%. [2]
- Current policies and laws dictate how water is distributed in the region, particularly after major droughts, thereby reducing water availability for certain populations. [3]
- The need for exploratory modeling

to strengthen and better target policies is imperative to lessen the impact of droughts in the region.

Next Steps

This policy should be implemented at the state level; every region of the U.S. is different and, as a result, there could be no one-size-fits-all model. While the state of Colorado may benefit from implementing exploratory modeling in its decision-making process, these same policies may not be adequate if applied to the state of California, for example. As the use of exploratory modeling is still in its infancy and is extremely computationally intensive, each state should donate funds for further research, so that this type of modeling can be more accessible. A water tax on extreme water usage from long showers or grass watering could also be put into place to disincentivize unsustainable water practices, as well as to fund the aforementioned research.

Action Plan Snapshot

The concept of exploratory modeling is confusing for the average citizen with no experience in computer science or engineering. For this reason, a campaign led by

universities such as Cornell, local organizations such as Colorado WaterWise, and state officials should be implemented to educate individuals on the topic. Informed citizens could then place pressure on regional representatives to invest more funding into StateMod and exploratory modeling, in order to better evaluate how it could be productively applied to the Colorado River basin. Finally, local citizens should lobby for state legislators to establish a new system, whereby water rights are based solely on utility.

Works Cited

- [1] "Economic Importance of the Colorado River." The Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/priority-landscapes/colorado-river/economic-importance-of-the-colorado-river/>.
- [2] Kann, Drew. "Climate Change Is Drying up the Colorado River, Putting Millions at Risk of 'Severe Water Shortages'." CNN. Cable News Network, February 22, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/21/weather/colorado-river-flow-dwindling-warming-temperatures-climate-change/index.html>.
- [3] Hadjimichael, Antonia, Julianne Quinn, Erin Wilson, Patrick Reed, Leon Basdekas, David Yates, and Michelle Garrison. "Defining Robustness, Vulnerabilities, and Consequential Scenarios for Diverse Stakeholder Interests in Institutionally Complex River Basins." *Earth's Future* 8, no. 7 (May 12, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1029/2020ef001503>.
- [4] "Water Rights Overview." Water Colorado. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://watercolorado.com/water-rights-overview/>.
- [5] "StateMod." Colorado's Decision Support Systems. Accessed December 1, 2021. <https://cdss.colorado.gov/software/s/tatemod#:~:text=StateMod%20is%20a%20monthly%20and,Major%20Features%3A&text=Applies%20to%20any%20river%20basin%20through%20appropriate%20input%20data%20preparation.>
- [6] Hadjimichael, Antonia, Julianne Quinn, and Patrick Reed. "Advancing Diagnostic Model Evaluation to Better Understand Water Shortage Mechanisms in Institutionally Complex River Basins." *Water Resources Research* 56, no. 10 (October 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1029/2020wr028079>.

Revamping the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program in New York State

Abraham Reiss, abr92@cornell.edu

New York State should take a significant step towards a greener, more equitable future by expanding its existing Drive Clean Rebate, thereby boosting access to electric vehicles.

Background

In New York State, the transportation sector is a key driver of climate change; light motor vehicles alone account for more than 27% of all state emissions of greenhouse gases. [1] The burdens of these emissions—including extreme weather, heat, and high levels of pollution—often fall disproportionately on low-income neighborhoods of color that have historically experienced discriminatory zoning and polluting. [2,3] Phasing out conventional fossil-fuel driven vehicles for electric vehicles (EV) promises to slash emissions; a study by the International Council for Clean Transportation finds that, compared to a conventional vehicle, the average EV is responsible for 50-70% fewer greenhouse gas emissions over its lifetime, depending on the electricity source. [4] Existing policies, such as New York State’s Drive Clean Rebate, which offers up to \$2,000 on new purchases of EVs and plug-in hybrids, have been shown to

mitigate upfront costs and expand EV adoption. [5,6] However, even with rebates, there exist significant disparities in EV access, as high-income zip-codes report far higher rates of EV adoption. [7] For instance, compared to low-income zip codes, high-income areas boast adoption rates that are 5.7 times higher for the Nissan Leaf, 4.3 times higher for the Chevrolet Bolt, and 3 times higher for the Chevrolet Volt. [5] While low-income individuals on the frontlines of climate change would benefit most from owning EVs, their access to such vehicles is limited. If New York is serious about reaching its ambitious climate goals—including its mandate for 100% of car sales to become zero-emissions vehicles by 2035—steps should be taken now to ensure that low-income New Yorkers afford EVs. [8]

Policy Idea

New York State should make three changes to expand its Drive Clean

Rebate to boost EV adoption among low-income people. First, the program should offer rebates for used EVs. Second, New York State should offer higher rebates based on targeted zip codes and income levels, perhaps by upping the rebate from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for these populations. Finally, New York should adopt a policy similar to California’s “Clean Cars for All” program, under which low-income New Yorkers can exchange their older, higher-emitting vehicles for credits to purchase an EV. [9]

Policy Analysis

These proposed boosts would allow low-income New Yorkers to more easily switch to EVs. An added \$1,000 rebate for qualifying New Yorkers and an expansion of the Drive Clean rebate to used cars would diminish upfront costs. A policy similar to California’s “Clean Cars for All” program in New York should offer comparable rebate rates ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000. [9]

Combined with the existing federal tax credit worth up to \$7,500 for new EV purchases, these proposed additions would enable qualifying low-income New Yorkers to trade in older cars and save up to \$20,500 when they buy an EV. [9] These incentives would likely prove extremely effective. A 2019 study found that rebates are significantly associated with EV adoption: across the U.S., every thousand dollars of rebate offered was associated with an 8% boost in new EV registrations. [10] Research has also demonstrated that low-income buyers are especially responsive to such incentives. [11] Should these policy changes be implemented, potentially towering rates of EV adoption among low-income populations would cut emissions and improve quality of life in frontline communities. Reductions in transportation noise and pollution have demonstrated significant health benefits, particularly in urban areas. [12] Finally, EVs are less costly to continue running compared to conventional vehicles, meaning that new owners would save around \$1,000 annually (a value that represents 7% of the annual income of the lowest quintile of American earners). [7]

Talking Points

- Combined with the existing \$7,500 federal tax credit, an income-targeted boost to the Drive Clean rebate and an adoption of a “Clean Cars for All” style program would save qualifying New Yorkers trading in their old cars between \$15,500 to \$20,500 on a new EV. [9]
- A \$1,000 rebate increase for EV purchasers is associated with an 8% increase in EV adoption. [10]
- Switching to an EV saves the lowest quintile of American earners around \$1,000 annually, which represents 7% of their annual income. [7]

Key Facts

- Light motor vehicles are responsible for more than 27% of all greenhouse gas emissions in New York State. [1]
- EV adoption is capable of slashing these emissions by as much as 70%. [4]
- While purchases for new gasoline vehicles are twice as high in high-income zip codes compared to low-income zip

codes, the gap in purchases is far higher for EVs, as high-income areas see 5.7 times higher adoption rates of the Nissan Leaf, 4.3 times higher for the Chevrolet Bolt, and 3 times higher for the Chevrolet Volt. [5]

Next Steps

Implementing these proposed boosts to New York’s Electric Vehicle Rebate program would require passing a bill through the State Legislature. Such an effort would require finding an elected official willing to act as a sponsor for the legislation. It would be important for this sponsor to be committed to persuading their colleagues in the legislature to support the proposed changes to the EV rebate policy. Senators and Assembly Members with a demonstrated history of motivated support for environmental policies would be a strong target. Politicians with this background could be found by looking at each chamber’s respective energy and environment committees. [13,14] Further, elected officials who have sponsored important environmental legislation, such as Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D) of Long Island, who introduced the monumental Climate Leadership and Community

Protection Act (CLCPA) in 2019, or Sen. Kevin Parker (D) of Brooklyn, sponsor of the Climate and Community Investment Act (CCIA) in 2021. [15,16] Legislative sponsors should also be willing to incorporate grassroots and community voices into the policy process. Furthermore, a policy push for EV equity should also seek input and support from low-income, “frontline” communities who are the targets of these proposed changes.

Action Plan Snapshot

First, an effort to revamp New York’s EV rebates should aim to mobilize support from target groups and organizations statewide. Since the policy would affect low-income New Yorkers from all corners of the state, congealing a broad coalition of actors would be an important strategy that would likely widen support in the legislature. Targets would include environmental and economic justice organizations and activists, as well as individuals and community groups from the low-income areas that would benefit most from these changes. Reaching out to existing New York coalitions, such as NY Renews, which brings over 200 groups together behind environmental policy efforts,

would be a strong starting point. [17] Social media campaigns, community meetings and deliberations, and news coverage and op-ed/research publications would also be strong avenues to garner support. Earning the favor of environmental interest groups with wide membership rolls in New York state, such as the Sierra Club, would be an important path to bolster awareness and to recruit volunteers. Once achieved, mobilized grassroots and organizational backing could be translated into success in the legislature. Building a network of elected officials and community and interest group voices to champion EV rebate policy improvements would be a key goal for implementing change.

Works Cited

[1] “Transforming Transportation in New York.” September 1, 2019. Sierra Club and Synapse Energy Economics, INC. <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/blog/Transforming%20Transportation%20in%20New%20York.pdf>
[2] “Addressing Climate and Environmental Justice Concerns.” NYC Mayor’s Office of Climate and Sustainability. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/sustainability/our-programs/environmental-justice.page>
[3] Kilani, Hazar. “‘Asthma Alley’: why minorities bear burden of pollution caused by white people.” *The Guardian*, 4 April, 2019. [\[bronx-minorities-pollution-inequity#:~:text=The%20park%20is%20a%20little,pollution%20levels%20in%20the%20US\]\(https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/apr/04/new-york-south-bronx-minorities-pollution-inequity#:~:text=The%20park%20is%20a%20little,pollution%20levels%20in%20the%20US\)
\[4\] Hall, Dale and Lutsey, Nic. “Effects of battery manufacturing on electric vehicle life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions.” The International Council on Clean Transportation, February 2018. \[https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/EV-life-cycle-GHG_ICCT-Briefing_09022018_vF.pdf\]\(https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/EV-life-cycle-GHG_ICCT-Briefing_09022018_vF.pdf\)
\[5\] Bui, Anh, Slowick, Peter, and Nic Lutsey. “Update on electric vehicle adoption across U.S. cities.” The International Council on Clean Transportation, 31 August, 2020. <https://theicct.org/publications/ev-update-us-cities-aug2020>
\[6\] “Drive Clean Rebate for Electric Cars.” New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/all-programs/programs/drive-clean-rebate>
\[7\] Bauer, Gordon, Hsu, Chih-Wei and Nic Lutsey. “When might lower-income drivers benefit from driving electric vehicles? Quantifying the economic equity implications of electric vehicle adoption.” The International Council on Clean Transportation, February 2021. <https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/EV-equity-feb2021.pdf>
\[8\] Trotta, Daniel and Shepardson, David. “New York sets 2035 zero-emission passenger car goal.” *Reuters*, 8 September, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/new-york-sets-2035-zero-emission-passenger-car-goal-2021-09-09/>
\[9\] Blanco, Sebastian. “Bay Area Grant Program Offers \\$9500 to Trade Your Gasoline Car for an EV.” *Car and Driver*, 9 October, 2021. <https://www.caranddriver.com/news/a37916152/bay-area-grant-program-trade-ice-for-ev/>](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/apr/04/new-york-south-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

- [10] Clinton, Bentley C. and Steinberg, Daniel C. "Providing the Spark: Impact of financial incentives on battery electric vehicle adoption." *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* 98 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jee.2019.102255>.
- [11] Jenn, Alan, Lee, Jae Hyun, Hardman, Scott and Gil Tal. "An in-depth examination of electric vehicle incentives: Consumer heterogeneity and changing response over time." *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 132, (2020): 97-109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2019.11.004>.
- [12] Vienneau, Daniell et. al. "Years of life lost and morbidity cases attributable to transportation noise and air pollution: A comparative health risk assessment for Switzerland in 2010." *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health* 218, no. 6, (2015):514-521. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijheh.2015.05.003>.
- [13] The New York State Senate. "Senators, Committees, and Other Legislative Groups." *NYsenate.gov*. <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators-committees>
- [14] New York State Assembly. "Standing Committees." *NYassembly.gov*. <https://nyassembly.gov/comm/>.
- [16] The New York State Senate. "Senate Bill S6599." 2019-2020 Regular Sessions, 18 June, 2019. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2019/s6599>
- [15] The New York State Senate. "Senate Bill S4264A." 2021-2022 Regular Sessions, 3 February, 2021. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/s4264>
- [17] NY Renewals. <https://www.nyrenews.org/>.

Digital Privacy: Protecting Individuals from Invasive Scans and Searches

Franklin Zheng, fmz7@cornell.edu

Due to the current lack of sufficient legislation regarding the violations of individuals' rights to privacy in their digital devices and environments, a law that prohibits the searching and scanning of individuals' digital affairs should be passed.

Background

In the digital environment, the matter of the Fourth Amendment is an area of great controversy. It is generally accepted that individuals' rights to be secure from unreasonable searches and seizures in their own affairs extends to their digital devices. [1] However, American tech giant Apple Inc. has recently played a role in circumventing this right for many individuals. Through the development of digital scanning and fingerprinting technology, the company has introduced the possibility of private technology providers soon being able to actively scan, search for, and detect child sexual abuse imagery on encrypted personal devices and environments. [2] The potential infringement on individuals' right to be digitally secure is pertinent, not only to users of Apple products, but also to users of all encrypted devices. In documents released by the European Union in 2020, similar scanning technologies

are purported to be in consideration for the detection of terrorism and child pornography. [3] Though technology providers are required by law to report illegal activity once they become aware of it, there remains insufficient U.S. legislation requiring providers to actively search for illegalities. [4] As one of the U.S.'s dominant technology companies, Apple Inc. has set a precedent for other tech companies to follow suit. As a result, the matter of American citizens' digital privacy is at stake.

Policy Idea

The U.S. federal government should pass legislation that completely removes the ability of private technology providers to scan and search individuals' private digital devices and environments. Such a law would clearly delineate digital devices and environments as spaces protected from unreasonable searches and seizures, federal or otherwise. Thus, only

under probable cause would companies be required to contact law enforcement, which would then have to obtain a warrant to conduct scans and searches.

Policy Analysis

The proposed policy is easily actionable, as it reflects a current soft law in which individuals have security within their own digital affairs. By establishing digital devices and environments as untouchable from federal and private entities, this policy would curb private technology providers' abilities to be actively involved in individuals' digital affairs. The policy would also reinforce existing legislation that prohibits computer trespassing, intercepts digital communications, and prevents access to stored electronic items. [5,6,7] In removing private companies from the search and scanning process, the proposed policy would also support existing literature, which highlights

the ineffectiveness of client-side scanning technologies (CSS), i.e., content detection software deployed on individuals' devices. In a study published on October 14, 2021 by prominent cybersecurity researchers, CSS was determined to be ineffective at detecting targeted material when exposed to existing manipulation tactics. [8]

Evasion attacks (manipulating images to evade detection) and false-positive attacks (encouraging software to flag inoffensive material) have traditionally been carried out server-side to continue illegal content proliferation. Reverse-engineering of the technology, which allows for its circumvention, becomes far easier for criminals with CSS. Thus, its ban would encourage the usage of more effective server-side scanning, thereby reducing illegal material while simultaneously protecting individual digital privacy. Furthermore, the proposed law would still allow for user-submitted reports and publicly uploaded illegal material to be communicated to law enforcement. As companies are already required by law to report instances of illegal digital material, this policy would incentivize compliant traffic along this route. [4]

Talking Points

- A domestic law that disallows private technology companies from freely scanning and searching individuals' encrypted, personal devices and environments should be enacted.
- Only through individuals' online publications (e.g., posting to a forum) and user-submitted reports of reasonable confidence would companies be required to report suspected illegalities to law enforcement.
- The proposition from Apple Inc. and the motion in the European Union clearly violate individuals' Fourth Amendment rights, but this proposed law would prevent private companies from having the legal, protected ability and duty to scan and search private, encrypted, digital devices.

Key Facts

- Apple Inc. introduced a new technology that detects and flags child sexual abuse material on users' iCloud Photos. [2]

- In a United Nations meeting in November 2020, a proposal to scan individuals' private digital repositories in search of terrorist and child sexual abuse content was put forth. [3] Cybersecurity researchers believe this proposal could be enacted within months. [8]
- If technology providers become aware of illegal content, they are required by law to report it. [4] There lacks, however, United States legislation disclosing whether or not providers are required to actively search for such illegalities. [4]

Next Steps

With the analysis of this policy indicating its great effectiveness, this policy should be implemented at the federal level as soon as possible. A feasible, immediate course of action would be to propose the bill to Congress, so that private companies are efficiently banned from conducting searches and scans on individuals' private digital devices and environments. Such a bill could be proposed and endorsed in either the Senate or the House of

Representatives. Once the bill is passed through both the Senate and the House, the President must sign it into federal law. However, amidst the current polarized political environment with few moderates, it may be difficult to reach consensus on such a controversial bill. Additional research must be conducted by lobbyists and government agencies to determine the exact definitions of digital devices and environments, as well as scans and searches.

Action Plan Snapshot

To implement this policy, several areas may need to be addressed for Congress to reach a consensus. Sufficient support behind such a bill is necessary for Representatives and Senators to vote to pass the bill. Projects such as the Project on Speech, Privacy, and Technology by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) could help generate national support for this proposed policy regarding digital privacy. [9] Organizations such as the ACLU could lobby for support of this bill and aid in forming bipartisan support, specifically by framing the issue as one of both ethics and security. Support from both Republicans and Democrats would certainly be needed to increase the likelihood of passing the bill.

Regarding specific technicalities of the bill, government agencies such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) within the U.S. Department of Commerce must be consulted. Thorough research must be conducted to delineate the definitions of the proposed ban on client-side scanning technology. In addition, the exact digital mediums to be maintained as untouchable must be specifically identified and laid out. The NIST could aid in forming standards of digital privacy through its Information Security and Privacy Advisory Board. [10] Clear delineations of the terms in the proposed legislation would allow for easier interpretation and enforcement. Only through bipartisan support, as well as rigorous research and development, can the proposed policy become law.

Works Cited

- [1] *Riley v. California*, 573 U.S. 373 (2014). Accessed October 20, 2021.
https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/13pdf/13-132_819c.pdf.
- [2] "Expanded Protections for Children." Apple. Last modified September 3, 2021.
<https://www.apple.com/child-safety/>.
- [3] Council of the European Union. "Council Resolution on Encryption - Security through encryption and security despite encryption." Last modified November 24, 2020.
<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/do>

<c/document/ST-13084-2020-REV-1/en/pdf>.

[4] Sexual Exploitation and Other Abuse of Children, 18 U.S.C. Ch. 110 §§2251-60. January 3, 2012.
<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title18/part1/cha110&edition=prelim>.

[5] Fraud and related activity in connection with computers, 18 U.S. Code § 1030 (2002).

[https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:18%20section:1030%20edition:prelim\)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:18%20section:1030%20edition:prelim))

[6] Interception and disclosure of wire, oral, or electronic communications prohibited, 18 USC 2511 (1970).

[https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:18%20section:2511%20edition:prelim\)#effective-date-amendment-note](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:18%20section:2511%20edition:prelim)#effective-date-amendment-note).

[7] Required disclosure of customer communications or records, 18 USC 2703 (1986).
[https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:18%20section:2703%20edition:prelim\)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:18%20section:2703%20edition:prelim)).

[8] Abelson, Hal, Ross Anderson, Steven M. Bellovin, Josh Benaloh, Matt Blaze, Jon Callas, Whitfield Diffie, Susan Landau, Peter G. Neumann, Ronald L. Rivest, Jeffrey I. Schiller, Bruce Schneier, Vanessa Teague, and Carmela Troncoso. *Bugs in our Pockets: The Risks of Client-Side Scanning*. Research paper. Last modified October 15, 2021.

<https://arxiv.org/pdf/2110.07450.pdf>.

[9] "ACLU History." ACLU. Accessed November 3, 2021.
<https://www.aclu.org/about/aclu-history>

[10] "Information Security and Privacy Advisory Board." National Institute of Standard and Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce. Last modified October 27, 2021.

<https://csrc.nist.gov/projects/ispab>.

[11] Browning, Kellen. "Cybersecurity Experts Sound Alarm on Apple and E.U. Phone Scanning Plans." Last modified

October 14, 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/14/business/apple-child-sex-abuse-cybersecurity.html>.

[12] Robertson, Jordan. "Apple's Child-Porn Tracking System Is Flawed, Report Says." Last modified October 15, 2021.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-15/experts-detail-flaws-in-apple-child-porn-tracking-system>.

[13] Fakhoury, Hanniand and Dia Kayyali. "Know Your Rights." Last modified October 2014.

<https://www.eff.org/issues/know-your-rights>.

[14] U.S. Const. amend. IV.

Accessed October 20, 2021.

<https://billofrightsintstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights>.

Foreign Policy

Director: Javier Vega

Analysts: Nile Johnson, Reese Kemen, Richard Li, Jason Liu,
Jack Lo, Avraham Spraragen, Sasha Zuberi

Competing Without Experts: Waning Interest in China Studies Among American Students

Nile Johnson, nyj3@cornell.edu

The lack of students studying Sino-studies on the precipice of a U.S.-China cold war makes the establishment of a State Department ROTC style program necessary. Such a program would offer incentives to make studying China more profitable.

Background

The consensus regarding U.S.-China relations has decisively shifted to be more confrontational. In February, President Biden proclaimed China “the most serious competitor” to the U.S., and public-opinion polls have captured similar sentiments. [1] Concerningly, increasing foreign policy attention on China has been accompanied by a waning of interest in China studies. Despite the existence of programs such as the Obama-era “Strong Initiative” to boost academic interest, enrollment in the program peaked in 2011-2012 and has been dwindling ever since. [2] Chief among the reasons for lackluster engagement is China’s declining need for foreigners, the increasing number of students studying STEM, and American students’ disinterest in Chinese culture. [3] The number of Chinese studying in the U.S. increased by 16.5% percent between 2013 and 2014, diminishing the number of jobs formerly

available to U.S. students with a Chinese background. [4] Further, STEM students have been discouraged from pursuing China Studies because they overemphasize language and culture, leaving them no time to fulfill their extensive major requirements. [5] Even among students who are otherwise interested in pursuing East Asian studies, because China’s soft power is comparably much weaker in the region, demand for degrees studying other East Asian countries is much higher. [6] If U.S.-China relations remain a priority, the lack of Chinese experts would leave policy makers exposed to possible miscalculations in a Cold War environment.

Policy Idea

For the U.S. to restore interest in China among its student population, the State Department must offer incentives to counteract declining interest. To accomplish this, the State Department should create an

ROTC-style program. Students enrolled in such a program would take certain courses, demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language, and serve in government—similar to their ROTC counterparts—for several years. Different tracks would also be offered within the program to provide students interested in STEM and other non-traditional fields with a path in policy regarding China relations.

Policy Analysis

One of the primary concerns for students studying China is the lack of a payoff. Students have no motive to take themselves out of a job market while simultaneously paying exorbitant tuition costs to learn a challenging language with no career path. Thus, the State Department program would offer a mutually beneficial exchange similar to ROTC. In return for service time in the government, the State Department would offer students who would have

otherwise studied in China a higher education scholarship and a guaranteed job to do so. The work experience gained in the State Department would encourage students to pursue careers in government, think tanks, or NGOs. While the shift of government workers to the private sector may create a brain drain at the State Department, the influx of China experts in any policy environment would be a valuable resource nonetheless. Furthermore, by providing scholarships, the State Department would be able to decide student coursework to an extent. Inevitably, not all students would have an interest in studying China. However, by providing different “tracks,” the State Department would create course sequences that correspond to an area of utmost interest within the State Department, such as China, that students have to take. Moreover, having different tracks would allow the State Department to tailor coursework for individual students. For example, STEM students who have been discouraged from pursuing China Studies, perhaps due to the overemphasis on language and culture, could accomplish a tech-oriented “track” that emphasizes expertise on Chinese technology but also omits language entirely.

Talking Points

- The decreasing number of Americans studying China, which corresponds to an increase in Chinese students studying in the U.S., suggests that China would have more “U.S. experts” than the U.S. would have of “China experts.”
- Creating a State Department program would alleviate language and on-the-job training for all entry-level foreign service officers.
- Scholarships and tracks deemphasizing language would allow more students to study China from a diverse set of academic backgrounds.
- The work experience gained at the State Department would induce students to continue their careers in government or similar career paths in think tanks/NGOs.

Key Facts

- In March, the Biden Administration’s Interim National Security Strategic Guidance asserted that China is the only competitor potentially

capable of mounting a sustained challenge against the U.S.-led international order. [7]

- The number of U.S. students studying in China has fallen, even as overall study abroad numbers have risen modestly (i.e., students with a serious interest in China spend time studying abroad). [8]
- The growing percentage of mainland Chinese who have studied abroad and have proficiency in English have diminished the jobs formerly available to U.S. students with a Chinese background. [9]

Next Steps

In FY2021, the ROTC program was given a \$987 million dollar budget. [10] Emulating such a program would likely cost the State Department a similar amount. Considering that the State Department spent only \$25.921 million on consular training and language studies, the State Department program is too high in cost to be implemented. As such, partnerships with other departments need to be explored. Given the increasing prevalence of

military officers in foreign policy making, the State Department should explore a partnership to expand ROTC. Adding a language component to ROTC would benefit the military's regional alignment doctrine and provide the State Department with highly capable applicants who might seek a civilian sector job later after their military careers. [10] In addition, a modification to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness to offer added benefits to students with a China background could incentivize students while working with existing funds. [11]

Works Cited

- [1] Churchill, Owen. "Biden Calls China 'Most Serious Competitor' to US in Foreign Policy Speech." *South China Morning Post*, February 18, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3120618/first-foreign-policy-address-president-biden-calls-china-most>.
- [2] Mooney, Paul. "American Students Lose Interest in China Studies." *Nikkei Asia*. *Nikkei Asia*, April 15, 2017. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Location/Rest-of-the-World/North-America/American-students-lose-interest-in-China-studies>.
- [3] Mooney, Paul. "American Students Lose Interest in China Studies." *Nikkei Asia*. *Nikkei Asia*, April 15, 2017. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Location/Rest-of-the-World/North-America/American-students-lose-interest-in-China-studies>.
- [4] Chao, Chiang-nan, Niall Hegarty, John Angelidis, and Victor F. Lu. "Chinese Students' Motivations for Studying in the United States." *Journal of International Students* 7, no. 2 (2017): 257–69. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v7i2.380>.
- [5] Harney, Alexandra. "U.S. Students Losing Interest in China as Dream Jobs Prove Elusive." *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, March 12, 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-usa-students/u-s-students-losing-interest-in-china-as-dream-jobs-prove-elusive-idUSKBN0M82MU20150312>.
- [6] Holyk, Gregory G. "Paper Tiger? Chinese Soft Power in East Asia." *Political Science Quarterly* 126, no. 2 (2011): 223–54. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1538-165x.2011.tb00700.x>.
- [7] Churchill, Owen. "Biden Calls China 'Most Serious Competitor' to US in Foreign Policy Speech." *South China Morning Post*, February 18, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3120618/first-foreign-policy-address-president-biden-calls-china-most>.
- [8] Mooney, Paul. "American Students Lose Interest in China Studies." *Nikkei Asia*. *Nikkei Asia*, April 15, 2017. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Location/Rest-of-the-World/North-America/American-students-lose-interest-in-China-studies>.
- [9] Chao, Chiang-nan, Niall Hegarty, John Angelidis, and Victor F. Lu. "Chinese Students' Motivations for Studying in the United States." *Journal of International Students* 7, no. 2 (2017): 257–69. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v7i2.380>.
- [10] "Defense Primer: Senior Reserve Officer Training Corps." *Congressional Research Service*. Accessed November 24, 2021. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/IF11235.pdf>.
- [11] Bechtel, Caroline. "Warriors, Scholars, Diplomats: The Role of Military Officers in Foreign Policymaking." *Warriors, Scholars, Diplomats: The Role of Military Officers in Foreign Policymaking | Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Accessed November 24, 2021. <https://www.csis.org/npfp/warriors-scholars-diplomats-role-military-officers-foreign-policymaking>.

Increasing the U.S. Military's Deterrence Capabilities in the Indo-Pacific Corridor

Reese Kemen, rnk54@cornell.edu

The U.S. government's objectives in the Indo-Pacific are to guarantee the safety and freedom of maritime traffic under international law and strengthen ties with regional partners. However, due to China's recent aggression, new deterrence and diplomatic strategies must be implemented to uphold international law.

Background

China regards the South China Sea as an inviolable part of its territory and has spent recent years transforming sandbars, reefs, and other natural features into artificial islands that hold military installations. [1] This infrastructure illegitimately expands China's military capabilities, offshore resources, and territorial claims. [2] The country has continued to ignore the international community, including the nations of Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam, among others, and courts that have opposed it on the basis of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) are already declaring administrative control over the Paracel and Spratly islands. [1] While the U.S. military's less aggressive and limited display of force through its freedom-of-navigation naval operations (FONOPS) may temporarily dissuade China from annexing more

maritime features, Chinese leadership has already shown that it will continue to militarize the islands it already controls: the PLA has deployed anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missile systems, bombers, and even U.S. naval assets and bases on several of these islands, providing China with extended range into the Indo-Pacific. [2]

The PLA now poses a significant threat to America's eroding competitive military advantage and authority in the Indo-Pacific region. [3] U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) released a report in 2020 conceding this point, stating that "the DoD's military advantage vis-a-vis China and Russia is eroding and, if inadequately addressed, it will undermine our ability to deter aggression and coercion." [4] Moreover, the U.S. must re-evaluate its current position and establish an action plan to ultimately regain the advantage and

restore order to this chaotic gray zone.

Policy Idea

To better combat Chinese territorial claims and restore international law and agreement in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S. should approve an action plan to provide an objective framework, including placing greater emphasis on regional allies and partners, promoting regional cooperation between China and ASEAN affiliates, and strengthening and mobilizing U.S. military assets in the region. Moreover, the United States should pursue a three-pronged approach: establish a *modus vivendi* agreement, prevent adversarial action through military buildup and deterrence, and resolve territorial disagreements by acting as a conciliatory party in negotiations.

Policy Analysis

One of the critical focus areas of the notional Indo-Pacific action plan

should be to strengthen the military capabilities of regional allies in pushing back against Chinese advancements. The U.S. military currently deals with nations in the Indo-Pacific region in largely bilateral terms through training exercises and mutual defense pacts, which have been successful in fostering mutual trust, respect, and information-sharing. [5] However, this “hub-and-spoke” alliance structure has limited the U.S.’s ability to assemble collective security against a rising China. [6] Thus, multilateral agreements must be made among all U.S. partners to improve the capacity for these nations to better defend themselves, united under a common objective to re-establish maritime law and denounce China’s claims of regional sovereignty.

Another important aspect of the action plan would be to adopt a more assertive approach to effectively counter China’s strategy in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. should commit substantial military forces to the Indo-Pacific region, positioning them in and around the South China Sea, which would allow the military to respond quickly if the PLA attempted to seize or militarize more features. These measures would ensure that the United States Indo-

Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) is able to maintain the military superiority necessary to make this containment policy credible and effective. With more capable U.S. military power projection and stronger allies, Washington DC could more effectively pursue agreements with Beijing and resolve maritime disputes. Preferably, the U.S., China, and The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) affiliates should seek to establish a *modus vivendi*, or practical compromise, that allows conflicting parties to co-exist without the threat of violence.

Talking Points

A future code of conduct between ASEAN and China should require that each nation adheres to the following proposed compromises:

- Upholding freedom of navigation as outlined by UNCLOS.
- Refraining from constructing, occupying, or militarizing facilities on uninhabited artificial islands and other features in the Indo-Pacific.
- Affirming peaceful negotiations relating to environmental conservation and protection, as well as

offshore resource exploration and extraction.

- Exploring avenues for cooperation between the respective militaries and coast guards of each signatory nation to deal with trans-national crime.
- Resolving disagreements solely through peaceful means, rather than resorting to threats of violence and destruction.

Key Facts

- China regards the South China Sea as an inviolable part of its territory, repeatedly ignoring the sovereign claims of Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. [7]
- China has already declared administrative control over the Paracel and Spratly Islands and has transformed the surrounding natural features within the Indo-Pacific disputed area into artificial islands that host airstrips, naval ports, and other military installations. [8]
- Washington has responded solely by

launching freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs), which entail sailing aircraft carrier strike forces within China's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), close to its artificial islands. [9]

Next Steps

To ensure cooperation among all ASEAN member states, as well as the other democratic states in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S. must make clear that its presence in the region is not meant to replace ASEAN as the primary governing body of the Indo-Pacific, but rather to bolster the organization in its efforts to restore international law. The U.S. should help facilitate the negotiation process between China and ASEAN nations, in order to construct the aforementioned *modus vivendi*. As a long-term partner of ASEAN, the U.S. should act as a conciliator to ensure that China does not overstep its bounds. Moreover, due to the severity of China's actions, this proposal should be implemented in a timely manner.

Action Plan Snapshot

Firstly, the U.S. can promote peace—or at least the absence of all-out war—by placing its own military capabilities and those of its

regional partners on full display, in order to ensure that China or any other potential threat would not be certain of a quick and easy victory. Moreover, diplomatic engagement with China would be far more effective when backed by credible military containment and deterrence, as China would be reluctant to escalate the situation in the face of strong U.S. power projection and allied support.

Of course, the U.S. should handle foreign affairs primarily using diplomacy, though also supplemented by military might; in this regard, the U.S. should employ all the tools at its disposal to counter the PLA, preferably within 1-2 fiscal years following its approval. Although the Indo-Pacific theater is primarily a naval theater, China's increasing militarization in the region has placed all U.S. military assets at risk. [10] Thus, INDOPACOM should respond by utilizing all domains, including cyber and space, rather than relying solely on naval and air forces. By preparing for attacks on these domains to counter China's long-range missiles, which would threaten naval assets and bases, the U.S. military could more effectively project its power. For the approval of such a ratcheting-up of U.S. military capacity, the leading

members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Forces should be consulted, including Jack Reed (D-RI), James Inhofe (R-OK), and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), among other members, who have each gone on public record stating that they support an increase in the U.S.'s ability to deter a rising China. [11] The influence that comes with these senators would be crucial for regaining military and geopolitical superiority over China.

Without regional military revitalization, strategic U.S. failure in the Indo-Pacific would become significantly more likely, should open conflict ever occur. At the same time, operating exclusively on a diplomatic stance is unlikely to convince China of ending its reign of terror. A combination of these policies would be far more effective in stabilizing the Indo-Pacific.

Works Cited

- [1] Philip Davidson, "China's Challenge to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific," *Harvard Kennedy School*, Cambridge, MA. October 1, 2019. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/chinas-challenge-free-and-open-indo-pacific>.
- [2] Karen Leigh and Peter Martin. "Troubled Waters: Where the US and China Could Clash in the South China Sea," *Bloomberg.com*. December 17, 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphiccs/2020-south-china-sea-miscalculation/>.

[3] Office of the Secretary of Defense. "Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China." United States Department of Defense, February 2021. <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF?source=GovDelivery>.

[4] U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM): *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy*. <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

[5] Zhou Bo, "The Risk of U.S.-China Military Conflict is Worryingly High," *Financial Times*, August 25, 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/0f423616-d9f2-4ca6-8d3ba04d467ed6f8>.

[6] Kathy Gilsinan, "How the U.S. Could Lose a War with China," *The Atlantic*, July 25, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/07/china-us-war/594793/>.

[7] Mara Karlin, "How to Read the 2018 National Defense Strategy," *Brookings Institution*, January 21, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/21/how-to-read-the-2018-national-defense-strategy/>

[8] Oriana Skylar Mastro, "Military Confrontation in the South China Sea," *New York: Council on Foreign Relations*, May 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/report/military-confrontation-south-china-sea>.

[9] Stephen F. Burgess, "The Changing Balance of Power in the Asia-Pacific Region and Optimum US Defense Strategy and USAF Strategic Posture," *USAF Institute*

of National Security Studies, US Air Force Academy. December 2015. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1070610.pdf>

[10] Grossman, Derek. "Military Build-up in the South China Sea." RAND Corporation, August 2019. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/external_publications/EP60000/EP68058/RAND_EP68058.pdf.

[11] Abrams, Robert B. "Full Committee Hearing: 'National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activities in the Indo-Pacific.'" House Armed Services Committee - Democrats, March 10, 2021. <https://armedservices.house.gov/2021/3/full-committee-hearing-national-security-challenges-and-u-s-military-activities-in-the-indo-pacific>.

Regaining the Oceans: Why the United States Should Accede to the Universal Convention Law of the Sea

Richard Li, rll246@cornell.edu

The U.S. Government should accede to the Universal Convention Law of the Sea, in order to gain international multilateral legitimacy to counter a rising revisionist China, as well as to continue many of its anti-terror operations through the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Background

The South China Sea has become a new flashpoint between China and the United States, largely due to trade. An estimated 60% of world maritime trade travels through the South China Sea, and control of its trade lanes is too important to global trade for either the U.S. or China to lose. [1] Additionally, former President Trump's isolationist policies and attitude have damaged American legitimacy when using multilateral institutions. [8] This lack of credibility may lead to a death by a thousand cuts scenario, where a revisionist China overtakes the United States in its legitimacy and becomes the leader of many international bodies.

The U.S. has done little to properly rectify the tensions in the South China Sea, since it lacks the political ability and credibility to meaningfully coordinate with its allies. [2]

Despite constant U.S military exercises in the region—coupled with "stern" condemnations—little has stopped the People's Liberation Army Navy's progress in the South China Sea. [2] Not only have these exercises failed to change China's behavior, but they could also accidentally start a war. [3] U.S. and Chinese forces have already bumped heads, as demonstrated in the 2018 naval collision in the South China Sea. [3] Bonnie Kristian, a fellow at Defense Priorities, elaborates, "The risk of stumbling into a shooting war is real. Open war between the U.S. and China would be catastrophic even if it never turned nuclear." [3]

Policy Idea

The United States must join the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Treaty to resolve the South China Sea tensions by affirming multilateralism norms and by

ensuring better enforcement of arbitration decisions regarding maritime land disputes. [6]

Policy Analysis

With increasing globalization, states would inevitably come in conflict with one another, thereby requiring more cooperation with allies. David Ross-Meyers, former Assistant Staff Secretary of the White House, finds that "the Convention is a low-risk opportunity to demonstrate our [global commitment] ... without altering many of our current practices." [12] The United States would virtually make no policy changes, while also quickly increasing multilateralism. Furthermore, Michael J. Mazarr, an analyst from the RAND Corporation, explains that strong multilateralism would be needed to give the U.S. the ability to tackle complex and unexpected issues since the U.S. is more adequately assisted in resources and

international legitimacy. [5] The more allies the U.S. has, the harder it would be to knock the nation off its feet. A 2019 ASEAN poll revealed that the majority of respondents had zero confidence that "the United States [would] 'do the right thing' in contributing to global peace, security, prosperity, and governance." [4]

Enforcing norms is also key to legitimizing arbitration. Senator Ben Cardin writes, "if we are not a party to UNCLOS, it is difficult for the United States to rely on the treaty to determine the legal entitlements of mid-ocean features, which claims are lawful, and what exactly constitutes the high seas. It's also harder for us to suggest it as the basis for resolving claims and arbitrating disputes—or to rely on EEZs drawn under UNCLOS's auspices." [7] By finally joining UNCLOS, the U.S. would be relieved of the moral burden of hypocrisy: China would no longer be able to easily ignore the arbitrations by calling out America's double standard.

Talking Points

- The United States and its allies have consistently criticized Chinese military actions. [2]

- If the United States were to join UNCLOS, it would get the legal credibility to force China to stop its illegal encroachments in the South China Sea. [5]
- The United States often lacks credibility in these challenges against China in international tribunals and negotiations because the U.S. has yet to join UNCLOS, which China has joined. [11]

Key Facts

- The Chinese Government currently criticizes U.S. calls for China to back off in the South China Sea because the international law violations cited by the U.S. have not been laws the U.S. has chosen to ratify. [2]
- The United States is now suffering from a leadership crisis in Southeast Asia. Most countries do not believe the United States has the trust to find a solution with the Chinese Government. [4]
- Military tension in the South China Sea is at an all-time high between the United

States and the Chinese Navy. Freedom of Navigation Operations conducted by the U.S. Navy could accidentally trigger a war. [3]

- The U.S. could increase its multilateralism and legitimacy in conducting Proliferation Security Initiative operations by ratifying UNCLOS and showing its willingness to follow international laws and norms. [10]

Next Steps

Because UNCLOS is an international treaty, it would need to be first ratified through Congress, and then finally signed by the President of the United States into law. A substantial debate about UNCLOS would definitely exist, especially with Republican Congresspeople who are skeptical about international bodies that they believe would threaten the sovereignty of the United States. [9] To convince more people that the treaty should be formally ratified, supporters should continue to emphasize the importance of international legitimacy that would help rather than harm the United States. By appealing to the benefits of

international legitimacy that the United States would gain, more skeptical politicians might support the bill, especially with U.S. military testimony about the benefits of UNCLOS helping the U.S. with more multilateral anti-terror operations in the War on Terror. [11]

Action Plan Snapshot

In order for the United States government to ratify the UNCLOS treaty, per the Constitution, the Senate needs to formally ratify the treaty. Public support may potentially be important to moving the political will of both Congress and the Presidency, in order to ratify the UNCLOS treaty. However, the swamped nature of politics, along with the log rolling involved, makes it a difficult task to accomplish. Public support might not easily be drummed up for a policy like UNCLOS, potentially because it would be challenging for U.S. citizens to willingly join a treaty that they may have either not heard about or thought about, especially regarding the security implications that come with international treaties and bodies. Furthermore, a major reason why the U.S. Government has had difficulty ratifying UNCLOS includes many Republican and Democratic Senators'

apprehension to international treaties that may potentially endanger U.S. Security of any nature. [9] Politicians, policy experts, and bureaucratic officials would lean to flexibility for national security purposes, and any perception that the U.S. potentially loses sovereignty is not a sound decision. The legal path to ratification of UNCLOS is not tricky, but the political challenges swing to the polar opposite.

Works Cited

- [1] "How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?" ChinaPower Project, January 25, 2021. <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/>.
- [2] Ahmad, Mohammad Zaki, and Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani. "China's Assertive Posture in Reinforcing Its Territorial and Sovereignty Claims in the South China Sea: An Insight into Malaysia's Stance: Japanese Journal of Political Science." Cambridge Core. Cambridge University Press, February 14, 2017. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/japanese-journal-of-political-science/article/abs/chinas-assertive-posture-in-reinforcing-its-territorial-and-sovereignty-claims-in-the-south-china-sea-an-insight-into-malaysias-stance/DAE18332B183C863CB2400EBCD604552>.
- [3] "U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China ...," October 6, 2021. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R42784.pdf>.
- [4] STROMSETH, JONATHAN. "Don't Make Us Choose: Southeast Asia in the Throes of Us ...," October 2019. [\[content/uploads/2019/10/FP_20191009_dont_make_us_choose.pdf\]\(content/uploads/2019/10/FP_20191009_dont_make_us_choose.pdf\).

\[5\] Mazarr, Michael J, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos. "Understanding the Current International Order." Accessed December 12, 2021. \[https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1598/RAND_RR1598.pdf\]\(https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1500/RR1598/RAND_RR1598.pdf\).

\[6\] "The United Nation's Convention on the Law of the Sea." - the United Nation's convention on the law of the sea \(treaty doc. 103-39\), October 4, 2007. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110shrg45282/html/CHRG-110shrg45282.htm>.

\[7\] "The Law of the Sea Convention." - the law of the sea convention \(treaty doc. 103-39\), June 28, 2012. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-112shrg77375/html/CHRG-112shrg77375.htm>.

\[8\] Dufour, Geneviève, and Delphine Ducasse. "'America First' and the Return of Economic Isolationism and Nationalism to the United States: A Historic Turning Point for International Trade Law: Canadian Yearbook of International Law/Annuaire Canadien De Droit International." Cambridge Core. Cambridge University Press, October 12, 2020. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/canadian-yearbook-of-international-law-annuaire-canadien-de-droit-international/article/abs/america-first-and-the-return-of-economic-isolationism-and-nationalism-to-the-united-states-a-historic-turning-point-for-international-trade-law/871140EF188124A0F4BFB556CE882DB4>.

\[9\] Doug Bandow. "The Law of the Sea Treaty: Inconsistent With American Interests." Cato.org. CATO Institute, April 8, 2004. <https://www.cato.org/testimony/law-sea-treaty-inconsistent-american-interests>.](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

[10] Baumgartner, William D. "UNCLOS Needed for America's Security." *Texas Review of Law & Politics* 12, no. 2 (April 2008): 445-51.

[11] Marek, Commander Jon. "US-China International Law Disputes in the South China Sea." Air University (AU), July 9, 2021. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/W>

ild-Blue-Yonder/Article-Display/Article/2685294/us-china-international-law-disputes-in-the-south-china-sea/#:~:text=In%202016%2C%20a%20UN%20tribunal,to%20near%20collisions%20at%20sea.

[12] Meyers, David Ross. "The Law of the Sea Treaty Could Strengthen Our National Security,

Not Harm It." Fox News. FOX News Network, November 12, 2014. <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/the-law-of-the-sea-treaty-could-strengthen-our-national-security-not-harm-it>.

Establishing a Global Tradable Carbon Emissions Permits Scheme

Jason Liu, hl2335@cornell.edu

To achieve emissions reduction goals set forth by the Paris Climate Agreement, individual carbon emissions that permit trading systems should be established by regional intergovernmental bodies with jurisdiction across geopolitically similar countries.

Background

In 2015, 196 territories signed the Paris Climate Agreement, a binding treaty to limit global temperature rises to under 2 degrees Celsius by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Under the agreement, signatories independently set goals towards GHG reductions, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). [1] Despite being hailed as a landmark achievement, the Paris Agreement has largely been seen as a failure. [1] A 2021 United Nations (UN) analysis of 75 territories' NDCs concluded that they would fail to achieve the Agreement's goals of cutting emissions by 45% overall. [1] However, one region that has seen success is the European Union, where emissions levels have fallen by 90% between 1990 and 2018. [3] This success may be attributed to the EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS). [2] Under the ETS, which is the world's first of

its kind, companies operating in the bloc's 27 member countries in certain carbon-emitting industries purchase permits, which allow for the emission of a maximum number of units of GHG through an auction system. Depending on the level of emissions a firm expects to produce, it may choose to buy or sell more permits from other firms to emit GHGs. [2] Combined, the ETS ensures that overall emissions of GHGs are set to a minimum level. [2]

Policy Idea

Regional economic blocs should each create an auction-based global emission permit among its member nations. The emissions trading system would be cost-effective, politically palatable, and encourage innovation in emissions-reducing technologies among a broader range of states and corporations. [7]

Policy Analysis

The EU's ETS scheme has largely been effective at reducing carbon emissions. A 2013 literature review of studies conducted around 5-6 years after the implementation of the ETS found an initial decrease of around 2-4% of total emissions. [3] However, as the ETS has expanded towards more industries and improved equity in permit allocations, its effects have grown. A 2020 study indicated that the ETS was responsible for an 8.1 to 11.5% reduction in overall carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, which have made up nearly half of the EU's previous emissions reduction goals. [4,5] Studies generally conclude that mature and well-established multi-national emissions trading systems are effective at lowering emissions but are subject to time-lags in their implementation. [3,4,5]

However, global expansion of the ETS may be challenging. A 2020 analysis of a potential linkage of

emissions trading systems in nine of the world's highest polluting countries found an increase in emissions by 1.6%, caused by artificially low prices that stemmed from global differences in carbon pricing. [6] A hostile political environment may also prevent implementation, including domestic opposition to cap-and-trade systems in certain countries, and the incompatibility of linking global legal frameworks for enforcing such taxes. [6] However, these concerns were largely attributed to the "bottom up" approach currently taken with linkages of emissions trading programs, in which individual countries link existing carbon trading systems. [6] Trading systems are largely more effective when planned with a "top down" approach, in which management is done from an influential centralised body carrying out enforcement, typically among countries facing similar geopolitical and economic circumstances. [6]

Talking Points

- Emissions trading systems are one of the most effective and widely adopted methods of reducing emissions and are generally considered to be more palatable to stakeholders when

compared with other carbon taxation systems. [4,6]

- Establishing emissions trading systems would be most effective when planned centrally, as well as with provisions that account for geopolitical and economic differences between the countries that are included under the scheme.
- To ensure maximum effectiveness, implementation of emissions systems should be limited towards regional, rather than global, economic and political blocs.

Key Facts

- Current government action is inadequate in fulfilling the 45% reduction in carbon emissions required to limit the rise of global temperatures by more than 2 degrees Celsius by 2100. [1]
- The European Union's emissions trading system, which sets a cap on emissions and provides tradable permits, has been largely effective in reducing carbon emissions. [4,5]

- Attempts to integrate local emissions trading systems from a "bottom-up" level have largely been unsuccessful, due to differences in carbon prices and resulting market inefficiencies. [6]

Next Steps

Based on the urgency of climate action and previously discussed considerations regarding a successful emissions trading system, emissions trading systems should be established by regional trade and economic blocs, such as among members of the African Union (AU) or The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states. The supremacy of such intergovernmental institutions would allow for increased efficiency in the planning and implementation of such systems. Furthermore, the regionalised nature of the AU and ASEAN would allow for regional geopolitical and economic factors to be better considered, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the policy.

Action Plan Snapshot

The successful implementation of emissions trading programs across regional trading blocs would

require the input of regions that have had existing successes in this area. This goal could be achieved with the establishment of a committee consisting of representatives from individual trading blocs. Under this framework, a series of guiding principles surrounding the creation of an emissions trading program could be set in order to ensure consistency and effectiveness. These principles could include the establishment of regulations that guarantee the equitable distribution of emissions permits, which would prevent corruption within such systems. They would also ensure that targeted emissions reductions set by the program are compatible with individual nations' NDCs and sufficient towards a 2-degree Celsius reduction.

The European Union, which has been a global leader in the implementation of emissions trading systems, could also provide additional guidance, including on the types of industries to be targeted, as well as on potential efficient pricing

mechanisms. Individual trading blocs would then be tasked with applying agreeable guiding principles to design unique systems, taking into account regional differences. These protocols may include targeting emissions from region-specific high polluters or setting carbon prices at an adequate level, in order to increase incentives for firms to reduce emissions. Even as regional trading systems mature, these systems should not be linked, considering that most projections point to increased carbon emissions under a potential global carbon emissions system. [6]

Works Cited

[1] "Climate Commitments Not On Track to Meet Paris Agreement Goals" as NDC Synthesis Report Is Published". United Nations Climate Change, United Nations Climate Change, 26 Feb. 2021, <https://unfccc.int/news/climate-commitments-not-on-track-to-meet-paris-agreement-goals-as-ndc-synthesis-report-is-published>.
[2] *The EU Emissions Trading System: An Introduction | Climate Policy Info Hub*. <https://climatepolicyinfohub.eu/eu-emissions-trading-system-introduction.html>. Accessed 24 Nov. 2021.

[3] Böhringer, Christoph, et al. 'EU Climate Policy up to 2020: An Economic Impact Assessment'. *Energy Economics*, vol. 31, Dec. 2009, pp. S295–305. *ScienceDirect*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2009.09.009>
[4] Laing, Tim, et al. *Assessing the Effectiveness of the EU Emissions Trading System*. 106, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, Jan. 2013. ideas.repec.org, <https://ideas.repec.org/p/lsg/lsgwps/wp106.html>
[5] Bayer, Patrick, and Michaël Aklın. 'The European Union Emissions Trading System Reduced CO2 Emissions despite Low Prices'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 117, no. 16, Apr. 2020, pp. 8804–12. [www.pnas.org](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1918128117), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1918128117>.
[6] Ranson, Matthew, and Robert N. Stavins. 'Linkage of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Systems: Learning from Experience'. *Climate Policy*, vol. 16, no. 3, Apr. 2016, pp. 284–300. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2014.997658>.
[7] Lehne, Johanna, et al. *The EU ETS: From Cornerstone to Catalyst - The Role of Carbon Pricing in Driving Green Innovation Briefing Paper, April 2021*. 2021, p. 15.

Uprooting Europe’s Last Dictator by Leveraging Domestic Pressures

Wai Tung “Jack” Lo, wl428@cornell.edu

To put an end to Lukashenko’s entrenched dictatorship in Belarus, the European Union (EU) and its allies must persist with targeted sanctions and continued commitment to its Eastern Partnership initiative, with the goal of precipitating domestic support for free and fair elections in 2025.

Background

Although Belarus and its authoritarian president, Alexander Lukashenko, have been thrust into the international spotlight in the past year—due to the humanitarian crisis at its borders with Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia—it is clear that the border crisis is only a symptom of a far greater pattern of problematic behavior surrounding Lukashenko. [1,2] Lukashenko has ruled over Belarus for twenty-seven years since 1994, when the country’s first presidential election after the dissolution of the Soviet Union was held. [3] Since then, Lukashenko has consolidated his grip on the country, with the help of a series of referendums that abolished term limits and amended the Belarusian constitution to expand presidential powers. [3,4] The stability of Lukashenko’s regime depends considerably on its ties with Russia, which is Belarus’s largest trading partner, a supplier of cheap oil, and one of the country’s

only advocates on the world stage. [5,6] However, Belarus has also taken advantage of the European Union’s (EU) past attempts at cooperation through the Eastern Partnership initiative, which promotes political and economic ties between EU countries and six former Soviet countries. [7] In the aftermath of the heavily disputed 2020 election, a sharp crackdown on the following protests prompted a round of sanctions that quickly deteriorated bilateral relations, which only worsened after Lukashenko ordered the diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 in May 2021 and arrested dissident activist Roman Protasevich. [8,9]

Policy Idea

In view of Lukashenko’s continued refusal to improve his human rights record, western powers should continue with a more heavy-handed approach to the Belarusian dictator. The EU should capitalize on the outburst of domestic

opposition to Lukashenko’s handling of the 2020 presidential election by advocating for a regime change in the next election. Dissatisfaction with Lukashenko could be stimulated by enforcing further economic sanctions in Belarus and by investing in the development of its neighbors via the Eastern Partnership initiative.

Policy Analysis

The EU has courted Lukashenko using the carrot-and-stick approach, yet without concrete change from his regime. In 2016, the EU lifted numerous sanctions in response to improved bilateral relations—a relatively uneventful 2015 presidential election—and the release of Belarusian political prisoners during the previous year. [9,10] However, Lukashenko returns to his authoritarian tendencies, clearly demonstrating that the EU cannot continue to hope for a democratic Belarus without Lukashenko removed from his political position.

With substantial grassroots support for opposing candidates in the 2020 elections, there is clear opportunity for a peaceful transition of power; violent depositions, by comparison, are less likely to succeed and less likely to produce democratic institutions. [11]

In addition to applying harsh sanctions on Lukashenko's allies and complicit corporations, the EU should present Belarusians with an alternative vision for the country. In particular, it should advocate for a recommitment to the Eastern Partnership (EaP)—a vision which is already being realized in Belarus's more EU-friendly neighbors. In the 2017 EaP summit, the EU and its partnership countries affirmed an ambitious agenda that has delivered over one and a half million jobs, increased bilateral trade to over €65 billion, and greatly increased both social and economic connectivity. [12] At the EaP's core is another pioneering plan involving the investment of over €2 billion and mobilization of up to €17 billion total. [13] If successful, the vast development achievable by partnership countries would only highlight Lukashenko's decision to leave the EaP as irrational and arbitrary in the eyes of Belarusians.

Talking Points

- Since Lukashenko took power in 1994, his authoritarian regime has presided over a dismal human rights record, and his obstinate refusal for cooperation indicates that the EU must look elsewhere for progress in Belarus. [8]
- Protests following the contested 2020 presidential elections indicate that there exists substantial domestic support for a regime change, which should be initiated by the EU. [6]
- By committing to further investments in the Eastern Partnership, the EU can simultaneously strengthen its relations with other former Soviet countries and highlight the socioeconomic failures resulting from Lukashenko's unilateral decisions. [7]

Key Facts

- The humanitarian crisis at the borders between Belarus and Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia is emblematic of Belarusian President

Alexander Lukashenko's problematic regime. [1,2]

- Lukashenko has been dictator in Belarus for 27 years, consolidating power through referendums and constitutional amendments while maintaining stability through the tacit support of the Kremlin. [3,4]
- Although Belarus has worked with the EU in the past through the Eastern Partnership, bilateral relations have recently deteriorated rapidly due to Lukashenko's violent crackdown on protests following his reelection, as well as his diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 in violation of international law. [7,8,9]

Next Steps

It is key that the Eastern Partnership's investment agenda be carried out successfully by the EU in the coming years, in order to greatly stimulate economic development of non-Belarus partner countries and to maximize internal pressure on Lukashenko. Additionally, the EU should emphasize that Belarus's participation in the EaP is desired and that,

should Lukashenko reconsider, Belarus could rejoin the partnership at any time, so long as appropriate measures are taken to ensure a free and fair 2025 presidential election. However, the EU should ensure it does not unnecessarily antagonize Lukashenko, nor should it force Lukashenko into doing anything drastic. Instead, the EU should maintain open communication with its allies to present a united front and to continue a campaign of calculated pressure.

Action Plan Snapshot

As a close ally to the EU and an international leader, the U.S. has considerable ability to influence how the Lukashenko situation unfolds in the near future. Furthermore, by nature of neighboring Russia with close economic and political ties, Belarus often acts as a conduit by which the Moscow Kremlin expresses its own interests. [14] This act gives Lukashenko an inherent gravity with which to draw the U.S.'s attention.

Nonetheless, Biden must be careful not to overstep his bounds and act unilaterally. Instead, he should default to following the EU's lead in applying sanctions and calling for free and fair elections. On the other hand, the U.S. should

not act as a passive bystander either. With enough public support for solidarity with Belarusian opposition against Lukashenko, the Biden administration may regard a democratic Belarus as worthwhile to pursue with greater intensity. Indeed, U.S. foreign policy towards Belarus could be a rare opportunity for agreement and cooperation between Democrats and Republicans when both are scarce. A comparable struggle for democracy in the Hong Kong protests in late 2019 saw the "Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act" passing through congress with overwhelming support, despite pushback from some business interests. [15]

First, individuals sympathetic to the cause of those opposing Lukashenko should aim to raise general awareness of the current political situation in Belarus. By emphasizing that Belarusian protestors are fighting for democratic values aligned with those in the United States, public opinion can be swayed to be staunchly anti-regime. Next, congressmen sitting on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs Committee should be targeted with calls, emails, and letters expressing the desire to see a democratic Belarus under a new regime, induced by free and fair

elections. Key policymakers include Sen. Bob Menendez (D), Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and Rep. Gregory Meeks (D), Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. To induce bipartisan support, Sen. Marco Rubio (R) and Sen. Josh Hawley (R) should also be targeted, due to both being vocal supporters of the Hong Kong protests. [16,17] With a careful but insistent depiction of Belarus as a country fighting both against Lukashenko's dictatorship and for democracy, there is no reason as to why a sympathetic movement could not reach Congress and the White House.

Works Cited

- [1] Troianovski, Anton, Monika Pronczuk and Anatol Magdziarz. "West Accuses Belarus of Orchestrating Migrant Crisis at Polish Border." *The New York Times*. Nov. 9, 2021. Last modified Nov. 18, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/world/europe/poland-belarus-border-crisis.html>.
- [2] Pérez-Peña, Richard. "How the Belarus Standoff Is Unlike Recent Migrant Crises." *The New York Times*. Nov. 17, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/belarus-poland-border-migrants.html>.
- [3] Mulvey, Stephen. "Profile: Europe's last dictator?" *BBC News*. Sept. 10, 2001. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/116265.stm>.
- [4] Preiherman, Yauheni. "Why Does the "Last Dictatorship in Europe" Hold Elections?" *Belarus Digest*. Mar. 26, 2012. <https://belarusdigest.com/story/why>

-does-the-last-dictatorship-in-europe-hold-elections/.

[5] “Belarus trade balance, exports and imports.” *World Integrated Trade Solutions*. n.d.

<https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/BLR/Year/2019/TradeFlow/EXPIMP>.

[6] “Protestors pack Belarus capital, Russia offers Lukashenko military help.” *France24*. Aug. 17, 2020.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200817-protestors-pack-belarus-capital-russia-offers-lukashenko-military-help>.

[7] “Eastern Partnership.” *European Council*. n.d.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/>.

[8] “Belarus: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report.” *Freedom House*. n.d.

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/belarus/freedom-world/2021>.

[9] “EU relations with Belarus.” *European Council*. n.d.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/>.

[10] “Belarus sanctions: EU delists 170 people, 3 companies; prolongs arms embargo.” *European Council*. Feb. 25, 2016.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/02/25/belarus-sanctions/>.

[11] Fisher, Max. “Peaceful protest is much more effective than violence for toppling dictators.” *The Washington Post*. Nov. 5, 2013.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/11/05/peaceful-protest-is-much-more-effective-than-violence-in-toppling-dictators/>.

[12] “20 Deliverables for 2020: Bringing tangible results for citizens.” *European Commission*. Nov. 2021.

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/default/files/eap_deliverables_factsheet_2021_en.pdf.

[13] “Eastern Partnership: a renewed agenda for recovery, resilience and reform underpinned by an Economic and Investment plan.” *European Commission*. Jul. 2, 2021.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_3367.

[14] Whitmore, Brian. “Belarus joins Vladimir Putin’s Russia

behind Europe’s new Iron Curtain.” *Atlantic Council*. Dec. 15, 2021.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/belarusalert/belarus-joins-vladimir-putins-russia-behind-europes-new-iron-curtain/>

[15] Leung, Hillary. “Trump Just Signed Off on Legislation Aimed at Protecting Human Rights in Hong Kong. Here’s What to Know.” *Time*. Nov. 22, 2019.

<https://time.com/5735361/hong-kong-rights-democracy-act-white-house/>.

[16] Rapoza, Kenneth. “Hong Kong Throws Protesters A Bone As Senator Rubio Threatens ‘Special Status’.” *Forbes*. Sep. 4, 2019.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2019/09/04/hong-kong-throws-protesters-a-bone-as-senator-rubio-threatens-special-status/>

[17] Lok-kei, Sum. “US senator Josh Hawley urges Hong Kong’s protesters to shun violence in their anti-government demonstrations.” *South China Morning Post*. Oct. 14, 2019.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3032871/us-senator-josh-hawley-urges-hong-kongs-protesters-shun>

Reversing Trump Era Diplomatic Malpractice in Israel-Palestine: Cuts, Closures, and Credibility

By Avraham Spraragen, abs356@cornell.edu

The Trump administration committed diplomatic malpractice by cutting Palestinian aid and closing diplomatic missions in Washington and Jerusalem. The Biden administration must reverse these Trump era policies in order to restore American credibility and U.S.-Palestinian relations.

Background

Since the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) of the West Bank and Gaza Strip came under the partial control of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the 1993-95 Oslo Accords, the U.S. has provided over \$4 billion in aid to the Palestinians. [1] From FY2008 to 2018, annual U.S. assistance to the PA interim self-government body averaged over \$600 million. [2] In August 2018, former U.S. President Donald Trump cut more than \$200 million from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding for health, education, developmental, and other humanitarian programs in the oPt, which were intended to lay the groundwork for Israeli-Palestinian peace. [3] Consequently, tens of thousands of Palestinians were deprived of these basic services, thereby impeding prospects for peace. [4] Palestinian confidence in U.S. peace efforts was further eroded by the Trump administration's decision to

close both the D.C. Office of the General Delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem. [5] The former, opened post-Oslo and closed in September 2018, was the chief PLO diplomatic representation to the U.S. [6] The latter, first opened in 1844 and closed in March 2019, was the chief U.S. diplomatic representation to the Palestinians. [7] These closures strained diplomatic ties between the U.S. and PA, undermining Palestinian trust in U.S. mediation of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. [8]

Policy Idea

President Trump significantly reduced the chances of a U.S.-brokered resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by 1) slashing more than \$200 million in U.S. aid to the Palestinians, 2) shutting down the PLO General Delegation office in D.C., and 3) merging the Consulate General Jerusalem with the

U.S. Embassy in Israel as a downgraded Palestinian Affairs Unit (PAU). [9] The 117th Congress should follow the Biden State Department in renewing aid to the Palestinians, and President Biden should reopen both the PLO Office and Consulate General Jerusalem. [10]

Policy Analysis

The U.S. has traditionally provided aid to the Palestinians, in order to advance three primary national security interests: 1) incentivize Palestinians to make peace with Israel and to prepare the PA for self-governance, 2) fulfill humanitarian obligations and prevent further instability, particularly in impoverished Gaza, and 3) combat radical Islamic terrorism against Israel, from Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, etc. [11] The previous U.S. administration's strategy to pressure Palestinians—through cuts and closures—into signing a final status agreement (FSA) failed,

undermining American credibility. [12]

Active since 1994 and approved by the State Department in 2010 for an upgrade to the status of “General Delegation,” the PLO Office housed the PLO Mission in the U.S. until September 2018. [13] The last Mission head, Husam Zomlot, who now serves as Palestinian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, was stripped of his visa and forced to fire his employees. [14] The de facto U.S. embassy to the Palestinians, which bisected the Green Line (1949 Armistice border), has been subsumed by the U.S. Embassy in Israel. [15] Most Consular functions are now being carried out by the PAU inside the U.S. Embassy. [16] The last Consul General, Karen Sasahara, who functioned as the State Department point person for the PA, was reassigned and not replaced. [17] As a consequence, relations between Washington and Ramallah have been frayed, leaving grim prospects for peace. [18] A reversal of this diplomatic malpractice in the form of \$225 million in Congressional funding and presidential reopening is needed to salvage U.S. diplomacy. [19]

Talking Points

- The U.S. provides aid to the Palestinians to advance the national security interests of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, regional stability, and combatting radical Islamic terrorism. [20]
- The PLO Office previously housed the PLO Mission in the U.S. and the Consulate General Jerusalem served as the de facto U.S. embassy to the Palestinians. [21]
- U.S.-PA relations are frayed, undercutting American peacemaking credibility in the eyes of the PA. [22]
- To achieve a final status agreement, the 117th Congress should follow Secretary of State Antony Blinken in renewing Palestinian aid, and President Biden should reopen both the PLO Office and Consulate General Jerusalem. [23]

Key Facts

- President Trump slashed USAID humanitarian programming in the oPt by more than \$200 million. [24]

- Palestinians in the tens of thousands now lack essential resources, jeopardizing the chances of Israeli-Palestinian peace. [25]
- Among Palestinians, U.S. credibility as a peace broker was further diminished by the Trump administration’s closure of the PLO Office and Consulate General Jerusalem. [26]
- These closures strained diplomatic ties between the U.S. and PA, undermining Palestinian trust in U.S. mediation of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. [27]

Next Steps

To revive the U.S.-PA relationship, it is imperative that the Biden administration unambiguously reverse the aforementioned three undiplomatic steps taken by former President Trump. Then-candidate Biden campaigned for president in 2020 on a platform of ending “the Trump Administration’s destructive cutoff of diplomatic ties” with the Palestinians. [28] As president, Joe Biden must now fulfill these vital pledges in order to restore Palestinian

confidence in the ability of the U.S. to serve as an honest broker of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Neutral arbitration of peace talks is a prerequisite for a just and lasting FSA. The path to diplomatic recovery, and to the eventual rekindling of the peace process, is best paved with a quick implementation of these three policies by the American president.

Action Plan Snapshot

Following the State Department restoration of Palestinian aid in April 2021, \$225 million in Congressional funding must be secured to salvage U.S. diplomacy. [29] Any FY2022 budget deal should include this crucial aid package. Concurrently, the PLO Office in D.C. should be permitted to reappoint a chief of mission, rehire staff, and resume operations, and the PAU should be converted back into an independent Consulate General in Jerusalem led by a Consul General. The latter would require careful diplomacy with the new Israeli governing coalition. Both the Israeli prime minister and alternate prime minister oppose the reopening of a Consulate in Jerusalem for Palestinians. [30] The mutual Israeli-Palestinian benefits of American neutrality must be emphasized to the Israeli government, and the

Consular reopening could be conducted in close consultation with our key Middle Eastern ally. These course reversals would jumpstart the long, arduous process of revitalizing U.S.-PA relations on the path toward rekindling Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. This action plan would demonstrate to the Palestinians that their relationship with the U.S. is being reprioritized and that Israeli-Palestinian diplomatic symmetry is being reinstated.

Works Cited

- [1] "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians." *Congressional Research Service*. Dec. 12, 2018.
- [2] "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians." *Congressional Research Service*. Nov. 9, 2011.
- [3] Krauss, Joseph. "US aid cuts hit Palestinians, further dimming hope for peace." *Associated Press*. Jan. 22, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-international-news-jerusalem-ap-top-news-3fad5d9e1fb94159a95decb08623e7d2>.
- [4] Krauss, Joseph. "US aid cuts hit Palestinians, further dimming hope for peace." *Associated Press*. Jan. 22, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-international-news-jerusalem-ap-top-news-3fad5d9e1fb94159a95decb08623e7d2>.
- [5] Nauert, Heather. "Closure of the PLO Office in Washington." *U.S. Department of State*. Sep. 10, 2018. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/closure-of-the-plo-office-in-washington/index.html>.

- [6] "US to shut Palestinian mission in Washington." *BBC News*. Sep. 10, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45471420>.
- [7] Tarnopolsky, Noga. "U.S. closes consulate in Jerusalem that served as the de facto embassy to Palestinians." *Los Angeles Times*. Mar. 4, 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-israel-us-consulate-20190304-story.html>.
- [8] Fahmy, Omar and Ulf Laessing. "Palestinians cut ties with Israel, U.S. after rejecting peace plan." *Reuters*. Feb. 1, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-security/palestinians-cut-ties-with-israel-u-s-after-rejecting-peace-plan-idUSKBN1ZV3PO>.
- [9] Krauss, Joseph. "US aid cuts hit Palestinians, further dimming hope for peace." *Associated Press*. Jan. 22, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-international-news-jerusalem-ap-top-news-3fad5d9e1fb94159a95decb08623e7d2>.
- Nauert, Heather. "Closure of the PLO Office in Washington." *U.S. Department of State*. Sep. 10, 2018. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/closure-of-the-plo-office-in-washington/index.html>.
- Palladino, Robert J. "Merger of U.S. Embassy Jerusalem and U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem." *U.S. Department of State*. Mar. 3, 2019. <https://il.usembassy.gov/merger-of-u-s-embassy-jerusalem-and-u-s-consulate-general-jerusalem/>.
- [10] Blinken, Antony J. "The United States Restores Assistance for the Palestinians." *U.S. Department of State*. Apr. 7, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-restores-assistance-for-the-palestinians/>.

- [11] “U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians.” *Congressional Research Service*. Nov. 9, 2011.
- [12] Fahmy, Omar and Ulf Laessing. “Palestinians cut ties with Israel, U.S. after rejecting peace plan.” *Reuters*. Feb. 1, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-security/palestinians-cut-ties-with-israel-u-s-after-rejecting-peace-plan-idUSKBN1ZV3PO>.
- [13] Mozgovaya, Natasha. “U.S. Upgrades Status of Palestinian Mission in Washington.” *Haaretz*. July 22, 2010. <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5151818>.
- [14] Morello, Carol and Ruth Eglash. “PLO mission in Washington is a ghost of an office 2 weeks before closing.” *Washington Post*. Sep. 21, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/plo-mission-in-washington-is-a-ghost-of-an-office-2-weeks-before-closing/2018/09/21/dba01b18-bdad-11e8-be70-52bd11fe18af_story.html.
- [15] Palladino, Robert J. “Merger of U.S. Embassy Jerusalem and U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem.” *U.S. Department of State*. Mar. 3, 2019. <https://il.usembassy.gov/merger-of-u-s-embassy-jerusalem-and-u-s-consulate-general-jerusalem/>.
- [16] Tarnopolsky, Noga. “U.S. closes consulate in Jerusalem that served as the de facto embassy to Palestinians.” *Los Angeles Times*. Mar. 4, 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-israel-us-consulate-20190304-story.html>.
- [17] Estrin, Daniel. “As U.S. Jerusalem Consulate Shuts, Pro-Israel Envoy Takes On Palestinian Relations.” *NPR News*. Mar. 1, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/01/698668688/as-u-s-jerusalem-consulate-shuts-pro-israel-envoy-to-handle-palestinian-relation>.
- [18] Fahmy, Omar and Ulf Laessing. “Palestinians cut ties with Israel, U.S. after rejecting peace plan.” *Reuters*. Feb. 1, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-security/palestinians-cut-ties-with-israel-u-s-after-rejecting-peace-plan-idUSKBN1ZV3PO>.
- [19] Harris, Bryant. “House Democrats revive bid to fully restore Palestinian aid.” *Al Monitor*. July 7, 2020. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/07/house-democrats-bid-restore-palestinian-aid-israel-lowey.html>.
- [20] “U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians.” *Congressional Research Service*. Nov. 9, 2011.
- [21] “US to shut Palestinian mission in Washington.” *BBC News*. Sep. 10, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45471420>.
- Tarnopolsky, Noga. “U.S. closes consulate in Jerusalem that served as the de facto embassy to Palestinians.” *Los Angeles Times*. Mar. 4, 2019. <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-israel-us-consulate-20190304-story.html>.
- [22] Fahmy, Omar and Ulf Laessing. “Palestinians cut ties with Israel, U.S. after rejecting peace plan.” *Reuters*. Feb. 1, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-security/palestinians-cut-ties-with-israel-u-s-after-rejecting-peace-plan-idUSKBN1ZV3PO>.
- [23] Blinken, Antony J. “The United States Restores Assistance for the Palestinians.” *U.S. Department of State*. Apr. 7, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-restores-assistance-for-the-palestinians/>.
- [24] Krauss, Joseph. “US aid cuts hit Palestinians, further dimming hope for peace.” *Associated Press*. Jan. 22, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-international-news-jerusalem-ap-top-news-3fad5d9e1fb94159a95dec08623e7d2>.
- [25] Krauss, Joseph. “US aid cuts hit Palestinians, further dimming hope for peace.” *Associated Press*. Jan. 22, 2019. <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-international-news-jerusalem-ap-top-news-3fad5d9e1fb94159a95dec08623e7d2>.
- [26] Fahmy, Omar and Ulf Laessing. “Palestinians cut ties with Israel, U.S. after rejecting peace plan.” *Reuters*. Feb. 1, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-security/palestinians-cut-ties-with-israel-u-s-after-rejecting-peace-plan-idUSKBN1ZV3PO>.
- [27] Fahmy, Omar and Ulf Laessing. “Palestinians cut ties with Israel, U.S. after rejecting peace plan.” *Reuters*. Feb. 1, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-security/palestinians-cut-ties-with-israel-u-s-after-rejecting-peace-plan-idUSKBN1ZV3PO>.
- [28] “Joe Biden and the Jewish Community: A Record and a Plan of Friendship, Support and Action.” *Biden For President*. Accessed Nov. 24, 2021. <https://joebiden.com/joe-biden-and-the-jewish-community-a-record-and-a-plan-of-friendship-support-and-action/>.
- Harris, Bryant. “House Democrats revive bid to fully restore Palestinian aid.” *Al Monitor*. July 7, 2020. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/07/house-democrats-bid-restore-palestinian-aid-israel-lowey.html>.
- [29] TOI Staff. “Bennett, Lapid in united front: ‘No place for US consulate in Jerusalem.’” *Times of Israel*. Nov. 6, 2021. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-lapid-in-united-front-no-place-for-us-consulate-in-jerusalem/>.

Combating Educational Inequity in Developing Countries with Private-Public Partnerships in Pakistan

Sasha Zuberi, sz596@cornell.edu

Due to both rural-urban and gender inequities, students in Pakistan face unequal opportunities for educational access and success. Introducing private-public partnerships (PPPs) would lead to improved teacher training, more holistic curriculums, greater incorporation of technology, and increased funding opportunities within the Pakistani education system.

Background

With only 2.3% of annual GDP allocated towards education, there are gaps in the public sector's ability to provide quality education to all its citizens. [1] On a national level, the literacy rate in Pakistan remains 59%. [2] With a teacher to student ratio of 1:44, public schools tend to be overcrowded and underfunded, making in-class learning impersonal and ineffective. [3] Additionally, teachers lack extensive training and educational resources, limiting student learning to base-level primary subjects. Students also suffer from a lack of basic infrastructure in schools, with challenges regarding electricity, toilets and drinking water. [4] Moreover, local government corruption leaves education budgets vulnerable to "ghost school" schemes, whereby schools exist only on paper and teachers draw salaries.

[5] For example, while 5,994 schools in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas are registered and funded on paper, 2,300 of them are actually closed down. [5]

Alongside these structural challenges, the Pakistani education system is failing women and rural communities: only 46% of adult females are educated compared to 71% of men, and rural children are 50% more likely to be illiterate than children from urban areas. [6,7] While public education perpetuates stark disparities, private non-profit schools such as The Citizens Foundation (TCF) focus on countering these inequities. [8] Through in-depth teacher training, 50% student-gender ratio policies, and curricula that include the arts and physical education, TCF runs 1,652 schools with 266,000 students and 120,000 adult learners, consequently creating an impact in over

700 communities across the country. [8]

Policy Idea

Shortages in the number of schools and trained teachers create high barriers to equal opportunities and limit the educational potential of Pakistani youth. Through contract school schemes, private-public partnerships would be instrumental in combating these challenges by designing accessible programs, tailoring approaches to encourage female education, and providing holistic teacher training, all while being more cost-efficient and inclusive. By promoting equity and making education system decisions from reliable data, PPPs would be effective at bettering equal access to education.

Policy Analysis

Partnerships between the public and private sectors

come with an inherent risk of failure without first setting common priorities that would lead to the aforementioned vision. The Adopt a School program, which involves non-governmental organisations (NGOs) managing schools in Punjab and Sindh, is a prime example of how PPPs can succeed on a small scale. [8] A study by Malik et al. (2015) found that, compared to regular government schools, these adopted schools generated better learning outcomes, with positive increases of 12.1%, 10.1% and 55.5% observed in Math, Urdu, and English, respectively. [9] If publicly funded and privately managed, contract school schemes could more efficiently improve the quality and accessibility of primary and secondary education. Moreover, by hiring and training teachers, designing holistic curricula, and acquiring funds more efficiently, PPPs could collaborate with The Kiran Foundation and The Citizens' Foundation to contract schools across the country. While the government maintains financial and regulatory responsibility, these non-profit schools could apply their experience and quality assurance towards uplifting government schools. These NGOs could also lay the groundwork for

e-learning practices by implementing basic technologies and equipment training in these schools. Moreover, educational policies could be targeted towards establishing schools in low-income rural areas and founding all-girls schools in residential areas, in order to encourage safe and unlimiting female education opportunities. Furthermore, these practices would be important in breaking cycles of poverty and sustainably driving long-term economic growth of the country.

Talking Points

- Successful PPPs require both the public and private sectors to act towards a common objective, provide equitable contributions of the resources they have available, and share equal responsibility in the outcome of improving the education system in Pakistan.
- Policies through PPPs would not only benefit enrollment and literacy rates, but also establish education infrastructure in low-income areas, all of which are important for the long-term development of the country.

- A prime example of success with PPP partnerships is the Adopt a School scheme—tested in Punjab and Sindh—where NGOs have managed government schools and raised student enrollment rates. [10]

Key Facts

- With a literacy rate of 59%, student to teacher ratio of 1:44 and only 2.3% of the GDP going towards education, the public sector has failed to provide equal opportunities to education for all of its youth. [1,2,3]
- PPPs are capable of improving educational standards by training teachers, equitably distributing education resources, and establishing schools in low-income areas.
- With the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of private sector practices, PPPs could make better use of financial resources allocated towards education.

Next Steps

The largest barrier against the successful implementation of PPPs is the sheer national

scale and long-term sustainability of the model. Efficiently modernizing education institutions across the country would involve in-depth organisation and planning, as the particular conditions of security, culture, and resources need to be accounted for in different parts of the country before relevant policies can be implemented. However, an effective way to manage this policy at a large scale would be by dividing the implementation stage provincially on the basis of population size, beginning with the two most populated provinces—Sindh and Punjab—and then expanding to Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. [11] In each province, private schools would work independently on the schools in their respective areas, while public officials would oversee progress.

Action Plan Snapshot

Those in support of this policy should first reach out to schools such as The Citizens Foundation, in order to draft a detailed schooling model proposal that could be formally presented to the Pakistani Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The model would include curriculum

information, teaching methods, infrastructure requirements, and financial considerations. Next, engagement would need to be initiated with the Federal Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education and Basic Education Community Schools to finalise terms of the public-private partnership. The project would then involve working with the Ministry to construct a pilot program that integrates the nonprofit school's structure with the existing national school system. In order to effectively do so, surveys and feedback would be needed from school administrators, principals and teachers. After the structure is formally created, 5-7 schools nationwide would be identified across rural and urban areas in which to launch the pilot program for the entire academic year. Within six months of implementation, the private and public sectors should assess the successes and challenges of the project to all relevant stakeholders—including administration, teachers, students, and parents—and propose relevant policy recommendations to alter and improve the PPP.

Works Cited

- [1] Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education, *Education Budget of Pakistan*. Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget, 2020.
- [2] The World Bank, *Pakistan: Literacy rate from 2006 to 2017, total and by gender*. World Development Indicators, 2017.
- [3] The World Bank, *Pupil-teacher ratio, Primary - Pakistan*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020.
- [4] Saleem, Beenish. *Private schools for the rich, public schools for the poor: In the land of pure*. Global Village Space, 2018.
- [5] IRIN, "Ghost schools" risk breeding militancy in Pakistan tribal areas. The UN Refugee Agency, 2018.
- [6] The World Bank, *Pakistan: Literacy rate from 2006 to 2017, total and by gender*. World Development Indicators, 2017.
- [7] Ministry of Education, *Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey PSLM 2010-11*. Islamabad Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2011.
- [8] The Citizens Foundation, *Keeping Dreams Alive: Annual Report 2020*. The Citizens Foundation, 2020.
- [9] Aslam, Monazza; Rawal, Shenila; and Saeed, Sahar, Ark Education Partnerships Group. *Public-Private Partnerships in Education in Developing Countries: A Rigorous Review of the Evidence*, 2017.
- [10] Malik, Allah Bakhsh, *Public-Private Partnerships in Education: Lessons Learned from the Punjab Education Foundation*. Asian Development Bank, 2015.
- [11] Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Brief on Census*. Government of Pakistan, 2017.

Healthcare Policy

Director: Rachel Armstrong

Analysts: Renle Chu, Harkirat Sangha, Hayley Seltzberg,
Ben Terhaar, Jack Viehweg

Birds, Bees, & Bias: The Case for Mandating Comprehensive Sex Education in New York

Renle Chu, rc778@cornell.edu

The state of New York should mandate a comprehensive sex education policy that is holistic, evidence-based, medically accurate, and inclusive in order to improve sexual and reproductive health, decrease intimate partner violence, reduce unintended pregnancy, and help adolescents foster a robust sense of bodily and emotional autonomy.

Background

In the state of New York, only 11% of high school students engaging in sexual intercourse have reported using a contraceptive. [4] The need for sex education is explicit and urgent—yet New York does not require sex education. [6]

Comprehensive sex education teaches safe sex practices, including the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STI), as well as the importance of consent and how to foster healthy relationships. [7] Thus, students who do not receive quality sex education may be ill-informed, leaving them potentially vulnerable to unintended pregnancy, STIs, and abusive behavior or sexual assault. [5]

The dissemination of medically inaccurate and inconsistent sex information—which is perpetuated by the lack of a CSE mandate—contributes to New York having the highest teen

abortion rate in the country, as well as higher-than-average teen pregnancy rates. [7] Additionally, over 50% of new STI cases in the state are among high school-aged individuals 15-19 years old. [7] Further, one-third of teen mothers who had unintended pregnancies have reported not using contraception because they believed that they could not get pregnant, illustrating the misinformation present in New York schools. [4] Clearly, the current programming, or lack thereof, puts New York students at an undue public health risk and highlights the urgent need for holistic, medically accurate, unbiased, and inclusive comprehensive sex education in New York.

Policy Idea

New York State should mandate comprehensive sex education (CSE) in public schools that conveys age-appropriate, science-based, and medically accurate information on a

broad range of topics, including sexual behaviors, healthy relationships, human development, sexual health, contraceptive use, and sexuality. The creation of such a program for K-12 students in New York would improve students' sexual and reproductive health, decrease domestic violence and sexual assault, reduce unintended pregnancy, and help them develop a strong, healthy sense of bodily autonomy.

Policy Analysis

A report from the United Nations found that CSE programs teaching proper contraceptive use reduce the incidence of unprotected sex, decrease the number of sexual partners and frequency of sex, and increase the use of condoms and other forms of contraception. [2] Further, a 2008 study of nearly 2,000 American adolescents comparing the efficacy of abstinence-only sex education and CSE found that teens who received CSE were

50% less likely to get pregnant than those receiving abstinence-only education, illustrating how CSE can reduce teen pregnancy. [8] Additionally, a cumulative study conducted among schools with CSE programs found more than half of these programs lowered the frequency of unprotected sex and led to lower rates of teen pregnancy and STIs. [7] The same study found that contraceptive use, including condoms, also increased by 40% in schools with CSE programs. [7]

Moreover, CSE has also been shown to instill lasting healthy social and emotional behaviors in teens. A 2020 study reviewing three decades of research on CSE found that CSE helps prevent dating and intimate partner violence and child sex abuse, while promoting the development of healthy relationships. [3] Further, a randomized study in North Carolina implemented a dating violence prevention program, called *Safe Dates*, which taught components of CSE in 14 schools; the study compared the program's outcomes to those within schools lacking any such program. [14] Schools with these programs found that sexual and other forms of intimate partner violence decreased by more than half, while psychological abuse between adolescents

decreased by 25%. [14] These studies demonstrate that mandating a CSE policy improves sexual and reproductive health, decreases intimate partner violence, and promotes healthy behaviors and bodily autonomy among teens.

Talking Points

- Research suggests that CSE programs are highly effective at reducing the incidence of unprotected sex, decreasing the number of sexual partners and frequency of sex, and increasing the use of condoms and other forms of contraception. [2]
- Multiple studies show that CSE programs significantly reduce teen pregnancy and STI transmission. [3]
- CSE instills healthy social and emotional behaviors in teens, including the prevention of dating and intimate partner violence, promotion of the development of healthy relationships, prevention of child sex abuse, improvement of social and emotional learning, and increase in appreciation of sexual diversity. [1,3]

Key Facts

- Only 11% of New York high school students engaging in sexual intercourse report utilizing contraceptives. [6]
- The dissemination of medically inaccurate and inconsistent sex information contributes to New York having the highest teen abortion rate in the country, as well as higher-than-average teen pregnancy rates. [7]
- Over 50% of new STI cases in the state are among high school-aged individuals 15-19 years old. [7]

Next Steps

In early 2021, Democratic State Senator Samra Brouk introduced S2584, which mandates comprehensive sex education for all K-12 New York State public and charter school students. [10] The current priority should be ensuring that Brouk's bill be passed by both houses of the Legislature and signed by Governor Kathy Hochul. However, historically, six similar bills have failed, illuminating the need for auxiliary measures to be taken to secure the passing of S2584. [10] Thus, additional research should be conducted

on New York schools with CSE, in order to further characterize its benefit into empirical evidence that can be used to support the bill. Results comparing sex education outcomes between schools with and without CSE should also be published. Since the New York City school district has mandated CSE, its schools may serve as the basis for such studies. Supplemental research would serve to further dissipate any misinformation on CSE being circulated.

Action Plan Snapshot

To assemble support for the implementation of CSE in New York, it is imperative that partnerships with influential local organizations, such as the National Organization for Women—New York City (NOW-NYC), Planned Parenthood, and the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) be procured. All three organizations have expressed explicit support for mandating CSE in New York. [7,11,12] In particular, the NYCLU has endorsed S2584. [11] Partnering with Planned Parenthood could contribute significantly to helping pass S2584, as the organization's support played a significant role in California's passing of a CSE mandate in 2016. Further, since CSE has already been

endorsed by the American Medical Association and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, obtaining an endorsement from the New York Medical Association would also contribute to the scientific legitimacy of CSE. One of the most significant issues faced while passing a CSE bill is the rampant misinformation surrounding CSE's goals. [10] Therefore, partnering with organizations that accurately represent CSE and support coalitions of medical professionals would demystify CSE and, subsequently, raise public support. Additionally, disseminating information from these various sources regarding the significant benefits of CSE and the detrimental short- and long-term effects of not receiving sex education would contribute to enacting legislation and galvanizing public support.

Once the aforementioned coalition of stakeholders has been assembled, Governor Kathy Hochul would be an additional supporter to lobby. Hochul has been vocal in her support of Planned Parenthood's efforts and is leading a new effort against campus sexual assaults—both of which align with implementing CSE in public K-12 schools. [13] Since Governor Hochul's role is

crucial to the passage of S2584, it is necessary to procure her support for the bill.

Works Cited

- [1] de Lijster, Gaby PA, Hanneke Felten, Gerjo Kok, and Paul L. Kocken. "Effects of an interactive school-based program for preventing adolescent sexual harassment: a cluster-randomized controlled evaluation study." *Journal of youth and adolescence* 45, no. 5 (2016): 874-886.
- [2] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "Emerging Evidence, Lessons and Practice in Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Global Review." (2015).
- [3] Goldfarb, Eva S., and Lisa D. Lieberman. "Three decades of research: The case for comprehensive sex education." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 68, no. 1 (2021): 13-27.
- [4] Nolan, Catherine, and Jen Metzger. "Support for Mandating Comprehensive Sex Education in New York: Report." New York City Bar. Accessed October 21, 2021. <https://www.nycbar.org/member-and-career-services/committees/reports-listing/reports/detail/support-for-mandating-comprehensive-sex-education-in-new-york-report>.
- [5] Goodman, Melissa, Johanna Miller, Kat Noel, Alison Yager, Rachel Santamaria-Schwartz, and Esther Lok. "Birds, Bees and Bias: How Absent Sex Ed Standards Fail New York's Students." *New York Civil Liberties Union* (2012).
- [6] "New York State Profile." SIECUS, May 21, 2021. https://siecus.org/state_profile/new-york-state-profile/.
- [7] "Get the Facts: Sex Education in NY - Now-NYC." NOW. Accessed October 21, 2021.

<https://nownyc.org/issues/get-the-facts-sex-education-in-ny/>.

[8] Kohler, Pamela K., Lisa E. Manhart, and William E. Lafferty. "Abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education and the initiation of sexual activity and teen pregnancy." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 42, no. 4 (2008): 344-351.

[9] Ott, Mary A., and John S. Santelli. "Abstinence and abstinence-only education." *Current opinion in obstetrics & gynecology* 19, no. 5 (2007): 446.

[10] Entralgo, Rebekah, Gale Brewer & Darren Bloch, and Donovan Richards. "Gotham Gazette." Opinion, November 22, 2021.

<https://www.gothamgazette.com/games-archive/130-opinion/10311->

[new-york-chance-pass-essential-sex-education-mandates](https://www.gothamgazette.com/games-archive/130-opinion/10311-new-york-chance-pass-essential-sex-education-mandates).

[11] "Legislative Memo: Comprehensive Sex Ed." New York Civil Liberties Union. NYCLU, May 18, 2021.

<https://www.nyclu.org/en/legislation/legislative-memo-comprehensive-sex-ed>.

[12] "Why Support Comprehensive Sex Education?" Planned Parenthood. Accessed November 22, 2021.

https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/6914/0080/0572/2013-04UpdatedWhyCompeSexEd_handout.pdf.

[13] McCarthy, Robert J. "Kathy Hochul Leads New Effort against Campus Sexual Assault." Dothan Eagle, August 10, 2021.

<https://dothaneagle.com/news/local>

[/education/kathy-hochul-leads-new-effort-against-campus-sexual-assault/article_ab6e2b7f-2954-5760-a818-92db012a9a85.html](https://www.dothaneagle.com/news/local/education/kathy-hochul-leads-new-effort-against-campus-sexual-assault/article_ab6e2b7f-2954-5760-a818-92db012a9a85.html).

[14] Foshee, Vangie A., Karl E. Bauman, Susan T. Ennett, G. Fletcher Linder, Thad Benefield, and Chirayath Suchindran. "Assessing the Long-Term Effects of the Safe Dates Program and a Booster in Preventing and Reducing Adolescent Dating Violence Victimization and Perpetration." *American Journal of Public Health* 94, no. 4 (April 2004): 619-24.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448308/>.

Race, Health, and Cynicism: Addressing Black Mistrust in Medical Institutions

Harkirat Sangha, hks52@cornell.edu

In an attempt to rebuild Black Americans' trust in medical institutions, the United States' hospital systems must better diversify their healthcare providers and staff. The U.S. must also revise and improve its triennial Community Health Needs Assessment to better assess minority representation in healthcare and to incentivize public hospitals to increase their number of Black American healthcare personnel.

Background

Black Americans' distrust of the U.S. healthcare system continues to persist: an October 2020 poll showed that 7 out of 10 Black Americans claim to be treated unfairly by the U.S. healthcare system, and 55% percent state that they distrust it. [2] Consequently, these patients are less likely to accept medical advice, maintain follow-up appointments, or fill prescriptions. [3,4]

Scientific studies demonstrate the detrimental health consequences of racial biases in medicine, particularly for Black patients. One study found that Black infants were 58% more likely to survive when their doctors were also Black instead of White. [9] Additionally, Black male patients received 18% fewer preventive services when visiting non-Black doctors compared to when seen by Black doctors. [10] The medical community must rectify the collective sense of

Black mistrust in medicine, which is a well-documented source of health disparities between Black and White patients. [5]

As a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), all tax-exempt hospitals are required to complete a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) on a triennial basis. [16] The CHNA consists of a demographic assessment of the community the hospital serves, a survey regarding predominant healthcare issues in the community, and a three-year plan for improving the overall health of the community. [16] Such requirements could incentivize hospitals to hire healthcare providers in which their community members would trust.

Policy Idea

As some of the aforementioned studies indicate the benefit of Black patients being treated by Black doctors, hospitals should diversify their

healthcare staff to mirror the populations they attempt to serve. Through an additional measure in hospitals' CHNA, hospitals should also compare the demographics of their staff to the demographics of their surrounding communities. An annual survey investigating each local community's confidence in its health system would provide insight into the state of the progress in rebuilding trust. Hospitals and health systems would therefore have the necessary data to diversify their staff and to rebuild trust accordingly.

Policy Analysis

It is important that Black patients be able to access a physician that reflects their racial or ethnic background, so that they may begin to foster a trusting and reliable relationship. Evidence suggests that physicians and patients sharing the same race or ethnicity improves the amount of time spent

together, medication adherence, shared decision-making, treatment wait times, patient understanding of cancer risk, and patient perceptions of treatment decisions. [6] One study found that Black men who were seen by Black physicians agreed to more invasive and preventative services compared to Black men who were seen by non-Black physicians. [12] These data indicate that sharing a common racial or cultural background with one's doctor promotes communication and trust. [11]

However, hospitals must also be held more accountable to follow through on their implementation plans after assessing their communities' needs through the CHNA. A recent report showed that hospitals' spending on general community benefit efforts increased by only 0.5% during the implementation of ACA regulations between 2010 and 2014. [8] Currently, the IRS's guidance for CHNA completion is broad and open to interpretation. [8] Specific evaluation criteria are necessary to increase the CHNA's utility and to improve health outcomes. Lobbying the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to increase its expectations of CHNA's quality and implementation would

incentivize hospitals to invest more resources into their assessments. Furthermore, the CHNA could play a more integral role in directing hospitals to better serve their communities, including minority populations such as Black Americans.

Talking Points

- Appointment length, medication adherence, shared decision-making, treatment wait times, patient understanding of cancer risk, and patient perceptions of treatment decisions are all improved when physicians and patients share the same race or ethnicity. [6]
- Black patients may feel more comfortable discussing their health with Black physicians and healthcare staff, which could help increase their compliance and adherence to medical recommendations. [7]
- Racial biases from non-Black healthcare providers, which may negatively impact the quality of care of Black Americans, may be prevented through this policy implementation. [7]

Key Facts

- Americans' trust in healthcare has declined in recent decades, but mistrust is especially prevalent amongst Black Americans. [1]
- In an October 2020 poll, 7 out of 10 Black Americans say that they are treated unfairly by the health care system in the United States, and 55% percent say they distrust it. [2]
- Patients who claim they mistrust health care organizations are not only more likely to report poor health outcomes, but they are also less likely to seek treatment and/or be compliant with recommended treatment plans. [5]

Next Steps

CHNA completion is currently enforced by the IRS. [8] Hospitals that do not meet the IRS requirements are in jeopardy of losing their 501c(3) nonprofit status, including millions of dollars in tax breaks. [16] Revising the CHNA to mandate that public hospitals become increasingly representative of the populations that they serve, particularly at the

expense of losing their nonprofit status, would create a financial incentive for change. This transition would be measured by measuring the hospitals' change(s) in staff socio-demographics after each CHNA is released every three years. Ultimately, hospitals would become increasingly encouraged to hire a greater diversity of providers in an attempt to rebuild medical trust within Black American communities.

Action Plan Snapshot

The surge in the number of COVID-19-related deaths and the lagging vaccination rates among Black Americans have created a sense of urgency for remediating the healthcare system for racial and ethnic minorities. Age-standardized data as of October 5, 2021 shows that Black people are at least twice as likely to die from COVID-19 as their white counterparts. [15] In addition, as the CHNA is still in its early stages, reform may occur more easily sooner rather than later. Using the momentum of the COVID-19 pandemic, now may be the best time to introduce a bill to repair the relationship between minorities and the healthcare system.

The Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of

2021 directs efforts towards improving maternal health, particularly among racial and ethnic minority groups. [13] The bill was sponsored by Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL) and it was introduced in the House this year. [13] Vice President Kamala Harris and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) have also invested in and introduced this bill. [13] As the purpose of this Act holds a sentiment similar to that of mitigating Black patient health disparities across the country, lobbying these legislators could encourage progress of passing this legislation.

The National Medical Association (NMA) is the oldest and largest national organization representing African American physicians and their patients in the country, and the group's mission is to improve the quality of health among minority and other disadvantaged populations. [14] As this organization continuously advocates for policies to eliminate U.S. health disparities and has experience lobbying for this type of reform in Congress, the NMA would be another ideal group to bolster support for this bill. [14]

Works Cited

[1] Hostetter, Martha, and Sarah Klein. "Understanding and Ameliorating Medical Mistrust among Black Americans." Commonwealth Fund. Accessed

November 13, 2021.
<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/newsletter-article/2021/jan/medical-mistrust-among-black-americans>.

[2] Fletcher, Michael A. "Poll: Black Americans See a Health-Care System Infected by Racism." *History*. National Geographic, May 3, 2021.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/black-americans-see-health-care-system-infected-racism-new-poll-shows#close>.

[3] LaVeist, Thomas A, Lydia A Isaac, and Karen Patricia Williams. "Mistrust of Health Care Organizations Is Associated with Underutilization of Health Services." *Health services research*. Blackwell Science Inc, December 2009.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2796316/>.

[4] Armstrong, Katrina, Abigail Rose, Nikki Peters, Judith A Long, Suzanne McMurphy, and Judy A Shea. "Distrust of the Health Care System and Self-Reported Health in the United States." *Journal of general internal medicine*. Blackwell Science Inc, April 2006.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1484714/>.

[5] Armstrong, Katrina, Karima L Ravenell, Suzanne McMurphy, and Mary Putt. "Racial/Ethnic Differences in Physician Distrust in the United States." *American journal of public health*. © American Journal of Public Health 2007, July 2007.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1913079/>.

[6] Huerto, Ryan. "Minority Patients Benefit from Having Minority Doctors, but That's a Hard Match to Make." *University of Michigan*, March 31, 2020.

<https://labblog.uofmhealth.org/rounds/minority-patients-benefit-from-having-minority-doctors-but-thats-a-hard-match-to-make-0>.

[7] "Why Black Patients Treated by Black Doctors Fare Better." *Roman HealthGuide*, March 13, 2021.

<https://www.getroman.com/health-guide/black-doctors/>.

[8] Young, Gary J., Rubin DB, Rosenbaum S, Young GJ, Leider JP, James J, Somerville MH, et al. "Community Benefit Spending by Tax-Exempt Hospitals Changed Little after ACA: Health Affairs Journal." *Health Affairs*, January 1, 2018.

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.1028>.

[9] Milne, Ethan. "Can White Doctors Treat Black Patients?" *Medium*. BeingWell, June 3, 2021. <https://medium.com/beingwell/can-white-doctors-treat-black-patients-61310d095a50>.

[10] Frakt, Austin. "When Black Patients See Non-Black Doctors." *Harvard Global Health Institute*, September 9, 2019. <https://globalhealth.harvard.edu/when-black-patients-see-non-black-doctors/>.

[11] Torres, Nicole. "Research: Having a Black Doctor Led Black

Men to Receive More-Effective Care." *Harvard Business Review*, August 10, 2018.

<https://hbr.org/2018/08/research-having-a-black-doctor-led-black-men-to-receive-more-effective-care>.

[12] Alsan, Marcella, Owen Garrick, and Grant C Graziani. "DOES DIVERSITY MATTER FOR HEALTH? EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM OAKLAND," June 2018. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w24787/w24787.pdf.

[13] "Adams Announces Moms Act and Maternal Care Act to Conclude Black Maternal Health Week." *Congresswoman Alma Adams*, April 17, 2021. <https://adams.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/adams-announces-moms-act-and-maternal-care-act-conclude-black-maternal>.

[14] "About US - National Medical Association." Accessed November 24, 2021.

https://www.nmanet.org/page/about_us.

[15] Artiga, Samantha, Latoya Hill, and Sweta Haldar. "Covid-19 Cases and Deaths by Race/Ethnicity: Current Data and Changes over Time." *Kaiser Family Foundation*, October 8, 2021. <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/covid-19-cases-and-deaths-by-race-ethnicity-current-data-and-changes-over-time/>.

[16] "Charitable Hospitals - General Requirements for Tax-Exemption under Section 501(c)(3)." *Internal Revenue Service*. Accessed December 19, 2021. <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-hospitals-general-requirements-for-tax-exemption-under-section-501c3>.

A Treaty to End the War on Drugs: Introducing the Endocannabinoid System to the United States Medical Education Curriculum

Hayley Seltzberg, hs647@cornell.edu

The American Medical Association (AMA) should incorporate research-based biosocial discussions of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) into the standard medical school curriculum.

Background

The ECS, a physiological network of endocannabinoid receptors, “regulates and controls many of our most critical bodily functions such as learning and memory, emotional processing, sleep, temperature control, pain control, inflammatory and immune responses, and eating.” [1] The ECS directly impacts almost all physiological functions, yet only 9% of institutions in the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) teach about the ECS during medical school or residency. [2]

Medical students need to understand the intricacies of the ECS in response to widespread usage and legalization of cannabis. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 18% of Americans reported using cannabis at least once in 2019. [3] Today, 36 states have approved medical cannabis programs, 18 of

which also regulate cannabis for nonmedical use. [4]

Outside of the policy arena, cannabis has gained lots of media attention for its therapeutic benefits. Researchers predict a surge in legal cannabis sales through 2026. [5] Interestingly, despite the projected spike in cannabis consumption and clear demand for cannabis guidance, 85% of doctors have never received education or training about the ECS. [2] This limitation in the average physician’s knowledge, despite the increase in patient cannabis usage across the United States, would restrict patients from accessing personalized and evidence-based care. In the context of widespread cannabis use and the importance of the ECS to human health, medical schools need to prepare future doctors to learn the ECS and, therefore, to potentially create more cannabis-centered treatment plans (as needed) for certain patients.

Policy Idea

In response to the physiological and cultural importance of cannabis usage in the U.S., the AMA should require the incorporation of research-based biosocial discussions of the ECS into the standard medical school curriculum. ECS research should be evaluated by the AMA for integration into the U.S. medical education system. Amending the curriculum could be achieved utilizing AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education grants to subsidize any additional costs of adding the ECS training to the curriculum. [7]

Policy Analysis

Medical students need to understand how the ECS interacts with the rest of the human body to identify cannabis-related diseases and to utilize the therapeutic benefits of cannabinoid drugs. Teaching about the ECS, along with the rest of the body’s neurotransmitter

receptor systems, would not signify any AMA endorsement of the usage of cannabis. In general, physicians must be capable of examining and identifying malfunctions of the ECS; without ECS education, this provision of care would be severely limited.

The absence of cannabinoid and ECS education in medical schools reflects the historical and social context surrounding cannabis usage. For example, the Brookings Institute found that, despite similar rates of cannabis usage between Black and White Americans, Black Americans are arrested for cannabis-related charges at a rate four times as high as for White Americans. [6] As such, biases surrounding cannabis leave its therapeutic potentials overlooked. Medical students and institutions have a unique opportunity to advance racial justice by normalizing discussions with patients surrounding the ECS and by dismantling racist prejudices that may make it more challenging for patients to communicate with their physicians about cannabis usage.

Historically, the medical school curriculum has been modified to meet modern needs. At the 15th annual AMA meeting, educators discussed the importance of including

health systems science (i.e., an overview of health policy economics) into the medical school curriculum. [7] Since then, 37 institutions have changed their curricula to include health system sciences. [7] The AMA's support for curriculum additions is precedented and effective, proving potentially valuable for the implementation of ECS information into these curricula.

Talking Points

- There is a concern that including ECS in AMA curricula promotes cannabis usage. Such an attitude denies the importance of an entire physiological system and undermines the purpose of medical training. If patients are using cannabis, doctors must understand how the active ECS might impact the wellbeing of their patients.
- Regardless of one's perception of the morality of cannabis usage, a physician should still be prepared and informed about ECS in the case a patient utilizes cannabis.
- The AMA has a history of affecting

change in medical school curriculum through its recommendations, which would be helpful in incentivizing implementation of this policy. [7]

Key Facts

- The endocannabinoid system is an integral physiological network that regulates critical bodily functions such as sleep, body temperature, inflammation, and memory. [1]
- Although cannabis usage and legalization are widespread throughout the U.S., 85% of physicians have never received training about the ECS. [2]
- Regardless of an increase in patient cannabis usage, such limitations in physicians' knowledge about cannabis usage and ECS may restrict patients from accessing personalized and evidence-based care.

Next Steps

The AMA should first recommend that the ECS be added to the AAMC standard curriculum. One effective

way to evoke medical school curriculum reform through the AMA is the Accelerating Medical Education initiative. [7] The AMA encourages medical schools to amend their curricula to include leadership skills, health system sciences, educational technology, adaptive learning, and reimagined residency programs. [10] Adding ECS education to the programs supported by the Accelerating Medical Education would help empower medical institutions to incorporate ECS training in their own curricula.

Action Plan Snapshot

Following AMA support, the ECS could be taught alongside other regulatory systems, including the nervous and endocrine systems. Delivering ECS education in an inclusive and holistic way is vital to ensuring that new classes of physicians are as unbiased in their practices as possible. Therefore, a team of biology and sociology experts should collectively design the addition of ECS material into the medical school curriculum. For medical schools and institutions, this team should be relatively simple to assemble with existing academic capital and resources. Harvard Medical School (HMS), for example, hosted the first two CannMed conferences and has direct

faculty relationships with McLean Hospital's Marijuana Investigations for Neuroscientific Discovery (MIND). [8,9] Staci Gruber, associate professor of psychiatry at HMS and director of MIND, leads her team in exploring cannabis treatments for vulnerable populations, including veterans and women with menstrual conditions. [9] The MIND project has received a \$4.5 million gift to boost cannabis-related discovery. [9] Figures such as Gruber would be valuable for building a network of socially conscious and biologically driven professionals to draft a standardized ECS curriculum addition.

Works Cited

- [1] Peter Grinspoon, M. D. (2021, August 11). *The endocannabinoid system: Essential and mysterious*. Harvard Health. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-endocannabinoid-system-essential-and-mysterious-202108112569>.
- [2] Russo, S. (2021, February 19). *The Gaping Hole in Medical Education on Cannabis*. Society of Cannabis Clinicians. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.cannabisclinicians.org/2021/02/18/lack-of-cannabis-education-in-medical-school/>.
- [3] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, June 8). *Data and statistics*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/data-statistics.htm>.
- [4] Karmen Hanson, A. G. (2021, August 23). *State Medical Marijuana Laws*. State Medical marijuana laws. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-medical-marijuana-laws.aspx#1>.
- [5] Jan Conway. (2021, June 17). *Legal Recreational Cannabis Sales U.S. 2019-2026*. Statista. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/933384/legal-cannabis-sales-forecast-us/>.
- [6] Hudak, J. (2020, June 25). *Marijuana's racist history shows the need for comprehensive drug reform*. Brookings. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2020/06/23/marijuana-racist-history-shows-the-need-for-comprehensive-drug-reform/>.
- [7] Murphy, B. (2019, April 9). *5 more medical schools join Innovative Medical Education Consortium*. American Medical Association. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from <https://www.ama-assn.org/education/accelerating-change-medical-education/5-more-medical-schools-join-innovative-medical>.
- [8] Pond, G. (2019, October 24). *Physicians say it's criminal that so few medical schools teach the endocannabinoid system and the specialty of cannabis-based medicine that it gives rise to*. CBD Digital News, December 3, 2021. <https://cbd.digitalnews.com/physicians-say-its-criminal-that-so-few-medical-schools-teach-the-endocannabinoid-system-and-the-specialty-of-cannabis-based-medicine-that-it-gives-rise-to/>.
- [9] *Cannabis and the brain*. Neurobiology. Accessed December 20, 2021. <https://neuro.hms.harvard.edu/centers-and-initiatives/harvard-mahoney-neuroscience-institute/archive-brain-newsletter/and-brain>.
- [10] *Members of the accelerating change in medical education consortium*. American Medical

Association. Accessed December
20, 2021. [https://www.ama-](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/accelerating-)
[assn.org/education/accelerating-](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/accelerating-)

[change-medical-](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/accelerating-)
[education/members-accelerating-](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/accelerating-)
[change-medical-education.](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/accelerating-)

Shifting Primary Care from Fee-for-Service to Capitation in New York State

Benjamin Terhaar, bat54@cornell.edu

New York healthcare spending can be lowered while improving patient outcomes by shifting from a focus on curative medicine to one centered around prevention, specifically through the implementation of a capitation payment model for primary care clinics.

Background

The United States, unlike its European counterparts, prioritizes curative medicine over preventative care. Primary care clinics are the most common avenue for preventative services in the United States. [1] In 2030, New York is projected to have only 3 to 15% of the number of physicians required to meet the anticipated demand for physician services. [26] These primary care clinics must be made more accessible to a broader population, since preventative care reduces both healthcare costs and incidences of chronic illness. On average, primary care services cost far less than specialty care, with the average primary care visit costing \$149 and the average specialist visit costing \$1,010 without insurance. [11] In 2019, the amount of health spending per capita in the U.S. (\$10,966) was 42% higher than in Switzerland, the country with the next

highest per capita health spending (\$6,161). [4] Given the quantity of care provided, the United States' amount of healthcare spending is unsustainable. [27] The U.S.'s relative non-prioritization of preventative care ultimately leads to more health-related problems, since individuals are more likely to skip treatment until absolutely necessary. [6] The nation's current fee-for-service model allows physicians to charge insurance companies and uninsured individuals per service. This model is problematic because, the more care a patient needs, the more they are charged, either through direct medical costs or through increased premiums the following year. In general, the fee-for-service system disincentivizes individuals from receiving necessary preventative and curative services. Capitation, on the other hand, provides payers a predictable cost while providing the recipient clinician with predictable cash flow. [28]

Policy Idea

The New York State government should require all primary care clinics to engage in a capitation payment model. The state and the federal government would provide all participating clinics with a monetary incentive using the same calculations as Medicare's local cost and average utilization analysis. [20] Each clinic must also provide an annual value-of-care assessment for each patient, based on Medicare's values for the resource-based relative value scale (RBRVS) model. Within this model, primary care clinics would act as small-scale Accountable Care Organizations. [21]

Policy Analysis

The current fee-for-service model results in a substantial amount of money being spent on low-value care without improving patient outcomes. [17] Rather than physicians being rewarded for providing inefficient care,

capitation payments would detract the physicians' profits. Primary care capitation fees would be determined by Medicare's resource-based relative value scale (RBRVS) fee schedule, so that practices can construct a consistent and fair rate to charge patients. The payment plan would have a set price for New York State residents, which would then be multiplied by each county's Geographic Price Cost Index (GPCI). The purpose of these adjustments is to account for geographic variations in the costs of practicing medicine in different areas within the state. [29] This payment scheme would establish a standardized pricing arrangement and therefore reduce gouging. [21]

Each primary care practice would receive a set amount of money per patient, and patients would be allowed to visit quarterly. Thus, physicians would have an incentive to make every procedure as high value as possible. Since primary care is the leading form of preventative services in New York State, altering the payment schedule of primary care clinics would be particularly effective in increasing the delivery of high-value care. [6] This policy would drive down the amount of spending needed in specialty fields, as fewer patients would require this

level of care relative to primary care. In shifting the state's emphasis from specialty services to primary care services, the state would transition from high-cost curative care to low-cost high-value preventative care.

Talking Points

- Capitation payments would allow physicians to focus on improving patient health outcomes by eliminating the incentive to overuse low-value care. [17]
- The current movement away from fee-for-service and toward episode-based payment and capitation creates financial incentives for providers to focus on coordination of care and management of chronic diseases, resulting in better outcomes at a lower cost. [18]
- Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) typically pay annual capitation payments per enrollee and reward their physicians with profit-sharing if their enrollees' medical costs are lower than their annual capitation payments. This system produces incentives for

providers to find more cost-effective methods to treat their patients. [19]

Key Facts

- In 2019, the U.S.'s health spending per capita (\$10,966) was 42% higher than in Switzerland, which has the next highest per capita health spending (\$6,161). [4]
- The U.S.'s relative non-prioritization of preventative care leads to more long-term health-related problems. [6]
- The nation's current fee-for-service model allows physicians to charge insurance companies and uninsured individuals per service. The fee-for-service system disincentivizes individuals from receiving necessary preventative and curative services. Capitation, on the other hand, provides payers a predictable cost while providing the recipient clinician with predictable cash flow. [28]

Next Steps

Due to its potential long-term health and economic benefits, this policy

should be implemented alongside a supplemental program to oversee the level of value-based care physicians are providing when under this new capitation model. At the community level, New York residents should petition their respective local town board members. At the state level, registered Democrats could voice their opinions to J. Gustavo Rivera, the Democratic chair of the Senate Health Committee, and registered Republicans could reach out to Patrick Gallivan, a ranking member of the committee. [30] Such advocacy would ideally streamline the rally for this policy into one unified, bipartisan voice of change.

Action Plan Snapshot

First, colleges, cities, and local communities within New York State should hold public forums to hear residents' opinions. Once the public opinion is understood and accounted for, residents would be more likely to speak out in support of the policy. Next, there would be a change.org petition set up, along with a supplemental GoFundMe page, in order to garner political and monetary support for the cause. In addition, an account would be made on Civility to spread the platform. Once separate town and county leaders are elected by a plurality vote to

implement these ground-level changes and policies, a statewide program would be established.

Partnering with the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Medical Student Association (AMA) would enable this policy to accumulate political support through lobbying, not only within the state, but also nationally. The AMA and pharmaceutical organizations such as PhRMA could also lobby for reforms. Specifically, they could advocate for higher Work Expense Relative Value Units (RVUs) for primary care services under Medicare. RVUs define the value of a service or procedure relative to all services and procedures. Its measure is based on the extent of physician work, clinical and nonclinical resources, and expertise required to deliver the healthcare service to patients. [30] Since this value-measurement system is based off Medicare's standards, it would also indirectly result in higher primary care payments by private insurance and Medicaid.

Lastly, all supporters of this movement would contact their local New York senators to voice their concerns with the current fee-for-service model at primary care clinics. Each individual

should inform the senator in an email with the same unified message on the negative societal externalities of a depletion of preventative services in primary care clinics. Based on the proposal, the policy idea would then be drafted by the senator for ultimate passage in the New York state legislature.

Work Cited

- [1] "What Is Preventive Care?" Cigna. Accessed November 16, 2021. <https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/understanding-insurance/preventive-care>
- [2] Carroll, Linda. "Declining Numbers of Americans Have a Primary Care Provider." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, December 16, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-pcp-trends/declining-numbers-of-americans-have-a-primary-care-provider-idUSKBN1YK1Z4>.
- [3] Michas, Frédéric. "Primary Care Physician Visit Frequency among Adults U.S. 2018." Statista, September 26, 2018. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/916781/primary-care-physician-visit-frequency-among-adults-us/>.
- [4] Kamal, Rabah. "How Does Health Spending in the U.S. Compared to Other Countries?" *Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker*, 4 Jan. 2021, https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/health-spending-u-s-compare-countries/#item-spendingcomparison_gdp-per-capita-and-health-consumption-spending-per-capita-2019.
- [5] Leonhardt, Megan. "Nearly 1 in 4 Americans Are Skipping Medical Care Because of the Cost." *CNBC*, CNBC, 12 Mar. 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/11/nearly-1-in-4-americans-are->

skipping-medical-care-because-of-the-cost.html.

- [6] Lehman, Shereen. "Most Americans Miss out on Preventive Healthcare." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 11 June 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-prevention/most-americans-miss-out-on-preventive-healthcare-idUSKBN1J72JG>.
- [7] *Antipoverty Impact of Medicaid Growing ... - Healthaffairs.org*. https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2018.05155?rfr_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Aacrossref.org&journalCode=hlthaff.
- [8] Oecd. OECD statistics. Accessed November 16, 2021. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?TreeId=9>.
- [9] Miriam J. Laugesen and Sherry A. Glied, Michael K. Gusmano, Michael E. Chernew, Gerard F. Anderson, Sherry A. Glied, Eric Sun and Laurence C. Baker, Warren Stevens, and David U. Himmelstein. "Higher Fees Paid to US Physicians Drive Higher Spending for Physician Services Compared to Other Countries: Health Affairs Journal." *Health Affairs*, September 1, 2011. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/abs/10.1377/hlthaff.2010.0204?etoc=>.
- [10] Tompkins County Health Department. "Community Health Assessment 2013–2017." *Community Health Assessment*, <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/pnc/cha>.
- [11] RevCycleIntelligence. "Balancing Specialty and Primary Care Lowers Costs for Aacos." *RevCycleIntelligence*, July 26, 2019. <https://revcycleintelligence.com/news/balancing-specialty-and-primary-care-lowers-costs-for-acos>.
- [12] Ezekiel J. Emanuel, MD. "Designing a Successful Primary Care Physician Capitation Model."

- JAMA. JAMA Network, May 25, 2021. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2780026>.
- [13] Twitter, Krutika Amin, Krutika Amin Twitter, Gary Claxton, Giorlando Ramirez, and Cynthia Cox Twitter. "How Does Cost Affect Access to Care?" Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker, November 16, 2021. https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/cost-affect-access-care/#item-costaccesstocare_11.
- [14] Roland M. Le financement forfaitaire a la capitation des soins primaires: une alternative possible au traditionnel paiement a l'acte-- 2eme partie [Capitation fixed payment for primary care: a possible alternative to the traditional fee-for-service--part 2]. *Rev Med Brux*. 1999 Feb;20(1):35-41. French. PMID: 10091535. [16]
- [15] "I Supreme Court of the United States." Accessed November 25, 2021. https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/20/20-1114/168634/20210210132919703_No._%20PetitionForAWritOfCertiorari.pdf.
- [16] Mafi JN, Reid RO, Baseman LH, et al. Trends in Low-Value Health Service Use and Spending in the US Medicare Fee-for-Service Program, 2014-2018. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2021;4(2):e2037328. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.37328
- [17] "Managing the Most Expensive Patients." *Harvard Business Review*, February 26, 2020. <https://hbr.org/2020/01/managing-the-most-expensive-patients>.
- [18] Gold, M. "Financial Incentives: Current Realities and Challenges for Physicians." *Journal of general internal medicine*. Blackwell Science Inc, January 1999. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1496870/>.

- [19] Kagan, Julia. "Capitation Payments Definition." *Investopedia*. Investopedia, November 20, 2021. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/capitation-payments.asp>.
- [20] Feldstein, Robert *Health Policy Issues: An Economic Perspective*.
- [21] "@HealthValueHub." Home. Accessed November 25, 2021. <https://www.healthcarevaluehub.org/advocate-resources/publications/new-yorkers-struggle-afford-high-healthcare-costs-support-range-government-solutions-across-party-lines>.
- [22] jmulder@syracuse.com, James T. Mulder |. "See NY Counties with Fewest Primary Care Doctors." *newyorkupstate*, April 3, 2017. https://www.newyorkupstate.com/news/2017/04/see_ny_counties_with_fewest_primary_care_doctors.html.
- [23] "How a Bill Becomes a Law." *Genome.gov*. Accessed November 25, 2021. <https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/policy-issues/How-Bill-Becomes-Law>.
- [24] "Legislation." *NY State Senate*. Accessed November 25, 2021. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBH/902>.
- [25] "Physician Shortage Report - Albany." Accessed November 25, 2021. <https://www.albany.edu/news/images/PhysicianShortagereport.pdf>.
- [26] "Health Center Financial Check-up - Pcdc.org." Accessed November 25, 2021. <https://www.pcdc.org/wp-content/uploads/Archive/Health-Center-Financial-Check-Up.pdf>.
- [27] Ab Stockholm sweden: Topics by science.gov. Accessed November 25, 2021. <https://www.science.gov/topicpages/a/ab+stockholm+sweden>.
- [28] "How to Calculate Medicare Fee Schedule?" *Coding Ahead*,

August 2,
2021. <https://www.codingahead.com/how-to-calculate-medicare-fee-schedule-html/>.
[29] “Health Committee, New York State Senate.” Ballotpedia.

Accessed November 25,
2021. https://ballotpedia.org/Health_Committee,_New_York_State_Senate.
[30] Advancing the Business of Healthcare. “All about Relative

Value Units (Rvus).”
AAPC. AAPC, January 12, 2021.
<https://www.aapc.com/practice-management/rvus.aspx>.

Addressing Unsafe Drug Usage in New York State Through Safe Injection Facilities

Jack Viehweg, jrv75@cornell.edu

New York State Governor Kathy Hochul should pass a bill authorizing a pilot program for the creation of privately funded safe injection facilities in order to reduce hospitalizations related to drug overdoses, decrease transmission of diseases through unsafe drug practices, and de-stigmatize addiction.

Background

New York State (NYS) has experienced a vast increase in drug-related deaths, with the age-adjusted rate of opioid-related deaths tripling from 5.4 to 16.1 deaths per 100,000 between 2010 and 2017. [8]

Currently, NYS has been addressing the opioid epidemic through educational campaigns, including naloxone administration training and the promotion of abstinence. [1] Moreover, NYS has a syringe exchange program that was launched in 2001. [7] From this program, 23 needle exchange sites were created, with 11 outside of New York City (NYC). [6] This distribution of sites is problematic because drug-related deaths are more prevalent in upstate and suburban counties than in NYC: a 45% uptick in drug-related deaths was recorded in NYC between 2010 and 2015, while an 84% increase was recorded in 17 suburban and rural counties outside of NYC. [4,8] Thus, harm mitigation efforts must also

be enforced throughout the state. [12] This additional focus aligns with the Biden administration's drug policy priorities, including enhancing evidence-based harm reduction efforts and expanding access to recovery support services. [13]

One harm-mitigation strategy is creating safe injection facilities (SIFs)—facilities where drug users safely inject under medical supervision to prevent overdoses or additional disease transmissions, as well as to provide additional resources. [2,3] However, implementation of SIFs has routinely been blocked by state courts, except for in Rhode Island, which could be a template for NYS. [11]

Policy Idea

Governor Kathy Hochul should follow Rhode Island Governor Daniel McKee in authorizing the creation of safe injection facilities, beginning in suburban communities of Upstate New York, such as

Poughkeepsie, Rochester, Syracuse, and Binghamton. By coupling safe injection sites with the needle exchange program, drug users would be more likely to commute to these facilities to access addiction services. This policy would reduce hospitalizations and deaths due to drug overdose, decrease disease transmission through unsafe drug practices, de-stigmatize addiction, and follow the Biden administration's drug policy priorities.

Policy Analysis

A meta-analysis of 44 studies conducted in Canada, Australia, and Europe found that no client of a SIF had ever died from an overdose within a facility. [2] The study also demonstrated a significant decrease in drug-related deaths after opening SIFs in different cities. [2] For example, a population-based study in Vancouver, British Columbia found a 35% reduction in overdose mortality within 500 meters

surrounding a SIF facility, and the number of overdose-related deaths decreased by 9.3% in the rest of Vancouver during the two years following the SIF's opening. [5]

The Vancouver SIF also found that the admission rate of intravenous drug users for skin infections decreased from 35% to 9% over 3 years. [9] Additionally, the average hospital stay length for drug-using patients decreased by 8 days, the number of monthly ambulance calls with naloxone treatment decreased from 27 to 9, and a projected 6 to 57 HIV infections have been prevented each year due to admission into the Vancouver SIF. [9]

The 2017 CDC Morbidity and Mortality Report estimates the yearly cost of opioid overdose and opioid use disorder in New York State to be over \$60 billion. [11] Based on data from the Vancouver SIF, NYS could save billions per year through the implementation of this policy. Further, creating an environment that ensures patient safety—instead of stigmatizing drug use—would increase both trust in medicine and opportunities for these patients to overcome their drug addictions. [3]

Talking Points

- Data suggest that SIFs lead to lower overdose mortality rates and reduced hospitalizations for opioid-related conditions. [2,3,5,9]
- Since the opening of the safe injection facility, the rate of fatal overdoses in Vancouver has decreased by 35%. [5]
- NYS should prioritize launching SIFs in rural and suburban areas, as these regions experience greater increases in drug usage and drug-related deaths compared to urban areas. [4,8]
- SIFs are well-used because patients do not fear legal repercussions, leading to both patients' increased trust in the medical system and a decrease in the prevalence of drug addictions. [3,9]

Key Facts

- NYS drug-related deaths are more prevalent in upstate and suburban counties than in NYC: the increase in drug-related deaths from 2010 to 2015 in 17 counties outside of NYC was

approximately double the increase of these deaths within the city. [4,8]

- The rate of opioid-related deaths in NYS tripled between 2010 and 2017. [8]
- Implementation of SIFs throughout the U.S. has been blocked by state courts, except for in Rhode Island, which could be a template for NYS. [11]

Next Steps

Other legislative steps need to be taken prior to the implementation of this policy. [14] 21 U.S. Code § 856, commonly referred to as the "Crack House Statute," prohibits the creation or utilization of any location for the purpose of consuming or distributing illicit drugs. [14] Furthermore, the Controlled Substances Act classifies opioids as Schedule I drugs, and possession of these drugs is a felony in NYS. Prior to the enactment of this policy, possession of small amounts of Schedule I substances for personal use must be either reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor, similar to legislation passed in Rhode Island in July 2021, or an exemption would need to be made for the possession of these substances for consumption in a SIF. [11] Additionally, legalizing the

transportation of small amounts of such substances would be crucial to ensure the legal success of SIFs upon implementation.

Action Plan Snapshot

First, the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers of New York State (ASAPNYS); NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS); and the Substance Use, Policy, Education, and Recovery (SUPER) PAC would generate funding and educate politicians on both the necessary and appropriate initiatives to make this policy feasible in NYS. These organizations would primarily lobby NYS Governor Kathy Hochul. In addition, NYS's Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and NYS Senator Peter Harckham (Chair of the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Committee) would be integral to passing any state legislation. Given their involvement in the Joint Senate Task Force on Opioids, Addiction, & Overdose, both Stewart-Cousins and Harckham would be more receptive to backing these legislative changes and would have the political power to influence other NYS legislators.

After garnering support from state officials, further steps to implement this policy include changing

possession of small amounts of specific opioids from a felony to a misdemeanor and legalizing transport of these goods within the state. Beyond these changes, the aforementioned organizations would need to begin working with pre-existing, privately funded clinics to provide education and assistance in employing addiction specialists. After 2-4 years in which these changes are made and in which Rhode Island publishes its pilot program results, Governor Hochul would be better able to legalize SIFs in NYS.

Beyond legalization, supporting organizations would need to create buy-in from local officials, such as mayors, throughout the state. Without support from multiple levels of government and private funding groups, legalization would lead to an increase in safe injection facilities throughout New York City rather than upstate, similar to the current distribution of syringe exchange sites. Since there is a greater need for safe injection in rural and suburban communities of upstate NY, Governor Hochul should authorize a rollout plan beginning with upstate suburban communities, such as Poughkeepsie, Rochester, Syracuse, and Binghamton, due to their increased need and existing infrastructure,

before expanding to New York City and the most rural areas of the state.

Works Cited

- [1] "Addressing the Opioid Epidemic in New York State." New York State, 2021. https://www.health.ny.gov/community/opioid_epidemic/.
- [2] Armbrrecht, Eric, et al. "Supervised Injection Facilities and Other ... - Icer." Institute for Clinical and Economic Review, January 8, 2021. https://icer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ICER_SIF_Final-Evidence-Report_010821.pdf
- [3] Kaplan, Louise. "Safe Injection Sites Save Lives." *The Nurse Practitioner* 43, no. 7 (2018): 13–15. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.npr.0000534948.52123.fb>.
- [4] Malatras, Jim. "The Growing Drug Epidemic in New York." Rockefeller Institute of Government, July 23, 2019. <https://rockinst.org/issue-area/growing-drug-epidemic-new-york/>.
- [5] Marshall, BD; Milloy, MJ; Wood, E; Montaner, JS; Kerr, T. "Reduction in Overdose Mortality after the Opening of North America's First Medically Supervised Safer Injecting Facility: A Retrospective Population-Based Study." *Lancet* (London, England). U.S. National Library of Medicine, April 15, 2011. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21497898/>.
- [6] "New York Needle Exchanges & Harm Reduction Programs." Detox Local, September 14, 2020. <https://www.detoxlocal.com/needle-exchanges/new-york/>.
- [7] New York State Department of Health. Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP): Overview of the Law and Regulations. New York State Department of Health, December 2019.

https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles_syringes/esap/overview.htm.

[8] New York State Department of Health. "New York State Opioid Annual Report 2020 - Health.ny.gov," 2020.

https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/opioid/data/pdf/nys_opioid_annual_report_2020.pdf.

[9] Ng, Jennifer, Christy Sutherland, and Michael R. Kolber. "Does Evidence Support Supervised Injection Sites?" The College of Family Physicians of Canada. The College of Family Physicians of Canada, November 1, 2017.

<https://www.cfp.ca/content/63/11/866>.

[10] "State-Level Economic Costs of Opioid Use Disorder and Fatal Opioid Overdose - United States, 2017." Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 15, 2021.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7015a1.htm>.

[11] "State of Rhode Island General Assembly." RI State Seal. Accessed November 13, 2021.

https://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease/_layouts/RIL.PressRelease.ListStructure/Forms/DisplayForm.aspx?List=c8baae31-3c10-431c-8dcd-9dbbe21ce3e9&ID=372088.

[12] Strathdee, Steffanie A., et al. "Needle Exchange Is Not Enough: Lessons from the Vancouver injecting drug use study." LWW. Lippincott-Raven Publishers, August 1997.

https://journals.lww.com/aidsonline/Fulltext/1997/08000/Intact_CCR_5_coreceptors_in_HIV_1_infected.1.aspx?casa_token=zIMGopGPwL8AAAAA%3AN0wFY-

VabvBITwbO-96M7aXq80s_3gA3Ne90GnKx6ZcIMzwup2mEquq6XNxEX9Rv2gIl670IQq16Q2uRLjp3l_p.

[13] "The Biden-Harris Administration's Statement of Drug Policy Priorities for Year One." Whitehouse.gov, April 1, 2021. The Executive Office of the President of the United States.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/BidenHarris-Statement-of-Drug-Policy-Priorities-April-1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2TBk34U_XRqIqK_pAYnUd_9f7zY3IbCQI9KxI6S5eYeRJdFz19B09hZ84.

[14] "Title 21 United States Code (USC) Controlled Substances Act." Section 811. Accessed November 13, 2021.

<https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/21cfr/21usc/811.htm>.

