

NEW PAPERS FOR RELEASE IN OCTOBER 2016

Second Chances Through Successful Reentry

There are approximately seven million Americans living under correctional supervision and even more who have criminal records. Effective reentry policies yield far-reaching benefits for the formerly incarcerated, their communities, and society at large. Yet often, Americans with criminal records receive insufficient support when reentering their communities. This can result in difficulties with securing employment, housing, and access to services, ultimately preventing successful reintegration.

Graduated Reintegration: Smoothing the Transition from Prison to Community

Authors: Angela Hawken (New York University) and Mark Kleiman (New York University)

The current prisoner release process in the United States does not maximize the chance of successful reintegration. Improving this process could reduce recidivism and incarceration as well as improve labor market outcomes for those with criminal records. Hawken and Kleiman propose to make the transition out of incarceration more gradual, with a systematic, incremental relaxation of restrictions on prisoner activities and extensive support provided to facilitate reintegration. Because this would replace the final years or months of a prisoner's sentence, it holds the promise of reducing costs while simultaneously improving recidivism and labor market outcomes. The authors further discuss how their proposals could be rigorously evaluated and improved over time.

Increasing Employment for Individuals with Criminal Records: Alternatives to Ban the Box Legislation

Author: Jennifer L. Doleac (University of Virginia)

Individuals who were formerly incarcerated often face great difficulty in re-entering the labor market after incarceration. The labor market facing these individuals is a difficult one, as Doleac shows, with employers often reluctant to hire job seekers with criminal records. Moreover, low-skilled workers – a group that is especially likely to have criminal records – face their own challenges in finding high-quality employment. Given this difficult environment, Doleac describes the potential to enhance work readiness and effectively communicate with employers regarding the work readiness of those with records, among other policy options. Doleac also discusses the unintended consequences of employer regulations like Ban the Box that aim at improving outcomes for workers with records.

Putting Time Limits on the Punitiveness of the Criminal Justice System

Author: Anne Morrison Piehl (Rutgers University)

Criminal justice policy in the United States is generally much more punitive than in other developed nations. In part, this has taken the form of very high incarceration rates and substantial economic impacts of incarceration, both for people with criminal records and the broader public. Anne Piehl evaluates a range of existing federal and state reform efforts and proposes ways to roll back excessively punitive sentencing, including through retroactive sentencing reform, and discusses the realistic scope of such efforts. The author also considers proposals to facilitate labor market re-entry after incarceration. Criminal record sealing and expungement, as well as targeted relief of incarceration's collateral consequences, can all play important roles.