Megan T. Stevenson

University of Virginia School of Law

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APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of Law, University of Virginia, 2020-current

Associate Professor of Economics (by courtesy), University of Virginia, 2021-current

Assistant Professor, George Mason University, Antonin Scalia Law School, 2017-2020

Quattrone Fellow, University of Pennsylvania Law School, 2015-2017

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Board of Directors, American Law and Economics Association

Finance Committee, American Law and Economics Association

Chair, AALS Section on Law & Economics

Co-founder, Virtual Law and Economics Workshop

Co-founder, Virtual Crim Workshop

“Expert” on the [Criminal Justice Expert Panel](https://cjexpertpanel.org/)

PUBLICATIONS (LAW REVIEWS)

**Cause, Effect, and the Structure of the Social World,** Forthcoming at Boston University Law Review [(link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4445710)

**Systemic Failures to Appear in Court,** Forthcoming at University of Pennsylvania Law Review (with Lindsay Graef, Sandra Mayson, Aurelie Ouss)

**The Counterintuitive Consequences of Sex Offender Risk Assessment at Sentencing,** Forthcoming at University of Toronto Law Journal (invited symposium essay; with Jennifer L. Doleac)

**Pretrial Detention and the Value of Liberty,** 108 Virginia Law Review 709, 2022 (with Sandy Mayson) ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3787018))

**Misdemeanors By the Numbers** 61 Boston College Law Review 971, 2020 (with Sandra Mayson) ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3374571))

**Algorithmic Risk Assessment and the Double-Edged Sword of Youth** 96 Washington University Law Review 681, 2018 (with Christopher Slobogin; re-issued in Behavioral Sciences & Law special edition on risk assessment) ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3225350))

**Assessing Risk Assessment in Action,** 103 Minnesota Law Review 303, 2018 ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3016088))

* Winner, 2017 **Young Legal Scholars Paper Competition**, Federalist Society

**The Scale of Misdemeanor Justice,** 98 Boston University Law Review 731, 2018 (with Sandra Mayson) ([link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3146057)

**The Downstream Consequences of Misdemeanor Pretrial Detention,** 69 Stanford Law Review 711, 2017 (with Paul Heaton and Sandra Mayson) ([link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2809840)

PUBLICATIONS (ECONOMICS JOURNALS)

**Algorithmic Risk Assessment in The Hands of Humans,** Conditionally accepted at AEJ: Economic Policy (with Jennifer Doleac) [(link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3489440)

**Does Cash Bail Deter Misconduct?** Accepted at AEJ: Applied Economics (with Aurelie Ouss) [(link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3335138)

**Algorithmic Social Engineering,** 110 American Economic Association Papers & Proceedings 96, 2020 (with Bo Cowgill) ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3523999))

**Distortion of Justice: How the Inability to Pay Bail Affects Case Outcomes,** 34Journal of Law, Economics & Organization 511, 2018 ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2777615))

* Winner, 2019 **Oliver E. Williamson Award** for best article, selected from all JLEO articles published within the preceding three years

**Breaking Bad: Mechanisms of Social Influence and the Path to Criminality in Juvenile Jails*,*** 99 Review of Economics and Statistics 824, 2017 [(link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2627394)

PUBLICATIONS (OTHER)

**Average Monotonicity in a Setting with Covariates,** (August 2023, Note) ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4528125))

**Choosing Freedom,** Inquest, August 2021 (with Sandy Mayson, Andrea Roth, Jane Bambauer) [(link)](https://inquest.org/choosing-freedom/)

**Open Risk Assessment**, Behavioral Sciences and Law, forthcoming 2020 (with Brandon L. Garrett) ([link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3615742)

**Response to “What is ‘Fair’? Algorithms in Criminal Justice”** 34Issues in Science and Technology, Summer 2018

**Pretrial Risk Assessment: A Practice Guide for Judges,** 57 ABA Judges Journal, Summer 2018 (with David G. Robinson and Hannah Jane Sassaman)

**Are Criminal Risk Assessment Scores Racist?**, [Brookings Institution](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2016/08/22/are-criminal-risk-assessment-scores-racist/), Aug. 22, 2016 (with Jennifer Doleac)

**Bail Reform: New Directions for Pretrial Detention and Release**, Academy For Justice, A Report on Scholarship and Criminal Justice Reform (Erik Luna ed., 2017) [(link)](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2939273)

**Green Industrial Policy: Trade and Theory,** World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (2012, with Larry Karp) [(link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2165676))

WORKING PAPERS

**Conviction, Incarceration and Recidivism: Understanding the Revolving Door,** Revise & Resubmit at Quarterly Journal of Economics (with John Eric Humphries, Aurelie Ouss, Kamelia Stavreva, Winnie van Dijk; date of most recent draft: July 2023) ([link](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4507597))

**`Natural Born Criminal’: A History of Risk Assessments** (with Robynn Cox)

**The Long-Term Socioeconomic Impacts of Incarceration** (with John Eric Humphries, Aurelie Ouss, Kamelia Stavreva, Winnie van Dijk)

**Robots Are Not Taking over the World** (with David Abrams, Aurelie Ouss, Colin Sullivan and Brian Collopy; work in progress)

RESTING PAPERS

**A Decomposition of Racial Disparities in Pretrial Detention** (date of most recent draft: Jan. 27, 2018)

**Tests of Random Assignment to Peers in the Face of Mechanical Negative Correlation: An Evaluation of Four Techniques** (date of most recent draft: Aug. 9, 2015)

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Agricultural and Resource Economics, UC Berkeley, 2016

 M.S., Agricultural and Resource Economics, UC Berkeley, 2011

 B.A., Interdisciplinary Studies, UC Berkeley 2009 (Highest Distinction)

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

**2022-2023 (including forthcoming):** Stanford Law & Economics Workshop, NBER Summer Institute (Crime/Law Sessions), Carnegie Mellon faculty workshop (Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy), Washington University Law and Economics Colloquim, NYU Law & Economics Colloquium, University of Texas Law & Economics Colloquium, Harvard Program on Criminal Justice, University of Pittsburgh Series on Prediction and Forecasting, ALEA Annual Meeting, AALS Session on Law and Economics, Harvard Roundtable on Racial Disparities in Massachusetts Criminal Courts, CELS (UVA)

**2021-2022:** Harvard Data Science Initiative (Keynote Speaker),University of Virginia Applied Micro Workshop, Brooklyn Law Faculty Workshop, Tulane Law and Economy Workshop Series, Latin American Workshop in Law and Economics, George Mason Law and Economics Colloquium, University of Southern California Law and Social Science Colloquium, ALACDE Annual Conference (Keynote Speaker), AALS Session on Law and Economics, CELS (Toronto)

**2020-2021:** ETH Zurich Speaker Series in Law and Economics, Boston University Law and Economics Colloquium, Cardozo Law School Faculty Workshop, ABA Sentencing Task Force, University of Toronto Law and Economics Colloquium, University of Chicago Law and Economics Colloquium, University of Kentucky Panel on Bail, United State Civil Rights Commission Panel on Bail Reform, Kentucky Advisory Committee to the United States Civil Rights Commission, Hebrew University of Jerusalem Law and Economics Workshop, UVA Federalist Society Lunch, American University Economics Workshop, George Mason Program on Economics & Privacy Panel on Algorithms

**2019-2020:** United States Commission on Civil Rights, Endogenous Rules Workshop, University of Berkeley Law, Accounting, and Business Workshop, Duke Law & Economics Colloquium, ASSA Annual Meeting, Conference on Empirical Legal Studies, NBER Summer Institute (Crime/Law Sessions), Schar School Microeconomic Policy Seminar

**2018-2019:** Economics and Fairness Workshop (Harvard, Computing Community Consortium), Law & Society Annual Meeting, Pretrial Reform and Operations Workgroup (Judicial Council of CA, appointed by Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakuaye), Inter-American Development Bank, UCLA Workshop on AI and Law Enforcement, Moritz College of Law (Ohio State), University of Michigan Law & Economics Colloquium, Northwestern University Law & Economics Colloquium, University of Texas at Austin Law & Economics Colloquium

**2017-2018:** CrimFest, Panel on Algorithmic Fairness (GMU Symposium on the Law & Economics of Privacy and Data Security), ALEA, Rebellious Lawyering Conference (Yale Law School), Vanderbilt University Panel on Risk Assessment, University of Louisville School of Business, Federalist Society Young Legal Scholars Panel (at AALS), ACLU Convening on Racial Fairness and Risk Assessments, Boston University Symposium on Misdemeanors

**2016-2017:** AALS Summer Session on Criminal Law, University of California, Berkeley, Boalt School of Law, George Mason University, Antonin Scalia Law School, University of Arizona, School of Public Policy, NBER Summer Institute, Brookings Institution

**2015-2016**: University of Chicago Crime Lab in New York City, University of Virginia Law and Economics Colloquium, Transatlantic Workshop on Crime (Sweden), Early Career Behavioral Economics Conference (Germany) Understanding Guilty Pleas

**2014-2015**: American Law and Economics Association Annual Meeting, Conference on Empirical Legal Studies, University of Indiana Bloomington School of Public Policy, UC Davis Labor Economics Seminar, WEAI Graduate Student Dissertation Workshop, 2014

**2013-2014:** ARE Departmental Seminar, University College London Workshop on Crime (England), Berkeley Statistics Seminar

AWARDS AND LARGE GRANTS

**2023 Donald M. Ephraim Prize in Law and Economics** “The [Ephraim Prize](https://www.law.uchicago.edu/news/inaugural-donald-m-ephraim-prize-law-and-economics-awarded-megan-t-stevenson) recognizes an early-career scholar in the field of law and economics whose work has advanced the state of knowledge in the field and whose intellectual impact has the potential to reach the legal academy, legal profession, and beyond.”

**2022 Arnold Ventures grant, $205,789** to study the long-term socioeconomic impacts of incarceration

**2022 Research Award, UVA** in recognition of significant contributions through research and scholarship to the University of Virginia

**2021 Research Award, UVA** in recognition of significant contributions through research and scholarship to the University of Virginia

**Oliver E. Williamson Award** for best article, selected among all papers published within the preceding 3 years in the Journal of Law, Economics & Organization (*Distortion of Justice: How the Inability to Pay Bail Affects Case Outcomes)*

Winner, **Young Legal Scholars Paper Competition**, Federalist Society, 2017 (*Assessing Risk Assessment in Action)*

RESEARCH FUNDING

American Constitution Society

National Science Foundation Dissertation Grant

Russell Sage Small Grants in Behavioral Economics

Laura and John Arnold Foundation

IBER Dissertation Award

Graduate Student Summer Fellowship

Breslauer Award

Banque Syz & Co. Scholarship

TEACHING

Criminal Law, Statistics for Lawyers, Economics for Lawyers, Rethinking Criminal Justice, Law & Economics Colloquium

ACADEMIC SERVICES

**Refereeing (Law & Economics Journals):**

American Law & Economics Review

Journal of Empirical Legal Studies

Journal of Law & Economics

Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization

Journal of Legal Studies

International Review of Law and Economics

Supreme Court Economic Review

**Refereeing (Other Economics Journals):**

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics

American Economic Journal: Economic Policy

American Economic Review

Cuadernos de Economia

Economic Development and Cultural Change

Journal of Development Economics

Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization

Journal of Economic Literature

Journal of Human Resources

Journal of Public Economics

Review of Economics and Statistics

Quarterly Journal of Economics

**Refereeing (Law):**

Behavioral Sciences and Law

Harvard Law Review

Journal of Legal Analysis

Law and Society Review

Yale Law Journal

 **Refereeing (Criminology):**

Criminology

Journal of Quantitative Criminology

 **Refereeing (Other):**

American Political Science Review

Journal of Policy Analysis and Management

Journal of the Royal Statistical Society

Nature Human Behavior

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

Science

**Refereeing (Other Research Organizations):**

RAND

Pew Research Center

**Grant Review:**

ETH Zurich Research Commission

Israel Science Foundation

National Science Foundation

Sloan Foundation

Social Science and Humanities Research Council (Canada)

Swiss National Science Foundation

**Other contributions to the field**:

* Committee on Research Integrity in Empirical Legal Studies
* Prize Committee (Best Article), American Law and Economics Review, 2022
* Creator, [Reading List: Black Economists on Criminal Justice](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rkjkujISwn0q-7kSRkCkq_LYpL-ngjps/view)
* Reviewer (Criminal Justice), Conference on Empirical Legal Studies, 2021
* Program Committee, Conference on Empirical Legal Studies, 2022
* Area Organizer, Criminal Law, American Law and Economics Association, 2021
* Program Committee, FAccT (Fairness, Accountability & Transparency in Algorithmic Systems), 2019

MEDIA

**Op-Eds:**

* *Our Pretrial System Needs to Be Torn Down and Rebuilt,* [The Ripon Forum,](https://riponsociety.org/article/our-pretrial-system-needs-to-be-torn-down-and-rebuilt/) May 2022
* *Virtually No One Is Dangerous Enough to Justify Jail,* [The Appeal](https://theappeal.org/virtually-no-one-is-dangerous-enough-to-justify-jail/), Mar. 15, 2021
* *In U.S. Bail Reform, Justice by Algorithm Can Only Go So Far,* [The Hill](https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/371954-in-us-bail-reform-justice-by-algorithm-can-only-go-so-far), Feb. 2, 2018
* *Risk Assessment: The Devil’s in the Details*, [The Crime Report](https://thecrimereport.org/2017/08/31/does-risk-assessment-work-theres-no-single-answer/), Aug. 31, 2017
* *Bail System is Unjust and Undermines Public Safety*, [Houston Chronicle](https://www.chron.com/opinion/outlook/article/Heaton-Mayson-and-Stevenson-Bail-system-is-9171634.php), Aug. 18, 2016 (with Paul Heaton and Sandra Mayson)
* *Reform Systems for Pretrial Incarceration in Philly*, [Philadelphia Inquirer](http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODN/PhiladelphiaInquirer/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=PHQP%2F2016%2F09%2F09&entity=Ar01700&sk=491E820E), Sept. 9, 2016

**Articles Focusing on My Research**

* *Algorithms were supposed to make Virginia judges fairer. What actually happened was far more complicated.,* [The Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/11/19/algorithms-were-supposed-make-virginia-judges-more-fair-what-actually-happened-was-far-more-complicated/), Nov. 19, 2019
* *Algorithms should’ve made courts more fair. What went wrong?* [Wired Magazine](https://www.wired.com/story/algorithms-shouldve-made-courts-more-fair-what-went-wrong/), Sept. 05, 2019
* *In Philly, your race predicts whether you’ll be locked up or go free before trial, study says,* [Philadelphia Inquirer](https://www.inquirer.com/news/philly-money-bail-criminal-justice-community-bail-fund-20190429.html), Apr., 29, 2019
* *Philly DA Larry Krasner stopped seeking bail for low-level crimes. Here’s what happened next*. [Philadelphia Inquirer,](https://www.inquirer.com/news/philly-district-attorney-larry-krasner-money-bail-criminal-justice-reform-incarceration-20190219.html) Feb. 19, 2019
* *Why poor low-level offenders often plead to worse crimes*, [Atlantic Magazine](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/why-pretrial-jail-can-mean-pleading-to-worse-crimes/491975/), July 24, 2016

**Media Mentions (warning – citations sometimes inaccurate!):**

* *Misdemeanors by the Numbers:* [Philadelphia Inquirer](https://www.philly.com/news/philly-money-bail-criminal-justice-community-bail-fund-20190429.html)
* *Bail, Jail, and Pretrial Misconduct: The Influence of Prosecutors::* [Time Magazine](http://time.com/5556823/bail-reform-criminal-justice-system/) (written by John Legend!), [Reason](https://reason.com/blog/2019/02/21/philadelphia-showing-successes-in-reduci), [Philadelphia Tribune](https://www.phillytrib.com/news/local_news/independent-study-supports-krasner-war-on-cash-bail/article_f5e77683-3978-5b57-9e1e-03e9c7f5ed5b.html), [Philadelphia Inquirer](https://www.philly.com/news/philly-district-attorney-larry-krasner-money-bail-criminal-justice-reform-incarceration-20190219.html), [The Hill](https://thehill.com/opinion/criminal-justice/432385-doing-justice-isnt-left-its-right), [Philadelphia Inquirer](https://www.philly.com/opinion/editorials/cash-bail-crimiinal-justice-reform-krasner-editorial-20190502.html)
* *Algorithmic Risk Assessments and the Double-Edged Sword of Youth*[*:* Prison Policy Initiative](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2018/08/22/blackbox/), [Undark](https://undark.org/article/a-calculating-look-at-criminal-justice/)
* *Assessing Risk Assessment in Action*: [Wired](https://www.wired.com/story/algorithms-shouldve-made-courts-more-fair-what-went-wrong/) (09/05/19) [Newsweek](https://www.newsweek.com/ai-racist-yet-computer-algorithms-are-helping-decide-court-cases-789296), [Science Magazine](https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/01/united-states-computers-help-decide-who-goes-jail-their-judgment-may-be-no-better-ours), [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/sep/07/imprisoned-by-algorithms-the-dark-side-of-california-ending-cash-bail), [US News & World Report](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/pennsylvania/articles/2018-07-28/pennsylvanias-bail-system-keeps-poor-people-in-jail), [The Daily Signal](https://www.dailysignal.com/2018/09/06/california-is-changing-its-bail-system-the-reforms-are-hopeful-but-unproven/), [Wired](https://www.wired.co.uk/article/police-ai-uk-durham-hart-checkpoint-algorithm-edit), [The Atlantic](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/09/the-bail-reform-tool-that-activists-want-abolished/570913/), [Undark](https://undark.org/article/criminal-justice-racist-algorithm/) (3/20/18), [Undark](https://undark.org/article/a-calculating-look-at-criminal-justice/) (9/26/18), [Slate](https://slate.com/technology/2018/07/pennsylvania-commission-on-sentencing-is-trying-to-make-its-algorithm-transparent.html), [USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/policing/2018/08/30/california-law-risk-assessments-bail-justice-system-policing-usa/1043956002/), [The Verge,](https://www.theverge.com/2018/1/17/16902016/compas-algorithm-sentencing-court-accuracy-problem) [Pacific Standard](https://psmag.com/social-justice/removing-racial-bias-from-the-algorithm), [US News and World Report](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/new-jersey/articles/2019-02-17/controversial-algorithms-help-decide-who-stays-in-jail), [Fast Company](https://www.fastcompany.com/90249511/hidden-algorithms-could-already-be-helping-compute-your-fate), [Law.com](https://www.law.com/legaltechnews/2020/07/16/judges-may-be-using-risk-assessments-too-much-and-too-little/?slreturn=20200620123916), [The Intercept](https://theintercept.com/2020/07/12/risk-assessment-tools-bail-reform/)
* *Pretrial Detention and Bail*: [Undark](https://undark.org/article/criminal-justice-racist-algorithm/)
* *Distortion of Justice: How the Inability to Pay Bail Affects Case Outcomes:* [The Atlantic](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/why-pretrial-jail-can-mean-pleading-to-worse-crimes/491975/), [Philadelphia Inquirer](http://www.philly.com/philly/business/law/20160826_Penn_study__defendants_who_can_t_make_bail_are_likelier_to_be_jailed_now_and_in_the_future.html) (8/5/2016), [International Business Times](https://www.ibtimes.com/pretrial-detention-linked-increase-guilty-pleas-drop-employment-study-2405031), [Brookings Institution](https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/to-reduce-wrongful-convictions-reform-the-bail-system/), [Philadelphia Inquirer (3/12/19)](https://www.philly.com/news/money-bail-philly-aclu-criminal-justice-reform-yasp-pretrial-20190312.html), [America Magazine](https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2018/04/06/why-more-data-needed-when-reporting-latinos-criminal-justice-system)
* *The Downstream Consequences of Misdemeanor Pretrial Detention:* [The Houston Press,](https://www.houstonpress.com/news/researchers-think-harris-countys-bail-system-is-unconstitutional-8627961) [NY Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/09/us/houston-bail-reform-sheriff-gonzalez.html), [Philadelphia Inquirer](http://www.philly.com/philly/business/law/20160826_Penn_study__defendants_who_can_t_make_bail_are_likelier_to_be_jailed_now_and_in_the_future.html), [Cleveland Plain Dealer](https://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2016/08/seattle_routinely_jails_people.html), [ABC News](https://abc13.com/news/bail-practices-in-harris-county-jail-under-scrutiny/1547276/)

**Podcasts:**

* [Common Law, The High Cost of Pretrial Detention](https://www.law.virginia.edu/commonlaw/show-notes-high-cost-pretrial-detention)
* [Hi-Phi Nation (Slate Podcasts) S03E02: Risky Business](https://hiphination.org/season-3-episodes/s3-episode-2-risky-business/)
* [Probable Causation (Hosted by Jennifer Doleac) S01E04](https://www.probablecausation.com/podcasts/episode-4-megan-stevenson)
* [The Pulse (PBS Radio): Can Algorithms Help Judges Make Fair Decisions?](https://whyy.org/segments/can-algorithms-help-judges-make-fair-decisions/)
* [Ipse Dixit S01E478](https://shows.acast.com/ipse-dixit/episodes/megan-stevenson-on-algorithmic-risk-assessment)

**Webcasts:**

* [The Appeal Live](https://www.pscp.tv/w/1nAKELBdVLOxL) (focus on Pretrial Detention and the Value of Liberty)
* [Testimony at the United States Commission on Civil Rights (beginning approx 2:41)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWLcyC_kZqI)
* [The Appeal Live](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=449312406352136&ref=watch_permalink) (discussion of bail reform)