

Research on Jails and Jail Alternatives

Jennifer E. Copp, Ph.D.
Florida State University

Presented to the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration
Traverse City, MI
August 23, 2019

What we will cover

Do arrests make us safer?

How does pretrial detention impact public safety?

How does pretrial detention impact defendants?

What works to improve pretrial outcomes?

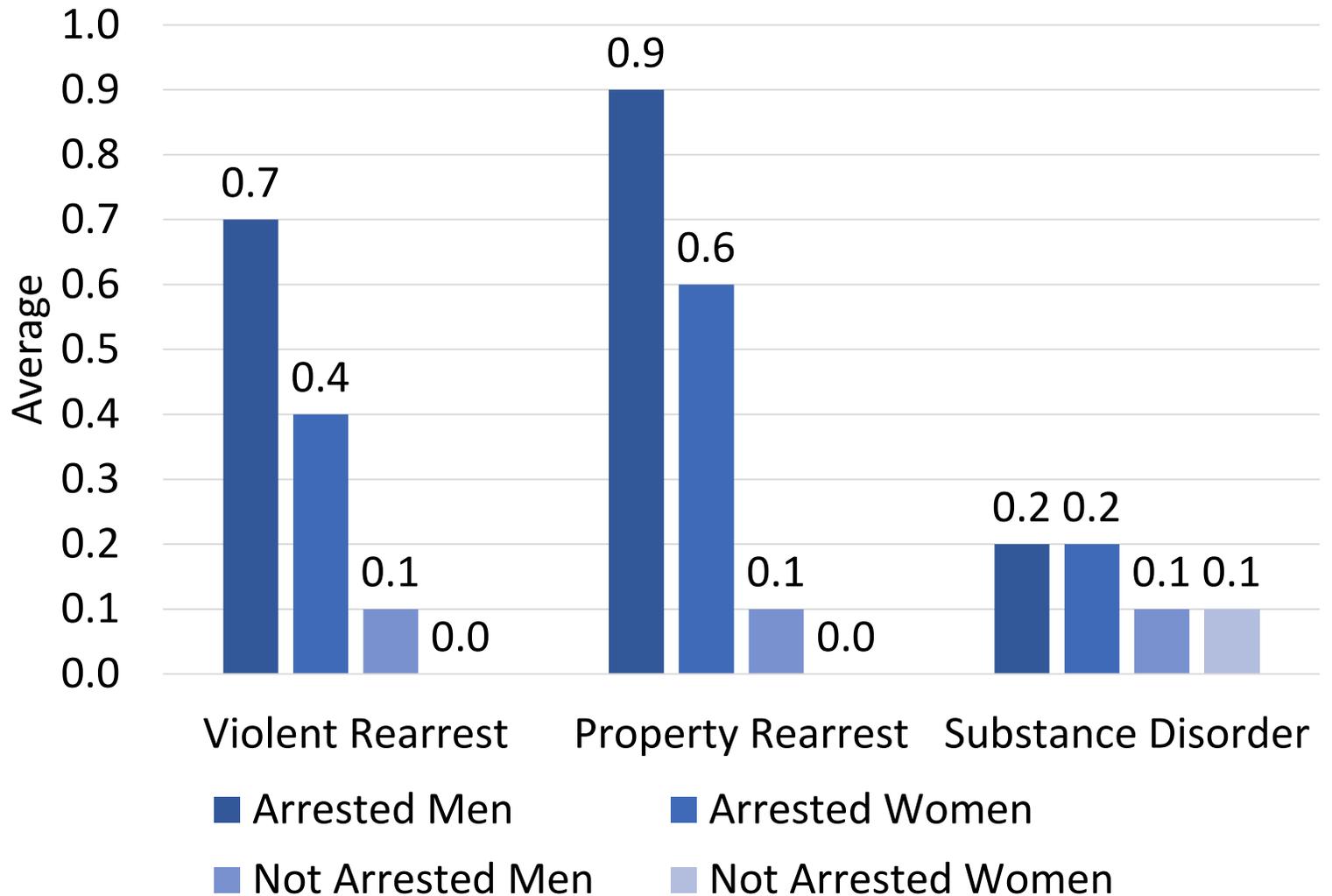
What works to protect victims pretrial?

Is jail an effective sanction for convicted populations?

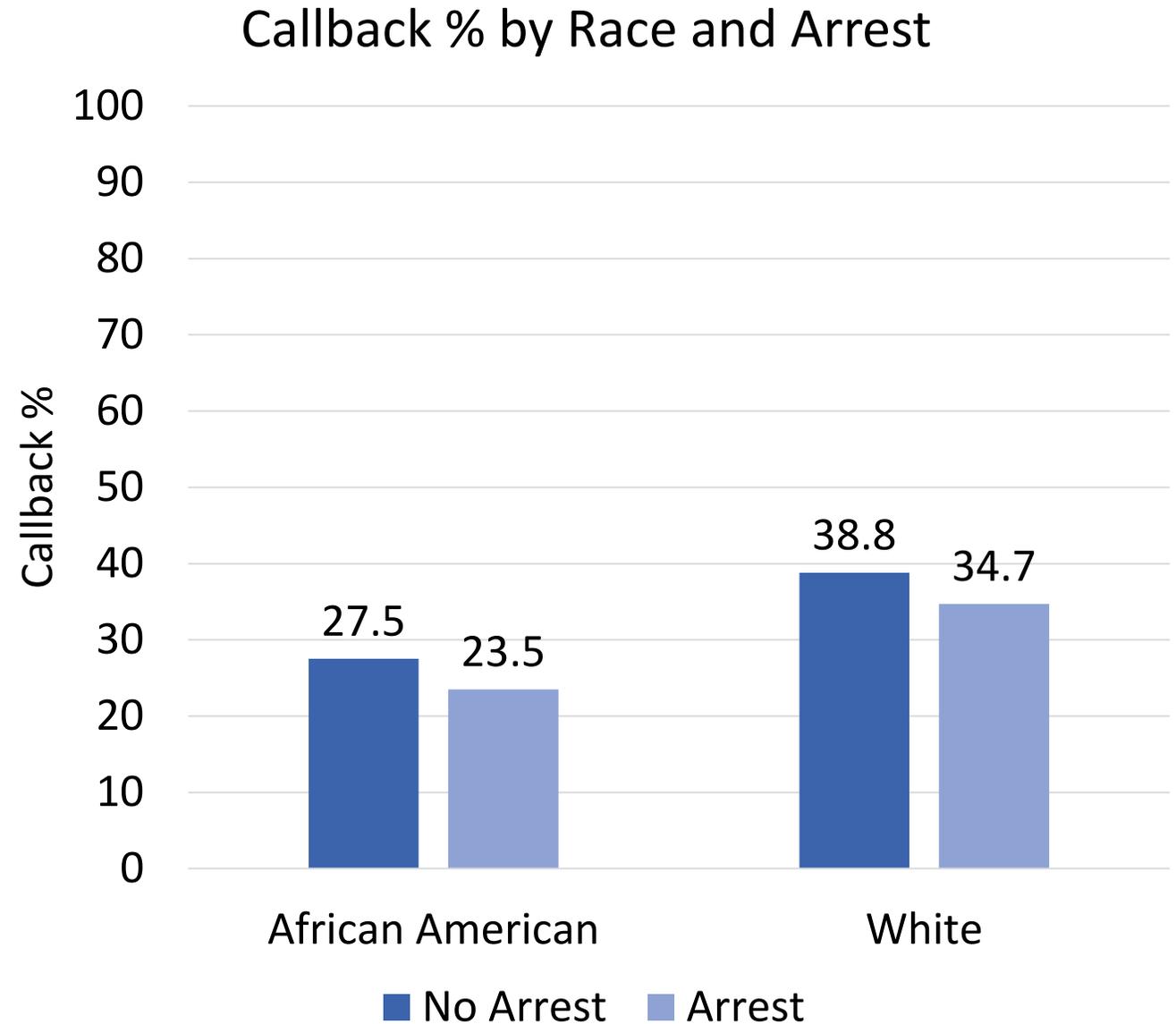
Do arrests make us safer?

Being arrested in young adulthood may contribute to later increases in arrest and substance disorders.

Impact of Arrest in Young Adulthood (17 to 32) on Rearrest and Substance Disorder among African Americans



Having an arrest record can reduce access to employment.

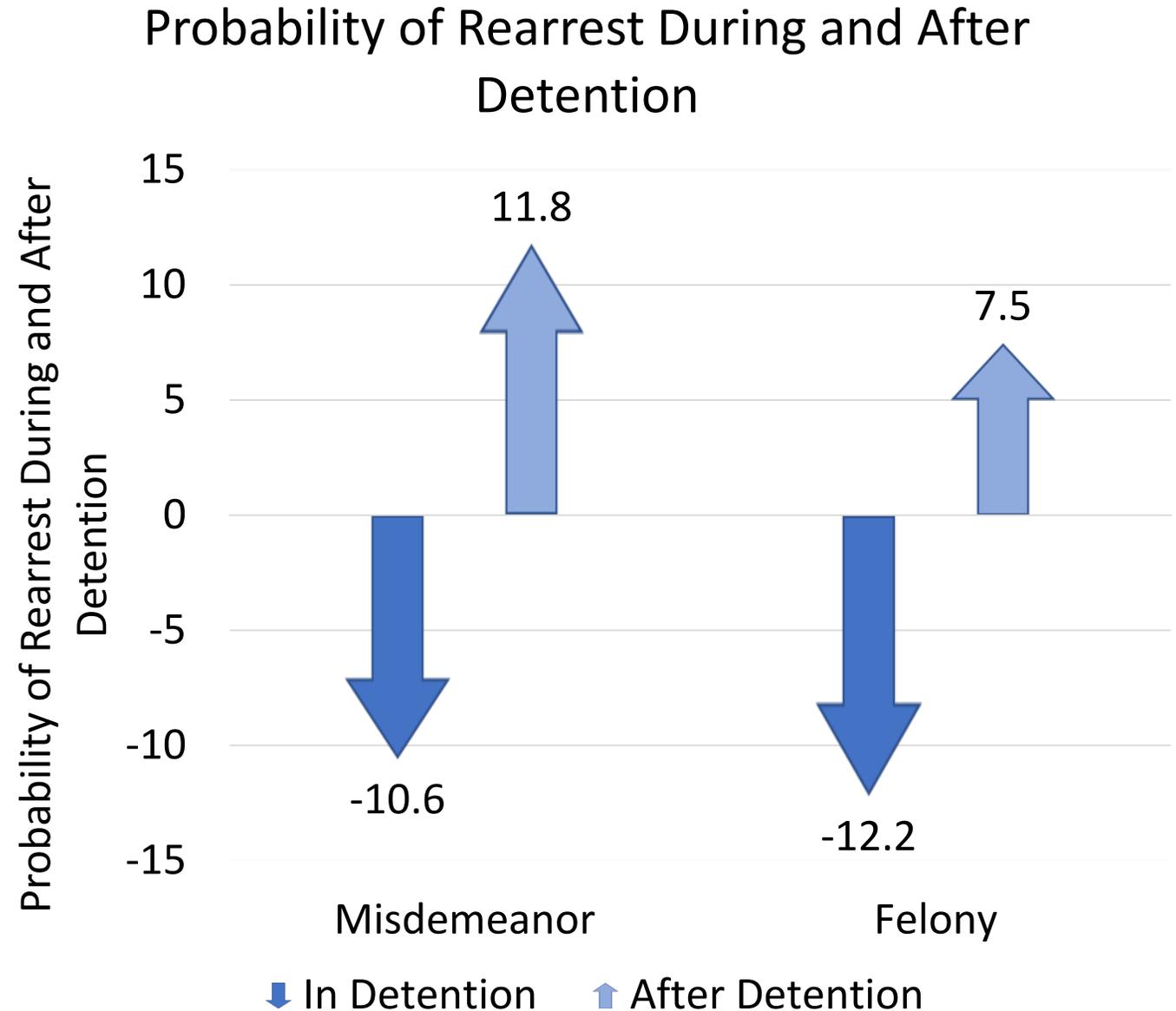


There is evidence that alternatives to arrest can reduce rearrest rates and are financially beneficial for jurisdictions.

- Citations in lieu of arrest
- Civil citations in lieu of criminal citations
- Summons in lieu of arrest
- Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT)
- Law-enforcement driven initiatives

How does pretrial detention
impact safety?

Pretrial detention temporarily reduces offending through incapacitation but *increases* arrests post-disposition.



How does pretrial detention
impact defendants?

Employment

- Decreased likelihood of formal employment
- Reductions in earnings

Dependence on Government Programs

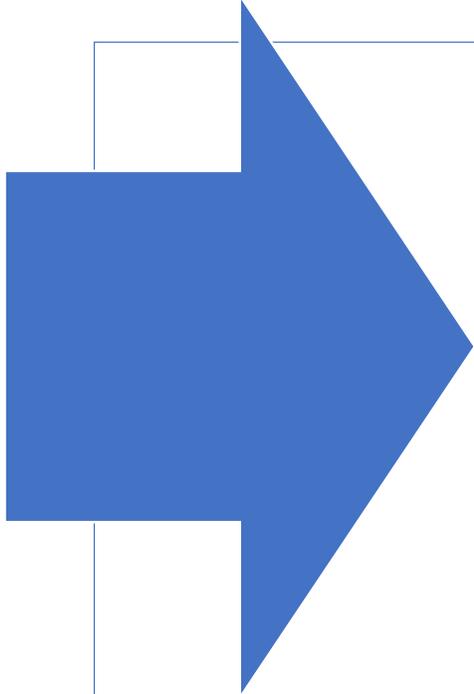
- Increased dependence on government programs, including cash welfare receipt

Residential Instability

- Greater residential difficulties, including disruptions in housing

Child Well-Being

- Negative impact on dependent children



Being detained pretrial has been shown to increase the likelihood of:

- Pleading guilty
- Receiving a jail or prison sentence

87%

Do not fail
to appear

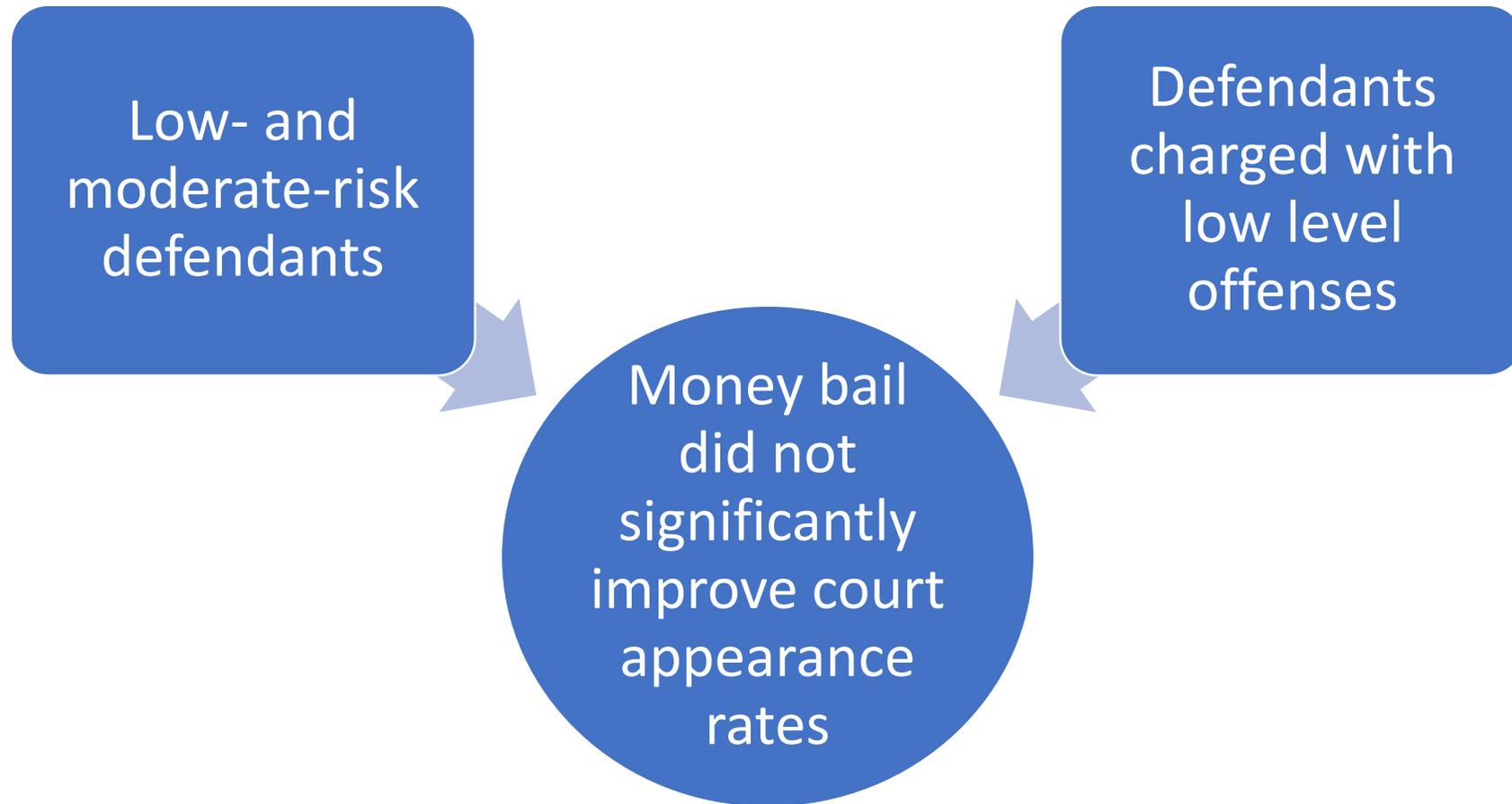
89%

Are not
rearrested

Pretrial failure is rare.

Research consistently shows that the majority of released defendants show up to court and are not rearrested.

Financial bonds are not more effective than release on recognizance (ROR) for certain types of defendants.



Early alternatives to money bail show promising results for defendants charged with lower-level offenses.

Increasing number of people released without monetary conditions for low-level offenses

No significant increase in failure to appear

No significant increase in rearrest

Secured bonds are not more effective than unsecured bonds at ensuring court appearance or public safety.

Lower Risk Defendants

- No statistical difference % failure to appear
- No statistical difference % new charges

Highest Risk Defendants

- No statistical difference % failure to appear
- No statistical difference % new charges

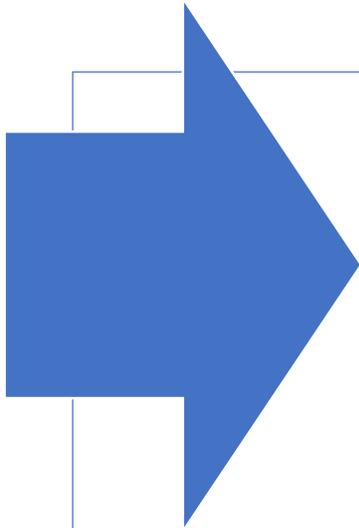
There is no credible evidence that surety bonds are more effective than other release mechanisms.

- Existing studies focused on the effect of surety bonds suffer from flawed methodology.
- To date, no trustworthy research has been published supporting the use of money bail.

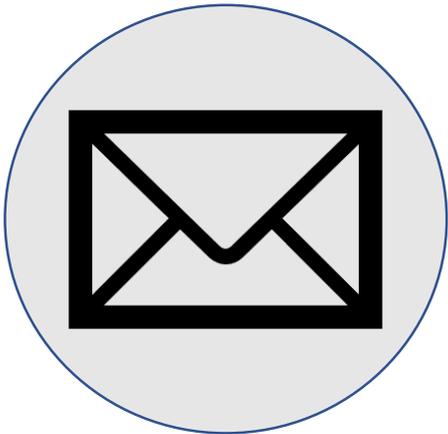
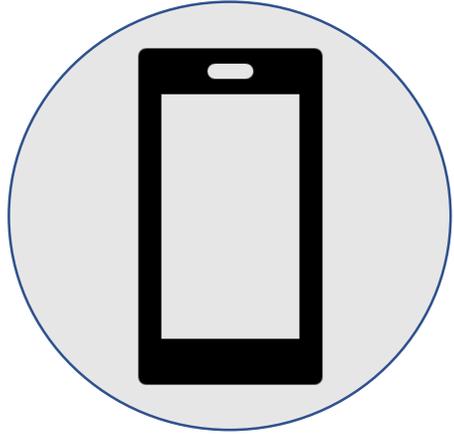
What works to improve pretrial
outcomes?

Pretrial supervision does not appear to reduce pretrial failure.

- Intensive supervision is no more effective than other types of supervision.
- In-person supervision is no more effective than automated phone reporting systems.



Electronic monitoring is no better (or worse) at reducing pretrial failure than regular supervision.

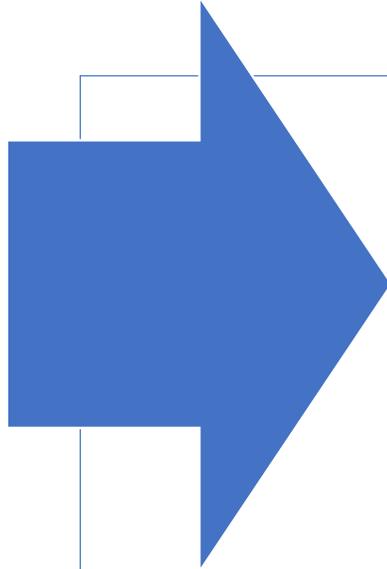


Court-date reminders increase appearance rates.

- Several studies have shown that court-date reminders improve court appearance among pretrial population across a range of notification types.

Drug testing does not increase appearance rates or improve public safety.

- Numerous randomized control trials show that drug testing is ineffective at reducing rates of failure to appear and rearrest.



Pretrial risk assessments may help to assess who is at risk for pretrial failure, however there are significant questions and concerns about their use for pretrial release decisions.

What works to protect victims pretrial?

Protection orders appear to reduce physical abuse in some circumstances.

Women with protection orders were less likely to experience:

- Contacts
- Injuries
- Abuse-Related Medical Cases
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Threatening

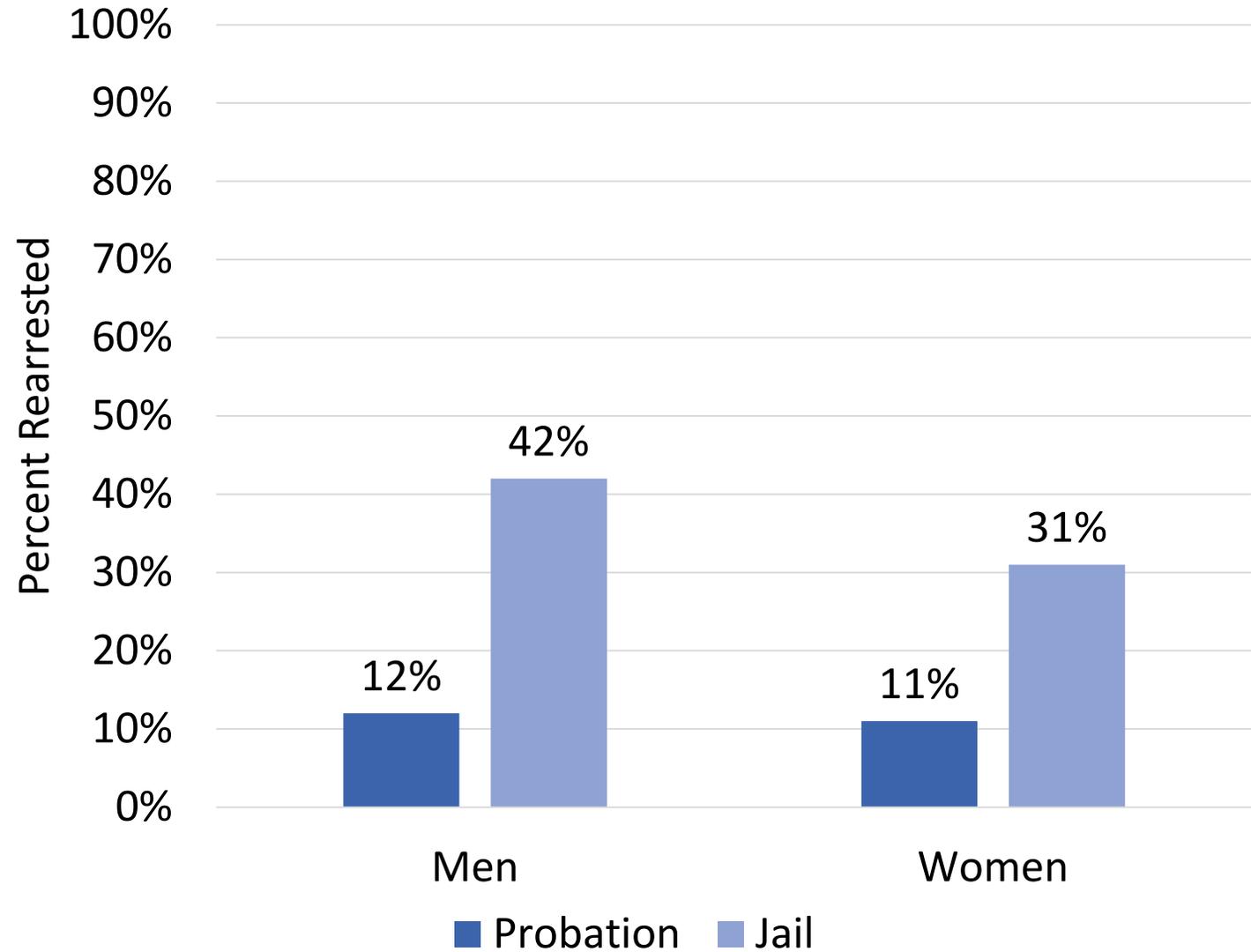
Victim advocacy, outreach, shelter,
and safety planning services reduce re-victimization.

- Formal strategies (such as shelters or safety and advocate services) reduce revictimization and the fear of victimization.

Is jail an effective sanction for convicted populations?

Jail sentences may increase rearrest.

Percent Rearrested,
by Sentence Type and Sex



Longer jail terms are no more effective
than shorter jail terms.

- Recent studies suggest that shortening jail terms and serving part of a jail sentence in the community rather than in jail can reduce rearrest.

Community-based sentences may be more effective than jail.

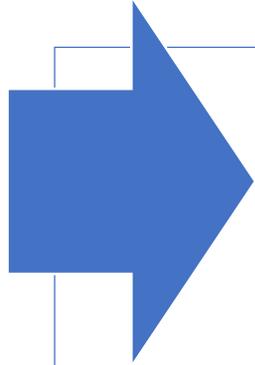
Less likely to reoffend

No difference in time to next violation

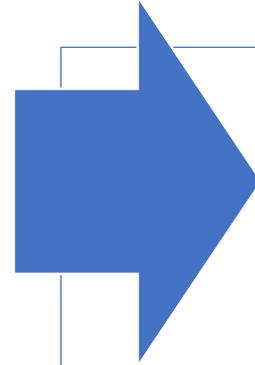
No difference in number of violations

No difference in successful program completion

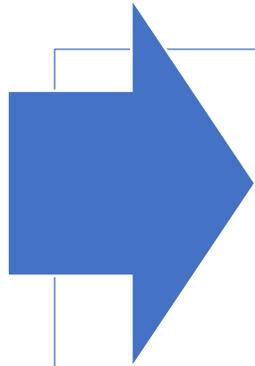
Research Takeaways



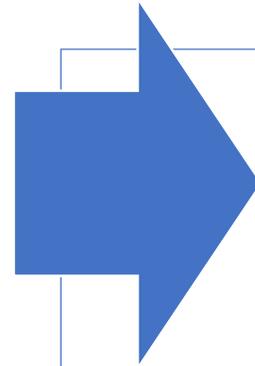
Some interventions designed to improve public safety may actually undermine it.



Not all pretrial interventions are created equal.



Promising practices to promote victim safety include protection orders and victim-centered supports and services.



Reductions to jail sentences and other community-based alternatives appear more effective for promoting public safety.

Questions?

Jennifer E. Copp, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Florida State University

jcopp@fsu.edu