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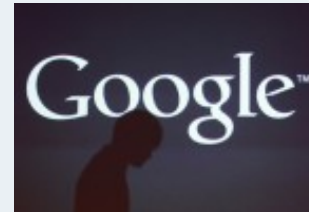
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## Throwing children in prison turns out to be a really bad idea

By Brad Plumer, Published: June 15, 2013 at 9:00 am [E-mail the writer](#)

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The United States still puts more children and teenagers in juvenile detention than any

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other developed nations in the world, with about 70,000 detained on any given day in 2010. And as it turns out, this is very likely a bad idea.

A [new paper](#) by economists Anna Aizer and Joseph J. Doyle, Jr. offers strong evidence that juvenile detention is a really counterproductive strategy for many youths under the age of 19. Not only does throwing a kid in detention often reduce the chance that he or she will graduate high school, but it also raises the chance that the youth will commit more crimes later on in life.



Probably doing more harm than good. (The Washington Post)

This seems intuitive enough, but the problem is actually measuring the effect. After all, the youths who commit crimes and get tossed in detention in the first place are presumably different from kids who never get detained. So of course they'd have different outcomes. What we'd really want to know is whether *detention itself* is actually making things worse.

So, to figure this out, Aizer and Doyle took a look at the juvenile court system in Chicago, Illinois. The researchers found that certain judges in the system were more likely to recommend detention than others — even for similar crimes. That is, it's possible to identify stricter and more lenient judges. And, since youths were assigned to judges at random, this created a randomized trial of sorts.



The Post Most:Business



What the researchers found was striking. The kids who ended up incarcerated were 13 percentage points less likely to graduate high school and 22 percentage points more likely to end up back in prison as adults than the kids who went to court but were placed under, say, home monitoring instead. (This was after controlling for family background and so forth.) Juvenile detention appeared to be creating criminals, not stopping them.

The authors lay out a couple of reasons why this would be. Going to prison can obviously disrupt school and make it harder to get a job later on. But also, as other researchers have found, many people who end up behind bars end up making friends with other offenders and building “criminal capital.” Prison turns out to be excellent training for a life of crime.

The authors end with a few broad policy suggestions. They note that the United States now spends about \$6 billion on juvenile corrections each year, despite evidence that other strategies might be more effective. Illinois, for instance, has started using electronic monitoring and well-enforced curfews as alternatives to detention for a number of nonviolent crimes (this doesn't work in all cases — murderers, say, still get sent to prison).

These types of alternative punishments, the authors note, can often do just as much to deter crime, but they don't do nearly as much long-term damage to the kids involved.



A terrifying chart



Now robots are coming



The economy in 11



Fatherhood in the

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Ezra Klein

Ezra Klein is the editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and

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**Rug Pilot** wrote:

6/24/2013 12:01 AM EDT

Punishment only corrects an attitude problem ...or creates one.

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**BrotherRog** wrote:

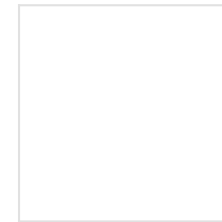
6/23/2013 6:23 PM EDT

Progressive Christianity advocates Jesus' call for restorative justice (reconciliation, restoration to community), not retributive justice (punishment). Sadly, our current penal system has largely given up on rehabilitation. The good news is that we can change our current systems. Let's.



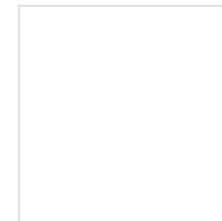
**Bloomberg.** His work focuses on domestic and economic policymaking, as well as the political system that's constantly screwing it up. He really likes graphs, and is on Twitter, Google+ and Facebook. E-mail him here.

**Neil Irwin**



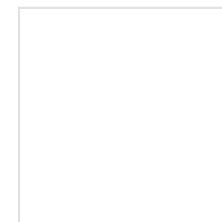
Neil Irwin is a Washington Post columnist and the economics editor of Wonkblog. Each weekday morning his Econ Agenda column reports and explains the latest trends in economics, finance, and the policies that shape both. He is the author of "The Alchemists: Three Central Bankers and a World on Fire." Follow him on Twitter here. Email him here.

**Sarah Kliff**



Sarah Kliff covers health policy, focusing on Medicare, Medicaid and the health reform law. She tries to fit in some reproductive health and education policy coverage, too, alongside an occasional hockey reference. Her work has appeared in Newsweek, Politico, and the BBC. She is on Twitter and Facebook.

**Brad Plumer**



Brad Plumer is a reporter focusing on energy and environmental issues. He was previously an associate editor at The New Republic. Follow him on Twitter. Email him here.

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**RNISH** wrote:

6/17/2013 7:28 PM EDT

Shouldn't there be a difference in the first place between "stricter and more lenient judges" that makes a statistical difference in how they decide?? (I am assuming study's control is reliable.) I know no one can be totally objective, but this is one of the areas where objectivity is most needed. I am curious if there is any other difference between these two groups of judges.

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**Thebes** wrote:

6/17/2013 9:46 AM EDT

Throwing ANYONE in prison, unless society really does need to be protected from their aggressions, is a really bad idea.

Every day we lock up hundreds of flower-smokers, along with countless pill-takers and junk-seekers. It is an abomination to our natural liberties that we might be caged for possessing part of a plant. It is useless to society to lock pill-heads into cages where car-jackers can teach them how to make their way when they get out with their new felony record.

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**Ann1497** wrote:

6/17/2013 1:50 AM EDT

They are cashing in on our children and using them as slaves.

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**MikeSoja** responds:

6/17/2013 2:42 AM EDT

### Dylan Matthews



Dylan Matthews covers taxes, poverty, campaign finance, higher education, and all things data. He has also written for The New Republic, Salon, Slate, and The American Prospect. Follow him on Twitter here. Email him here.

### Lydia DePillis




Lydia DePillis is a reporter focusing on business policy, including lobbying, government contracting, and international trade, with a bit of urban affairs and infrastructure on the side.

She was previously a staff writer at The New Republic and the Washington City Paper. Email her here and follow her on Twitter here.

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--\*They are cashing in on our children and using them as slaves.\*--

They are using everyone as slaves. Welcome to the collectivist plantation.

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**harold3** responds:  
6/17/2013 10:44 AM EDT

Collectivist? You mean the capitalist.


 Like Liked by 2 readers · Flag



**MikeSoja** responds:  
6/17/2013 1:25 PM EDT

--\*Collectivist? You mean the capitalist.\*--

My bad. I distinctly remember that it was the early 70s when the CEO of AT&T, (I believe his name was Richard M. Nixon), began the Corporate War on Drugs. Only a few years later, that notorious Georgian Mob Boss, Jimmah Carter, working for the Peanut Farmer Conglomerate, imposed the U.S. Department of Education on an unsuspecting public. Sad days in history of the free market.

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**Ann1497** wrote:  
6/17/2013 1:48 AM EDT

Florida is an EVIL corrupt state. <http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.causes.com%2Factions%2F1720639-stop-florida-prosecutor-from-charging-12-year-old-child-as-an-adult&h=hAQFHiUDn&s=1>

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**MikeSoja** responds:

6/17/2013 2:39 AM EDT

--\*Florida is an EVIL corrupt state\*--

Insofar as the state of Florida continues to sanction the demonstrably corrupt, tyrannical, and incompetent Angela Corey, yes, you are correct. She has accrued a long, public, train of abuses, that should not stand in a just society.

As I noted elsewhere a year ago, respecting another case of hers....

//cite

Thompson rejected a plea agreement for a three-year sentence. He was found guilty and, because he had discharged a firearm, state law required he be sentenced to 20 years.

Fourth Circuit Judge [James Harrison] called the 20-year sentence "a crime in itself" and declared the 10-20-Life statute unconstitutional. [James Harrison] gave Thompson three years.

Corey's office appealed and won. Assistant State Attorney James Colaw said prosecutors had little choice but to appeal since Judge [James Harrison]'s declaration would have affected many other cases if it stood.

"That ruling was going to have potential ramifications far, far beyond the Thompson case," Colaw said. "It would have potentially affected every other 10-20-Life case that came up in Clay County, the 4th Circuit or even beyond. It was setting a precedent, and we wanted to make sure that this didn't have a ripple effect."

//end cite

ed note: the article features a correction concerning the particular judge involved in the case, but the correction is not promulgated through the article. I have substituted the correct judge's name in the quotes above.

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20120614/ARTICLES/120619789?p=1&tc=pg>

The gist of the article is that Angela Corey went out of her way to sentence a man excessively in order not to have to contend with the "precedent" that would have had her having to revisit other cases where excessive punishment was meted at her hands.

Corey is not interested in Justice. Her sole aim is the advancement of her own power over the beleaguered citizenry over whom she holds sway.

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**MikeSoja** responds:

6/17/2013 3:28 AM EDT

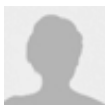
Corey's administration of the Trayvon Martin case also stands as evidence of her corruption. In her initial press conference announcing the charges against Zimmerman, her demeanor and statements clearly marked her as a charlatan and a fraud. Irrespective of the particulars of the Zimmerman proceeding, in that single performance alone, she marked herself as unfit for the office she holds.

Recently, it was revealed that one of her subordinates concealed and/or destroyed evidence pertinent to the Zimmerman case. Corey is travesty upon travesty.

For other coverage of prosecutorial malfeasance (and the many other crimes of the encroaching police state) stretching across this once great land, one needs only to find the writings of Radley Balko, formerly at Reason.com, but currently at HuffPo.

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**fyngyrz** wrote:

6/17/2013 1:39 AM EDT

The article proceeds from a mistaken assumption: That prison is intended to rehabilitate. That's not been the case with US prisons for years. Prison is a mechanism to create a criminal underclass with zero privileges and rights that will in large part continually cycle through the prison system, to benefit corporate prison operations, and to inflict retribution, because this pleases the population at large. In this regard, not only is incarceration used, but also double jeopardy, ex post facto laws, lists, and shaming.

No one in power has any intention of fixing anything. It's been getting worse and worse for years, and it will continue to get worse until or unless major social change turns what the actual population wants into



something else.

You may grieve, but no one who can make a difference cares.


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**Mary McGuirk** responds:

6/23/2013 11:08 PM EDT

And they manage to convince grammas that putting people in jail makes grandma safer, but the worst part is that it is dangerous to complain about the system unless you are squeaky clean, because the powers that be are vindictive.

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**bama4** wrote:

6/16/2013 8:17 PM EDT

The school systems, and justice departments in this country go out of their way to destroy as many young people lives, as possible. Many people of all ages are framed, by police dept., and their informants, false evidence, and no legal help for these people will send them to jail/prison for years, with no future ahead of them. The legal departments in this country are controlled by the politicians, who own many private jails/prisons, they need to fill up, to become more wealthy, so our children, that the school systems don't like, and want to get rid of, are doomed.

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**EMI MIKE** wrote:

6/16/2013 10:23 AM EDT

We need to focus on what they are getting, what the payoff is, out of this inappropriate behavior. No, not the kids . . . the judges, the prosecutors and the law enforcement community. Who exactly is rewarding them for

this immoral, unconscionable, inhumane behavior?

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**bama4** responds:

6/16/2013 8:30 PM EDT

The judges, prosecutors, and the law enforcement community are being rewarded by the corrupt system to make millionaires out of many people. Throwing decent people away for years in private jails/prisons, owned by corrupt politicians. These private jails/prisons are in most states in this country, and are 95% occupied, at all time. Politicians, and wealthy people, becoming more wealthy, is why, the U.S.A., has more people in jails/prisons, inc., young people, than any other country.



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**greggwiggins** wrote:

6/16/2013 9:48 AM EDT

Someone who thinks throwing children into jail should go read some Dickens.

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**greggwiggins** responds:

6/16/2013 11:28 AM EDT

Sorry -- that should be, "Someone who thinks throwing children into jail is a good idea should go read some Dickens."



Like Liked by 1 reader · [Flag](#)



**Astorix** responds:



6/16/2013 3:13 PM EDT

They should have to go to jail themselves. Just like all chickenhawks should be conscripted.



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**Steve Kahn** wrote:

6/16/2013 9:07 AM EDT

real nice for a "free" country



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**bama4** responds:

6/16/2013 8:42 PM EDT

Our once proud country, is now free, only to the 30 million ILLEGALS, who osama has allowed to remain in our country, and take millions of American citizens jobs. Our children, and young people have lost their future, by being sent to jail, and American citizens have lost their jobs, and a way of lives, that our fore-fathers, fought for all of us to have.



Like Liked by 1 reader · Flag



**iodine9** responds:

6/18/2013 11:06 AM EDT

blah blah blah republican't rhetoric republican't rhetoric blah blah blah conservaterrorist blather conservaterrorist blather blah blah blah



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**Mary McGuirk** responds:



6/23/2013 11:10 PM EDT

Bama has been listening to too much FAUX NEWS!

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Add your thoughts...



**EMI MIKE** wrote:

6/16/2013 9:03 AM EDT

You guys are sooooo smart, lady sailor too, and yet behind all those fancy and some down right ignorant words, I wonder if there might yet be one or two of you with enough balls, no offense ma'am, to actually stand up and try to do something about the freaking mess. There is a tremendous groundswell of discontent in the Nation today over mass incarceration and all the various assorted assundry aspects of the paradigm of thinking surrounding this fairly recent phenomena. There has been an 800% increase in the number of Citizens (a few illegals too to be frank here) incarcerated by law enforcement agencies SINCE 1980! 800% in 33 years! Makes me wonder who they'll go after when they get through with the poor. You? So my suggestion is that you look very hard at them locking up these children and when you realize the extent of the real problem that you put your apathy and ignorance (as in lack of education) aside and join in what is going to be a fight to take back the government from those now subverting it in the name of higher profit. fb/End Mass Incarceration . . . We march on DC in April of 2014 ... contact them and join. Unless you're scared, then ignore this issue . . . maybe it'll go away!

Like Liked by 2 readers · Reply · Share · Flag



**bama4** responds:

6/16/2013 8:52 PM EDT

EMI MIKE, I just today, 6/16/13, so your comment. Sorry I didn't see it before. I don't recall seeing anything about your march on DC. I hope it was a success, and think you for you efforts. And to all people who are young enough, and strong enough to join EMI MIKE, and his cause, please do so.



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**EMI MIKE** responds:

6/16/2013 11:15 PM EDT

Bama4, we are organizing now . . . Fb end mass incarceration. . . We are looking at the end of Mar or the beginning of April . . . We're contacting Capital Police this week so they can prepare for us . . . Find us on facebook . . . we are building support and could use yours . . . even if you can't be there, I'm sure you know people . . . spread the word bama4, we need your help

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Add your thoughts...



**msbpodcats** wrote:

6/16/2013 8:34 AM EDT

Well, duh, no its not.

You want disposable, fit young men going into the military/prison-industrial complex ***without any hope of bettering their lot when they get older.***

They'll ***never*** be eligible for:

- social services, (which will keep costs down,)
- pensions, (administered by some 1%ers, which will preserve the funds pool for the previously gainfully employed,)
- health services, (which will keep costs down,) and
- \* they'll never darken the unemployment statistics with their presence, (much like the 25 [and growing] percent of the general population who have dropped of the unemployment rolls.)

The 1%ers must be so proud of the military/prison-industrial complex for finding such a simple solution to the problem of what to do with all those *less than ideal* citizens.

They won't even have to go through the frustration of seing their jobs prospects being destroyed through automation by systems which are growing more intelligent than they are.

They have already placed themselves as the bottom 13%ers of the 99%ers.

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**cstrike** wrote:

6/16/2013 4:20 AM EDT

Well of course we put more in juvelile detention.. we have more black kids than all the rest of the developed countries too.

Like · Reply · Share · Flag



**msbpodcats** responds:

6/16/2013 8:39 AM EDT

What makes you say they're black kids?

The Latino, Amerindians and *white-trash* kids are also all growing percentages of the military/prison-industrial population.

We're equal opportunity bigots.

Like · Liked by 1 reader · Flag



**akindependent** responds:


6/16/2013 1:18 PM EDT

If you stop a disproportionate number of Blacks and Latinos, you will arrest a disproportionate number of blacks and latinos:

The Public Advocate's analysis of 2012 data finds:

- The likelihood a stop of an African-American New Yorker yielded a weapon was half that of white New Yorkers stopped. The NYPD uncovered a weapon in one out every 49 stops of white New Yorkers. By contrast, it took the Department 71 stops of Latinos and 93 stops of African-Americans to find a weapon.
- The likelihood a stop of an African-American New Yorker yielded contraband was one-third less than that of white New Yorkers stopped. The NYPD uncovered contraband in one out every 43 stops of white New Yorkers. By contrast, it took the Department 57 stops of Latinos and 61 stops of African Americans to find contraband.
- Despite the overall reduction in stops, the proportion involving black and Latino New Yorkers has

remained unchanged. They continue to constitute 84 percent of all stops, despite comprising only 54 percent of the general population. And the innocence rates remain at the same level as 2011 – at nearly 89 percent.

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Add your thoughts...



**Morey Soffo** wrote:

6/16/2013 1:08 AM EDT

I can only offer my own experience. I had a terrible childhood: absent father, criminal mother, moved so often that sometimes I came home from school to find an empty home, and school attendance was sporadic. I had no friends since parents would not want their children around my family. I was even homeless for my 12th birthday, at a highway rest stop in Jan. Finally, mother in prison, father mentally ill, grandmother legally blind, I was sent to the IL Home for the Children of Soldiers & Sailors at 13. Aged out of the system six months before graduation from HS. With few options, I enlisted in the Navy. By 19, I had my GED, by 20 I was a petty officer and going to the local JC when I could. At 22, I bought my first home. At 25, I was a licensed draftsman. At 27, I was commissioned as a Warrant Officer. I was an architect at 33. Retired at 40 on half-pay and finally went to college full-time for my Master's in Arch. History.. Met my husband the year I retired. We were finally able to marry almost two years ago. Even in the Navy, I always found a second job, and I work two now: in the Planning Dept. and with UPS. My life is as secure as I can make it, but I've had a good time: thrice-around the world, climbed mountains and even ran with bulls.

I never went into detention because I never found a reason to commit a crime. Playing by the rules was easier. In a rip current, the smart guy goes with the current, not against it. I had patience; impatience is the cause of most crime and accidents. I was never molested or beat up because I was, for whatever reason, mostly ignored. I learned to keep my own counsel and to reason my own solutions.

I entered military service when the draft was ending in 1974. I first served with draftees. Conscription. should be reinstated: a benefit is when people from all walks of life serve together, a common bond is forged, āā "We're all in this together." For those with nothing, it's a good place to start.

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**Mike Soja** responds:

Kudos and congratulations, except for the conscription part.

As I understand it, voluntary recruitment has worked very well. Not only do we have a largely competent fighting force, but those, like you, who are hard working, yet needy, get to compete for entry on your merits. Though possibly you would have it that conscription would only come if insufficient volunteers offered themselves, I think the armed forces are turning away people.


While the camaraderie and discipline might be of great benefit to huge swaths of people, that really isn't justification for its imposition.

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 **Boomhauer** responds:  
6/16/2013 1:22 AM EDT

I'll never be conscripted at this point so perhaps it no entirely fair for me to say-- but I believe you may be right. It would help for congress to have more teeth in terms of their constitutionally mandated war powers than the last era has seen as well. Some will say in other words "oh the last thing we need is to give a president an ocean of warm bodies to send in harms way..." A fair point but perhaps we need to get back to congress saying it, not the pres.


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 **MikeSoja** responds:  
6/16/2013 2:30 AM EDT

--\*It would help for congress to have more teeth in terms of their constitutionally mandated war powers\*--

It might help if Congress were made up of people other than ninnies. They are granted plenty of teeth, but almost never seem to use them. Other than in backbiting, alá the Iraq War. And not even that in the Libyan fiasco. Or Syria looming, with Russia prancing on the other side. These are serious times and there don't seem to be any serious people amongst the rabble at the Capitol.

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**cstrike** responds:  
6/16/2013 4:40 AM EDT

conscription is not necessary.... but service should be required to vote.

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**msbpodcats** responds:  
6/16/2013 8:50 AM EDT

*For those with nothing, it's a good place to start.*

That's why its called the **military/prison-industrial complex**.

First, if you're not blessed by and from birth, they take everything away from you, stick you in inadequate social services, (I could tell by how you **didn't** write about being sexually abused that you were an average looking male,) and screw you out of a future.

Like · Flag



**wolfemi** responds:  
6/17/2013 11:28 AM EDT



"With few options, I enlisted in the Navy."

Good man/woman! Former squid here too, though only four years in.

Note too that at least one of the mid-level folks I met in the service were there as a "punishment" from the court in lieu of a short jail term, in an effort to rehabilitate them. Seeing as he had been in for quite a while, it appears to have worked.

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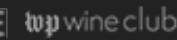




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