June 5, 2020

Dear Data Dissemination Committee:

I am writing to express our support and commitment to partner with Will Dobbie (Harvard University) and Crystal Yang (Harvard Law School) in their research designed to improve judicial decision-making and reduce racial disparities in bail decisions. King County District Court has already committed to partnering with this team of researchers and several judges from our court have agreed to participate in the study. Given the well-documented evidence of racial disparities at the pretrial justice stage, it is important that we find the most impactful interventions that could mitigate the existing racial bias and this study is the first of its kind to study the impact of providing bail judges with evidence-based decision-aids.

Thus far, we have been able to help our research partners seek access to administrative data from the Administrative Office of the Courts needed to implement the study, including information on defendant characteristics such as race and age and case characteristics such as the type and severity of the charge. However, our collaboration with the researchers also requires us to obtain public docket level data through JIS-Link. Because we are working with academic researchers on this project and given the importance of the research collaboration, we petition the Committee to grant the research team a fee exemption from the Data Dissemination Policy to allow the researchers to access JIS-Link free of charge. All uses of JIS-Link will be for research purposes only.

We have worked with the researchers extensively to design and implement this project through e-mails, phone calls, and document sharing. We are confident in their ability to conduct the proposed interventions professionally and successfully and hope that the Administrative Office of the Courts can assist us in making this collaboration possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Judge Lisa Paglisotti
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