

Megan T. Stevenson

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APPOINTMENTS

Henry L. and Grace Doherty Charitable Foundation Professor of Law, University of Virginia, 2023-current

Professor of Economics (by courtesy), University of Virginia, 2023-current
Associate Professor of Law, University of Virginia, 2020-2023

Associate Professor of Economics (by courtesy), University of Virginia, 2021-2023
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 (2021-2024)

Finance Committee, American Law and Economics Association (2021-2024)

2024 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](#)

WORKING PAPERS

Humans in the Loop: The Blind Spot of the Credibility Revolution (with Joshua B Fishman, date of most recent draft: January 2025. Revise & Resubmit, Journal of Economic Literature)

Incarceration and Wealth, (with John Eric Humphries, Aurelie Ouss, Winnie van Dijk; under review, date of most recent draft: May 2025)

PUBLICATIONS (ECONOMICS JOURNALS)

Conviction, Incarceration and Recidivism: Understanding the Revolving Door, Accepted at QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS (with John Eric Humphries, Aurelie Ouss, Kamelia Stavreva, Winnie van Dijk; date of most recent draft: January 2025) ([link](#))

The Importance of Base-Rates in Differential Impact: A Bail Reform Case-Study, 108 JOURNAL OF INSTITUTIONAL AND THEORETICAL ECONOMICS 139, 2025 (with Aurelie Ouss)

Algorithmic Risk Assessment in The Hands of Humans, 16 AEJ: ECONOMIC POLICY 382, 2024 (with Jennifer Doleac) ([link](#))

Does Cash Bail Deter Misconduct? 15 AEJ: APPLIED ECONOMICS 150, 2023 (with Aurelie Ouss) ([journal](#)) ([non-paywalled version](#))

Algorithmic Social Engineering, 110 AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION PAPERS & PROCEEDINGS 96, 2020 (with Bo Cowgill) ([link](#))

Distortion of Justice: How the Inability to Pay Bail Affects Case Outcomes, 34 JOURNAL OF LAW, ECONOMICS & ORGANIZATION 511, 2018 ([link](#))

- 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](#))

PUBLICATIONS (LAW REVIEWS)

Eugenic Criminology and the Origins of Predictive Algorithms in Criminal Justice (forthcoming, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LAW REVIEW, with Robynn Cox; date of most recent draft: April 2025)

The Robots Aren't Taking over yet: a Criminal Justice Field Experiment (forthcoming, AMERICAN CRIMINAL LAW REVIEW, with David Abrams, Brian Collopy, Aurelie Ouss and Colin Sullivan; date of most recent draft: January 2025)

Cause, Effect, and the Structure of the Social World, 103 BOSTON UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW 2001, 2024 ([link](#))

Systemic Failures to Appear in Court, 172 UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA LAW REVIEW 1, 2023 (with Lindsay Graef, Sandra Mayson, Aurelie Ouss) ([link](#))

The Counterintuitive Consequences of Sex Offender Risk Assessment at Sentencing, 73 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LAW JOURNAL 59, 2023 (invited symposium essay; with Jennifer L. Doleac) ([journal](#))

Pretrial Detention and the Value of Liberty, 108 VIRGINIA LAW REVIEW 709, 2022 (with Sandy Mayson) ([link](#))

Misdemeanors By the Numbers 61 BOSTON COLLEGE LAW REVIEW 971, 2020 (with Sandra Mayson) ([link](#))

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](#))

Assessing Risk Assessment in Action, 103 MINNESOTA LAW REVIEW 303, 2018 ([link](#))

- 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](#))

The Downstream Consequences of Misdemeanor Pretrial Detention, 69 STANFORD LAW REVIEW 711, 2017 (with Paul Heaton and Sandra Mayson) ([link](#))

PUBLICATIONS (OTHER)

Average Monotonicity in a Setting with Covariates, (August 2023, Note) ([link](#))

Choosing Freedom, Inquest, August 2021 (with Sandy Mayson, Andrea Roth, Jane Bambauer) ([link](#))

Open Risk Assessment, 38 BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AND LAW 279, 2020 (with Brandon L. Garrett) ([link](#))

Response to “What is ‘Fair’? Algorithms in Criminal Justice” 34 ISSUES 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](#), 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](#))

Green Industrial Policy: Trade and Theory, WORLD BANK POLICY RESEARCH WORKING PAPER (2012, with Larry Karp) ([link](#))

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Institutes for Defective Delinquents (with Thomas Frampton)

Credit, Conviction and Incarceration (with John Eric Humphries, Aurelie Ouss, Kamelia Stavreva, Winnie van Dijk)

Crime in Prison (with Emma Harrington, Aurelie Ouss, and Hannah Schaffer)

PERMANENT WORKING 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)

AWARDS AND LARGE GRANTS

2024 Arnold Ventures grant (\$608,671) to study the impact prisons have on crime once within-prison offenses are taken into account

2024 Arnold Ventures grant (\$656,237) to study the socioeconomic impacts of a criminal conviction

2024 Shannon Fellowship (\$70,000) “to honor outstanding mid-career faculty from across the University”

2023 Donald M. Ephraim Prize in Law and Economics (\$30,000) “The [Ephraim Prize](#) 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
Econometrica
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 Political Economy: Microeconomics
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
Criminology & Public Policy
Journal of Crime & Criminal Justice
Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology
Journal of Quantitative Criminology

Refereeing (Other):

American Journal of Sociology
American Political Science Review
Health Affairs
Journal of the American Medical Association – Network Open
Journal of Policy Analysis and Management
Journal of the Royal Statistical Society
Nature Human Behavior
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences
Science
Science Advances

Refereeing (Other Research Organizations):

RAND
Pew Research Center

Grant Review:

ETH Zurich Research Commission
Israel Science Foundation
National Science Foundation
Russell Sage 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](#)
- 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

Op-Eds:

- *Too Many Philly Police Are No-Shows in Court, Delaying Cases and Undermining Justice*, [PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER](#), Dec. 1, 2023
- *Our Pretrial System Needs to Be Torn Down and Rebuilt*, [THE RIPON FORUM](#), May 2022
- *Virtually No One Is Dangerous Enough to Justify Jail*, [THE APPEAL](#), Mar. 15, 2021
- *In U.S. Bail Reform, Justice by Algorithm Can Only Go So Far*, [THE HILL](#), Feb. 2, 2018
- *Risk Assessment: The Devil's in the Details*, [THE CRIME REPORT](#), Aug. 31, 2017
- *Bail System is Unjust and Undermines Public Safety*, [HOUSTON CHRONICLE](#), Aug. 18, 2016 (with Paul Heaton and Sandra Mayson)
- *Reform Systems for Pretrial Incarceration in Philly*, [PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER](#), Sept. 9, 2016

Articles Focusing on My Research

- *Systemic Failures to Appear in Court*, [ABA Journal](#), December 6, 2023
- *Trump out on bail – a criminal justice expert explains the system of bail*. [THE CONVERSATION](#), August 25, 2023
- *Algorithms were supposed to make Virginia judges fairer. What actually happened was far more complicated.*, [THE WASHINGTON POST](#), Nov. 19, 2019
- *Algorithms should've made courts more fair. What went wrong?* [WIRED MAGAZINE](#), Sept. 05, 2019
- *In Philly, your race predicts whether you'll be locked up or go free before trial, study says*, [PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER](#), Apr., 29, 2019
- *Philly DA Larry Krasner stopped seeking bail for low-level crimes. Here's what happened next*. [PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER](#), Feb. 19, 2019
- *Why poor low-level offenders often plead to worse crimes*, [ATLANTIC MAGAZINE](#), July 24, 2016

Media Mentions (warning – citations sometimes inaccurate!):

- *Misdemeanors by the Numbers*: [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- *Bail, Jail, and Pretrial Misconduct: The Influence of Prosecutors*:: [Time Magazine](#) (written by John Legend!), [Reason](#), [Philadelphia Tribune](#), [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), [The Hill](#), [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- *Algorithmic Risk Assessments and the Double-Edged Sword of Youth*: [Prison Policy Initiative](#), [Undark](#)
- *Assessing Risk Assessment in Action*: [Wired](#) (09/05/19) [Newsweek](#), [Science Magazine](#), [The Guardian](#), [US News & World Report](#), [The Daily Signal](#), [Wired](#), [The Atlantic](#), [Undark](#) (3/20/18), [Undark](#) (9/26/18), [Slate](#), [USA Today](#), [The Verge](#), [Pacific Standard](#), [US News and World Report](#), [Fast Company](#), [Law.com](#), [The Intercept](#)
- *Pretrial Detention and Bail*: [Undark](#)
- *Distortion of Justice: How the Inability to Pay Bail Affects Case Outcomes*: [The Atlantic](#), [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (8/5/2016), [International Business Times](#), [Brookings Institution](#), [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (3/12/19), [America Magazine](#)

- *The Downstream Consequences of Misdemeanor Pretrial Detention*: [The Houston Press](#), [NY Times](#), [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), [ABC News](#)

Podcasts:

- [Social Science Bites, Megan Stevenson on Why Criminal Justice Interventions Don't Work](#)
- [Common Law, The High Cost of Pretrial Detention](#)
- [Hi-Phi Nation \(Slate Podcasts\) S03E02: Risky Business](#)
- [Probable Causation \(Hosted by Jennifer Doleac\) S01E04](#)
- [The Pulse \(PBS Radio\): Can Algorithms Help Judges Make Fair Decisions?](#)
- [Ipse Dixit S01E478](#)

TV/Webcasts:

- [Fox LiveNow](#) on bail and Trump's indictment
- [The Appeal Live](#) (focus on Pretrial Detention and the Value of Liberty)
- [Testimony at the United States Commission on Civil Rights \(beginning approx 2:41\)](#)
- [The Appeal Live](#) (discussion of bail reform)

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

2025-2026 (forthcoming): Hedges Lecture at the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Vanderbilt Criminal Justice Roundtable

2024-2025: Economics of Race, Racism, and Structural Inequality, Yale Criminal Justice Roundtable, VICE seminar, Ephraim Prize Lecture (University of Chicago), NYU Law & Economics Workshop, University of Chicago Works in Progress Workshop, RAND talk, Niskanen Center talk

Note: Many talks in 2022-2024 canceled due to illness

~~**2023-2024:** Carceral AI Workshop (Keynote, University of Pittsburgh), Loyola Symposium, Duke Economics, Columbia Law Criminal justice Roundtable, JITE Conference on the Economics of Crime and Criminology (Lecce, Italy)~~

2022-2023: 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 Colloquium, NYU Law & Economics Colloquium, University of Texas Law & Economics Colloquium, (Canceled due to illness) 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), Niskanen Flash Webinar Series

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