A Descriptive Analysis of Pretrial Services at the Single-Jurisdictional Level[1]

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THIS STUDY DESCRIBES various patterns of change over time in the Pretrial Services Program in Lake County, Illinois, from 1986 through 2012. The overall objective of the study is to demonstrate the utility and value of "in-house" research at the local, single-jurisdictional level—in this case using a county-based program as the object of analysis. Although the study is limited in scope, I hope it captures some of the research "responsibilities and potential" at the single-jurisdictional level of pretrial services programming (see Mahoney et al., 2001). Moreover, with legal and evidence-based practices emerging as a conceptual and practical framework in which pretrial services programs can more effectively and efficiently use their resources and align themselves with the precepts of "pretrial justice" (see VanNostrand, 2007; VanNostrand, Rose, & Weibrecht, 2010), it seems essential that local programs evaluate and assess their own practices in an objective, research-driven manner as opposed to relying upon opinion and speculation.[2] In this study, I hope to illustrate that with just a handful of variables, ongoing data collection, and a fairly simple descriptive and comparative method of analysis, pretrial services practitioners can provide factual knowledge of the services they provide to the judiciary and the outcome of these pretrial processes.

Lake County is located just north of Chicago (Cook County); it is considered one of the suburban, "collar" counties that wrap around the city of Chicago and Cook County, with the population of the latter topping five million. As of 2010, the population of Lake County was just over 700,000 persons, with a racial/ethnic mix of 64 percent white, 7 percent African American or black, 20 percent Hispanic or Latino, and 7 percent Asian. Lake County is an area of contrasts: There are, for example, the affluent, racially-homogenous communities of the "North Shore" and the economically and racially-mixed county seat, Waukegan, an old post-industrial town now dominated by a service economy. Lake County has both rural and urban characteristics, with most of its population and built-environment situated along the eastern shores of Lake Michigan but with agricultural, rural-like areas scattered among suburban "bedroom" or residential communities in the rest of the county.

The Pretrial Services Program of the 19th Judicial Circuit, Lake County, Illinois, began operation in October 1983 in response to the county's jail crowding problem. The initial function of pretrial services was to provide the court with verified information regarding the defendant's personal, social, and criminal background as it pertained to pretrial release. These "bond reports" assisted the judge in making a more-informed bond decision; in short, to identify and recommend to the court those defendants who could be considered for a non-financial condition of release (personal recognizance bond). In February 1986 the Pretrial Bond Supervision (PTBS) component was added to the overall responsibilities of pretrial services. Pretrial Bond Supervision is an alternative to the traditional release mechanisms of personal recognizance and cash bonds; it provides for the court a "supervised release" option that involves monitoring defendants in the community to ensure court appearance and minimize the risk of pretrial misconduct.

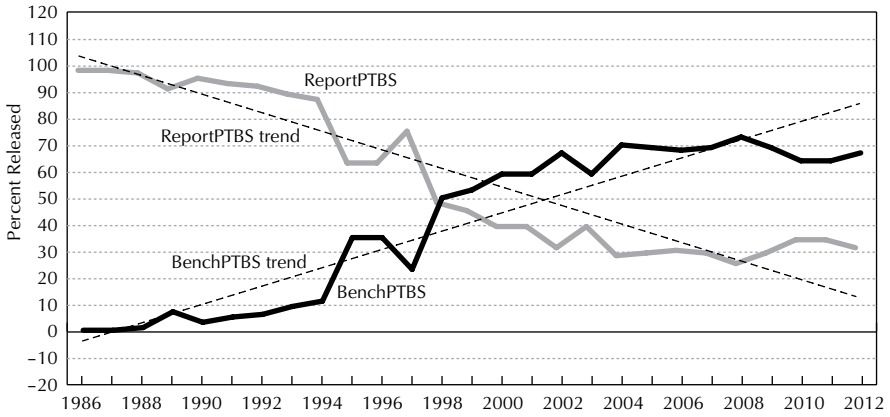
Pretrial Supervision: Growth and Change

The 27 years of development of pretrial services in Lake County can be described in three words: change, adaptation, and growth. Most of the growth occurred in the Pretrial Bond Supervision (PTBS) component: On average, the number of defendants released to pretrial supervision grew 8 percent per year, while the average number of bond reports completed per year increased 1 percent per year. With the growth in PTBS, some interesting patterns of change have emerged over time. For example, before 1998 the majority of defendants released to pretrial supervision had a bond report completed before their release; since 1998 the majority of supervised released defendants have not had a bond report completed before their release (see Figure 1). Indeed what was once an almost indispensable practice before releasing a defendant onto PTBS—that is, a bond report being done beforehand—has dramatically changed over

[1] The author would like to thank Rose Gray and Robert Verborg of the 19th Judicial Circuit, Lake County, IL, and Marie VanNostrand, Ph.D., for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this article.

[2] As quoted in Mackenzie (2000), "…the basic premise of 'evidence-based practices' is that we are all entitled to our own opinions but not to our own facts" (see Sherman, 1999:4). In reference to the concept of "pretrial justice," VanNostrand and Keebler (2007) provide this definition: "The honoring of the presumption of innocence, the right to bail that is not excessive, and all other legal and constitutional rights afforded to accused persons awaiting trial while balancing these individual rights with the need to protect the community, maintain the integrity of the judicial process, and assure court appearance."

FIGURE 1.
ReportPTBS and BenchPTBS Defendants, Percent Distribution by Year w/ Trend Lines, 1986–2012



time. In the nascent years of pretrial supervision, 9 out of every 10 defendants had bond reports completed prior to their supervised release; however, from 1998 through 2012, only 3 out of every 10 defendants had a bond report completed.

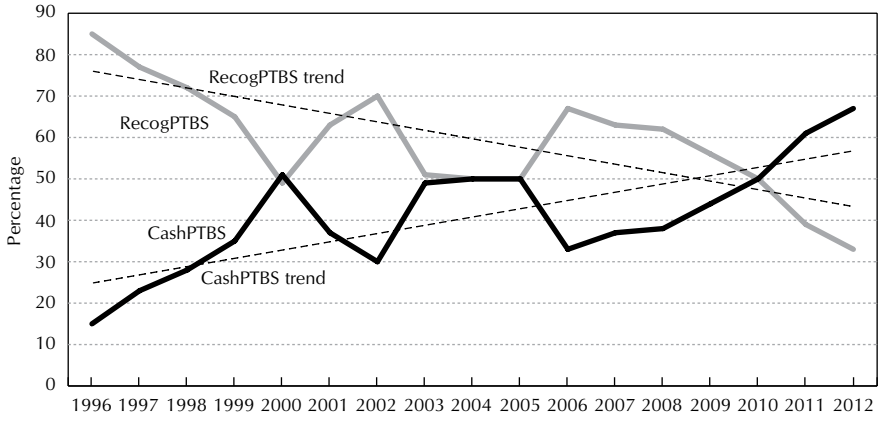
One possible explanation for this trend is that as pretrial services has matured as an integral part of the judicial system, it has established an environment of confidence with the judiciary in regard to the functions it performs. Over time, the judiciary as a whole has become more knowledgeable of and familiar with PTBS as a pretrial release option and, as a consequence, judges may be more inclined to release a defendant onto PTBS without a bond report. In addition, the composition of the PTBS population has changed over time, reflecting a greater proportion of PTBS defendants charged with less-serious crimes (see below); previous research by Cooprider, Gray, and Dunne (2003) found that the court is less likely to order a bond report for defendants charged with less-serious crimes. It should also be noted that as of 1998 judges have had independent and direct computerized access to the Circuit Clerk's criminal record database, thus allowing a judge to examine a defendant's county-based criminal record and court appearance history. This technological advancement and availability of information "on the bench" may influence a judge's decision to release a defendant onto PTBS without a bond report or to request a bond report for more information before a release decision is made.

Figure 2 illustrates the yearly variation in the percentage of defendants released to pretrial supervision with and without a financial condition of release. This is important because the original premise of PTBS was that pretrial supervision would operate as an *alternative* to a cash bond, not a mechanism to be used *in conjunction with* a cash bond. Although clearly there is year-to-year variation—in 1996 there was a wide difference between CashPTBS (pretrial bond supervision with a financial condition, 15 percent) and RecogPTBS (pretrial bond supervision without a financial condition, 85 percent); some years saw a one-to-one ratio, and more recently (2011-2012), for every four defendants released onto PTBS without a financial condition six had financial conditions required—the overall trend has been an increase in the proportion of defendants released to supervision with a cash bond posted.[3] Using a different measure, a month-to-month time series analysis of the number of CashPTBS and RecogPTBS defendants over the same time period reveals an average monthly rate of decline of –0.08 percent in the number of RecogPTBS defendants and a 1.23 percent average monthly rate of increase for CashPTBS defendants.

Of course, this raises the question: Why are we seeing more defendants released to pretrial services in conjunction with cash bonds? The answer is similar to the explanation for more defendants being released to PTBS without a bond evaluation done beforehand: Familiarity begets utility. Casual observation and anecdotal evidence suggest that the State's Attorney's Office is requesting that if the defendant is released on a personal recognizance bond, he or she is to be supervised by pretrial services. It also appears that the judge is setting a cash bond at the initial appearance and, if the defendant posts, the defendant is ordered to be supervised by pretrial services, either at the behest of the judge or the State's Attorney's Office. In short, both the judge

[3] We first noticed this trend in the mid- to late-1990s (Cooprider, Rose, & Dunne, 2003) and started to collect data thereafter on the number of defendants released to PTBS with and without cash bonds; thus this particular set of data only goes back to 1996. It also should be noted that this finding somewhat mirrors the findings of Cohen and Reaves (2007), whose analysis of State Court Processing Statistics from 1990-2004 reveals that two-thirds of defendants had financial conditions required for release in 2004 compared to only half in 1990. Indeed an increase in the proportion of financial bonds and a decrease in the proportion of release on personal recognizance was the general trend in the 75 largest U.S. counties during the time period studied by the authors.

FIGURE 2.
CashPTBS and RecogPTBS, Percent Distribution by Year w/ Trend Lines, 1996–2012



and the state have become more proactively involved in determining who will be supervised. Judicial rotation may also be a factor, since it is quite possible that when judges rotate, so does the "court's" perspective on the use of bond and supervised release. For example, a judge with a prosecution background might be more inclined to use supervised release with a cash bond than a judge with a "defense" background. Another possible factor is that the defendant is more "at-risk," but this is a problematical assertion since most defendants are released without an assessment of their risk. And, finally, there may be another shift in the existential purpose of bond supervision: from an alternative to a cash bond, to the use of PTBS in conjunction with a cash bond, and finally to the premise that some supervision is better than no supervision.

Another dimension of change in pretrial supervision is in the class-of-crime and type-of-offense composition of the PTBS population. Generally speaking, the overall trend has been towards supervising a defendant charged with a less-serious crime (see Figures 3 and 4). Figure 3 illustrates that when all the misdemeanor cases are combined with the lowest class of felony cases (N=17,786) and compared with all of the combined more serious Class X, 1, 2, and 3 felony cases (N=13,858), the PTBS composition has almost reversed itself over time.[4] On average, in the formative years of pretrial supervision, about 7 out of every 10 defendants were charged with a Class X, 1, 2, or 3 felony charge; starting in 1998, however, for every 4 defendants charged with a more-serious felony, 6 were charged with less-serious crimes. Much of this increase in less-serious crimes is related to the growth in misdemeanor defendants being placed on supervised release (see Figure 4), the majority of whom were charged with domestic battery and driving under the influence (DUI). Figure 4 also illustrates the change over time in the composition of the PTBS population, but by offense type. The percentage of PTBS defendants charged with property, violent, and sex-related crimes generally declined over time; PTBS drug defendants, comparatively speaking, remained fairly stable over time after some early growth; and public order and misdemeanor defendants increased substantially over time. For the last 15 years, the proportion of misdemeanor PTBS defendants has seemed to reach a ceiling of about 30 percent.

FIGURE 3.

PTBS Defendants by Combined Offense Class, 1986–2012 (with Trend Lines)

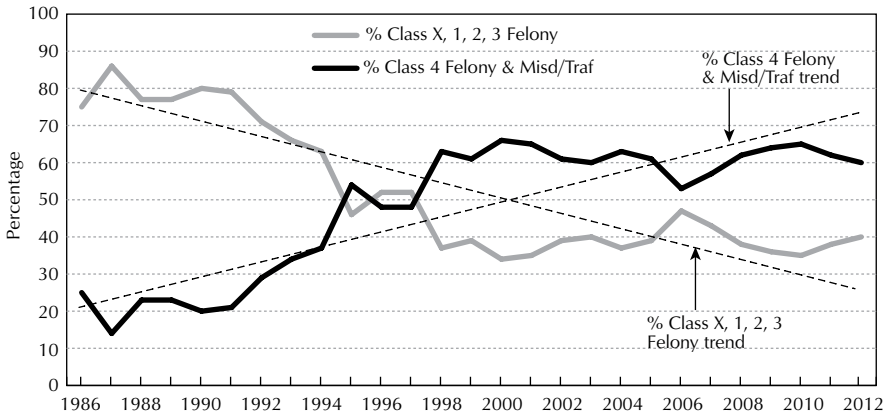
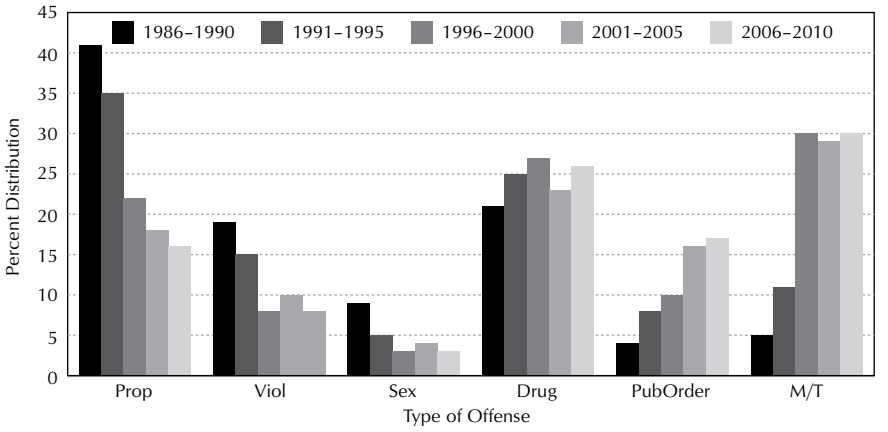


FIGURE 4.

PTBS Defendants by Offense Type, Five-Year Comparisons, 1986–2010



As for the trend towards placing defendants on PTBS who have been charged with less-serious crimes, this may just be a representation of the type of crimes that are being committed in the community and the police response to them of making arrests. In other words, who gets placed on PTBS is a function of what kinds of crime are most prevalent in the community and who ends up in bond court. The proportion of PTBS defendants charged with less-serious crimes may therefore merely reflect that less-serious crimes are being committed in the community. It can also be hypothesized that, despite being charged with less-serious crimes, the average PTBS defendant today may have a more serious or substantial prior criminal record or a FTA history, thus suggesting a need for supervised pretrial release when considering bond options. And, finally, in reference to the greater number of defendants being placed on supervised release who have been charged with misdemeanor domestic battery and misdemeanor DUI, what may appear to be a trend towards "net widening" may in reality be a legitimate societal and criminal justice response to the social problems of domestic violence and driving under the influence. If social control is defined as the capacity of a society to regulate itself in relation to its values (Janowitz, 1978, p. 3), then the values of public and personal safety—of being safe in one's home and on the highway—may be the impetus behind the increased societal and criminal justice scrutiny applied to drunken drivers and domestic batterers. Consequently, judges may recognize the potential danger of domestic batterers and DUI offenders and accordingly order supervised release to minimize risk of harm to others in the community.

Bond Conditions

There has been a steady rise in the number and percentage of supervised defendants

[4] In Illinois, felonies range from Class X, the most serious types of felony crimes, to Class 4, the least serious. Misdemeanors range from Class A, the most serious misdemeanor, to Class C, the least serious.

subjected to drug testing and curfew restrictions since 1991 (see Figure 5). Nearly 100 percent of PTBS defendants are now ordered released with the condition of drug testing and nearly 9 out of every 10 defendants have curfew restrictions imposed, despite individual differences in risk levels. Imposing these conditions as a matter of course raises questions, since "blanket" pretrial release conditions contradict the least-restrictive conditions of bond principle, the excessive bail clause of the Eighth Amendment, and the risk principle of evidence-based practices. As VanNostrand, Rose, and Weibrecht (2011) point out:

> Blanket pretrial release condition is a term used to describe one or more conditions imposed upon defendants…without regard to individualized risk assessment. Constitutional issues arise when blanket pretrial release conditions are imposed upon a group of defendants without an individualized assessment of a particular defendant's risk factors.[5]

The application of least-restrictive conditions of bond to assure court appearance and community safety is a fundamental principle of pretrial justice. In addition, a basic principle of evidence-based practice is that bond conditions should match the level of defendant risk: High-risk defendants receive the more-restrictive conditions of bond and low-risk defendants receive less-restrictive conditions of bond. Drug-testing and curfew restrictions have become such frequently-imposed court-ordered bond conditions that they have, in effect, become standard or "blanket" release conditions rather than special conditions tied to the unique risk level of the defendant. This standardization has created a situation of applying bond conditions that may have nothing to do with the individual defendant's pretrial failure risk. Imposing conditions that may have no direct impact on ensuring court appearance or reducing the risk of new arrest can be viewed as going above and beyond what is necessary to ensure court appearance and community safety; these conditions thus may be considered "excessive," if not unreasonable.[6] In the context of these findings, current supervision strategies, including the use of curfew restrictions, drug testing, and needs assessment, need to be reexamined, with more emphasis given to a defendant's unique risk score as a factor when determining, e.g., the need for a curfew restriction. Perhaps most important, when implementing supervision strategies and imposing bond conditions we ought not to forget what is ultimately to be accomplished: having the defendant return to court and remain arrest free.

FIGURE 5.
Percentage of PTBS Defendants with Drug/Alcohol Testing and/or Curfew Restrictions Ordered, 1991–2012

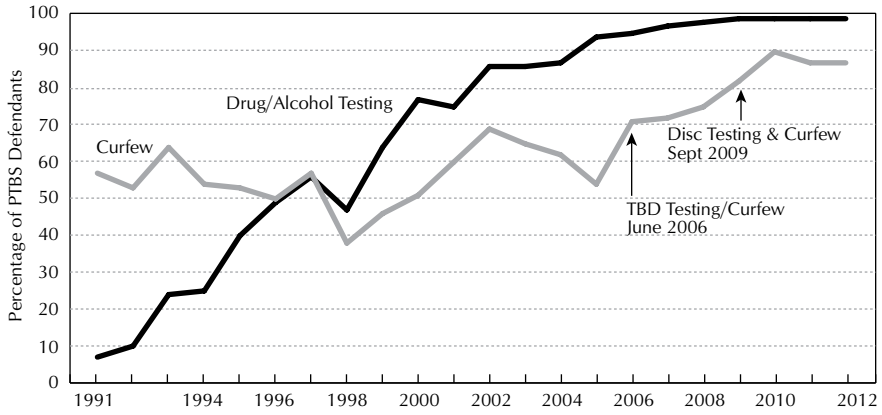
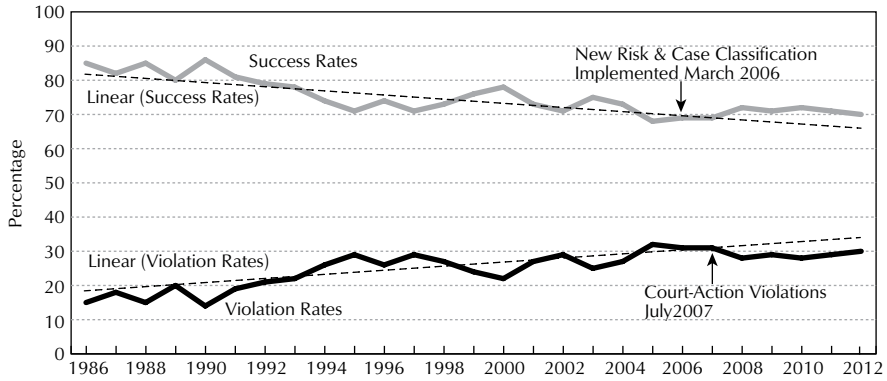


FIGURE 6.
Success and Violation Rates of PTBS Defendants, 1986–2012



Violation Trends

From 1986 through 2012, approximately one out of every four PTBS defendants violated pretrial release conditions in some way (FTA, new arrest, or technical violation such as a positive drug test). The general trend over time has been an increase in aggregate violation rates, from a low of 14 percent in 1990 to a high of 32 percent in 2005 (see Figure 6). This could be expected since, as noted earlier, the overall trend has been towards supervising a defendant charged with less-serious crimes, and persons who are charged with less-serious crimes are at greater risk of violating, particularly by failing to appear (Cooprider, Rose, & Dunne, 2003). Notably, since the implementation of objective risk assessment in 2006 and differential levels of supervision based on the level of risk, aggregate success and violation rates have remained relatively stable.

In reference to violation-specific rates, over the 27-year time period, 14 percent of PTBS defendants failed to appear, 5 percent violated with a new arrest, and 7 percent were

[5] See VanNostrand, Rose, and Weibrecht (2011) for a detailed discussion of pretrial legal questions regarding blanket pretrial release conditions. The authors also review the drug-testing literature in relation to the effectiveness of drug testing in reducing pretrial failure (failure to appear and new arrest). They concluded that there is no empirical evidence demonstrating "that when drug testing is applied to defendants as a condition of pretrial release it is effective at deterring or reducing pretrial failure…" (p. 24).

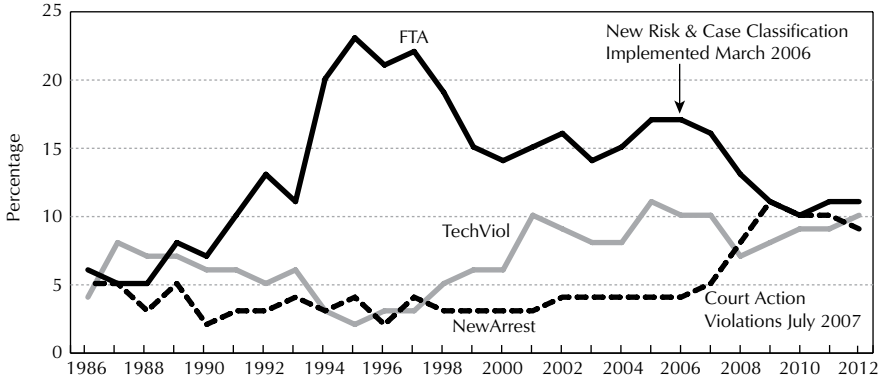
[6] Part of this dilemma could be explained by our own practice: Starting in 2006 we implemented a policy of 6 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew "out the door" for all new clients placed on PTBS—assessed for risk or not. We did this in an attempt to stabilize the defendant's residency situation and to ensure that initial field contact would be made. The case officer had the option to remove the curfew at a later date, but what tends to happen is an attitude best expressed as: "…if it works, leave it alone."

returned to jail custody because of technical violations (see Figure 7). Failure-to-appear rates peaked from 1994 through 1997, when they stayed above 20 percent, followed by a relative decline and stability from 1998 through 2006. After implementation of objective risk assessment and case classification based on level of risk in 2006, FTA rates began to decline again and stabilized to around 11 percent starting in 2009. In reference to the first decline in FTA rates, it could be hypothesized that the addition of two new staff at this time contributed to more effective supervision of PTBS clients (smaller caseloads, more contacts)[7]; in reference to the second major decline in FTA rates starting in 2006, it could be hypothesized that the implementation of objective risk assessment and differential levels of supervision based on one's level of risk were contributing factors to this FTA rate reduction. Nonetheless, whether measured in rates or in numbers, failing to appear for court represents the primary violation problem: In terms of volume, FTAs made up 53 percent of the total number of violations (N=4,479), followed by technical violations (N=2,287) or 27 percent of the total, and new arrest (N=1,625) or 19 percent of the total.

In reference to the FTA problem, one of the most fundamental goals of pretrial services agencies and programs—indeed, their raison d'etre if you will—is to minimize failure-to-appear risk and to maximize court-appearance rates. Lake County has always practiced courtdate notification; the standard practice has been a verbal reminder, either by phone or in person, the day before defendants' scheduled court dates. Since failing to appear is Lake County's primary violation problem, it may be incumbent upon us to assess a possible "enhancement" of our courtdate notification procedures, such as mail reminders and automated calling reminders. VanNostrand, Rose, and Weibrecht (2010) reviewed six courtdate notification studies: Every study they examined revealed that some form of courtdate notification—by phone, by mail, or automated system—significantly reduced failure-to-appear rates. Granted that FTA rates and numbers have been going down for several years, missed court appearances still are costly and interfere with the orderly and efficient administration of justice.

[7] Some research has shown that "contact" is related to pretrial misconduct, especially FTA violations; more contact, less pretrial misconduct (see D.C. Bail Agency, 1978; Clarke, Freeman, & Koch, 1976; Austin, Krisberg, & Litsky, 1984).

FIGURE 7.
PTBS Violation-Specific Rates, 1986-2012



New arrest rates remained very stable over time, always 5 percent or less until 2008, when they jumped to 8 percent and have hovered around 10 percent since then. This doubling in new arrest rates is most likely related to an expanded definition of pretrial failure. From the inception of bond supervision, "pretrial failure" had been defined as a defendant's *termination from supervision* as a direct consequence of either

1) Failing to appear for a court appearance, which resulted in a bench warrant being issued;
2) Obtaining a new arrest, resulting in the defendant's jail incarceration for the new charge; or
3) Committing a "technical" or rule violation (positive drug test; curfew violation), which resulted in a bond revocation and a return to jail custody.

The problem with this definition is that it didn't capture pretrial misconduct *occurring while the defendant was being supervised but not resulting in the defendant's termination from PTBS.* For example, some defendants would fail to appear, surrender on the bench warrant, and be returned to PTBS; others might "pick up" a new arrest while under supervision, and some would get remanded on technical violations only to be returned to PTBS after their jail admonishment. These violations were not factored into the original operational definition of pretrial failure. In order to get a more robust measure of violating behavior by PTBS defendants, starting in July 2007 these "process" violations, or what came to be known as "court action" violations, were included in the measurement of pretrial failure.

Interestingly, although from 1986 through 2000 the average technical violation rate was five percent, from 2001 through 2012 the average rate increased to nine percent. Since the reporting of all violations has remained a constant over time, this near-doubling of the technical violation rate is perhaps related to an intensified, less-than-tolerant view of technical violations—positive drug use, failing to report as required, and curfew violations—by the judiciary.

Violations and the Importance of Bond Reports

Defendants who are released to pretrial services for supervision without a bond report have higher violation rates than those defendants who have a bond report completed prior to their pretrial supervised release (see Figure 8). This finding applies to all violation categories, with the widest disparity in the failure-to-appear violations. For example, of the total number of defendants who failed to appear between 2003 and 2012, fully 68 percent did not have a bond report completed before their release. These findings suggest that screening and assessment before release plays an important role in identifying violation risk and thus ensuring a certain degree of success for those defendants who are released to pretrial supervision.

Successful Dispositions

Four out of every ten defendants received some form of community-based sentence (e.g., probation, conditional discharge, probation/work release); 14 percent of the defendants had their cases nolle prossed or dismissed, and 10 percent of the defendants were removed from pretrial supervision before case disposition because of their compliance (see Figure 9). In other words, nearly seven out of every ten defendants who were released to bond supervision remained in the community after their release from bond supervision. These

FIGURE 8.
Violations by ReportPTBS and BenchPTBS, 2003–2012

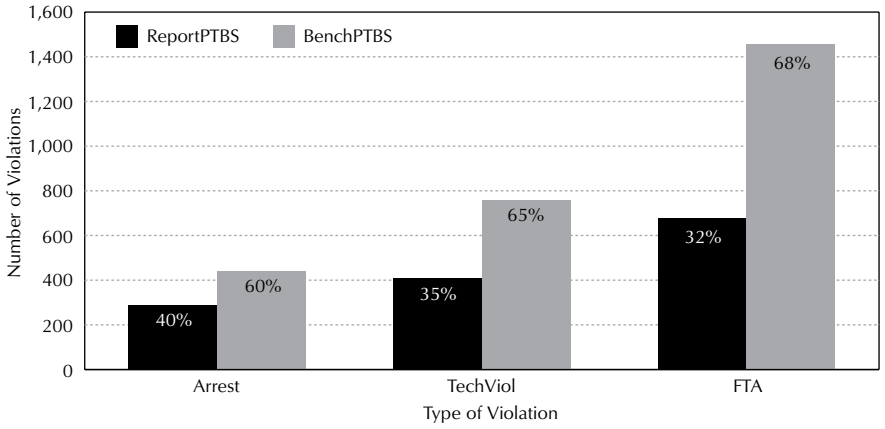
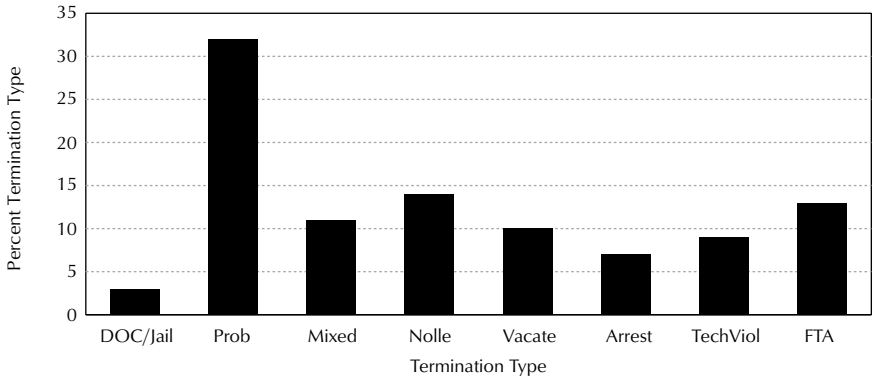


FIGURE 9.
Type of PTBS Termination, 2003–2012



findings suggest the importance of favoring a presumption of release on personal recognizance—supervised or otherwise—during the pretrial release decision-making process (see National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies, 2004). The vast majority of defendants entering the criminal justice system, at least in this sample, are ultimately returned to the community in one form or another. If this is a valid observation, then the presumption of recognizance release at the earliest possible time seems imperative as well as imposing the least-restrictive set of bond conditions.

Risk Assessment and Legal and Evidence-Based Practices

Legal and evidence-based practices (LEBP) can be defined as "interventions and practices that are consistent with the pretrial legal foundation, applicable laws, and methods research has proven to be effective in decreasing failures to appear in court and danger to the community during the pretrial stage" (VanNostrand, 2007, p. 12). Applying the LEBP model to pretrial services programming suggested a need to re-examine how we assessed and supervised pretrial defendants. In the traditional model of supervising our clientele, pretrial defendants were usually monitored at the same level of supervision, with no attempt to differentiate supervision strategies based on measureable differences in levels of risk. In addition, risk was assessed subjectively. That is, prior to implementation of an objective, empirically-validated risk assessment tool, bond recommendations were based on a "subjective" method, i.e., they were predicated on the experience, knowledge, and perceptions of the bond report investigator. In 1987 Lake County developed a rudimentary in-house point scale based on various criteria identified in the literature as being related to pretrial failure. However, its limitations quickly came to light: a bias toward cash bond recommendations and a lack of statistical validation. The instrument became rather meaningless and was eventually shelved, and the use of the subjective method continued for several years.

A newer approach based on the principles of legal and evidence-based practices assumes that supervision would consider variations in risk levels and introduce interventions and strategies that could minimize the risk of pretrial misconduct. With the LEBP model, the goal of pretrial services changes from simply monitoring bond conditions to objectively assessing risk and prioritizing supervision based on differential levels of risk. Because the Lake County Division of Adult Probation (which was Pretrial Services' administrative locus) had already been an "evidence-based practice" site for the National Institute of Corrections since 2004, the application of evidence-based practices to pretrial services seemed a logical extension of what was being practiced in the division. By applying relevant principles of EBP—assessing actuarial risk and prioritizing supervision based on level of risk—pretrial decision-making shifted from being based on opinion and subjectivity to being grounded in research and objectivity.

As noted earlier, legal and evidence-based practices is emerging as a practical framework in which pretrial services can more effectively and efficiently use their resources. The application of policies and procedures that are supported by empirical research and driven by a strong commitment to the legal principles that define pretrial justice has been referred to as legal and evidence-based practices. Indeed, what pretrial practitioners have seen develop since the inception of bail reform in the early 1960s is nothing short of the evolution of a "pretrial justice" model or concept and its practical application—i.e., legal and evidence-based practices—at the pretrial stage of criminal justice. VanNostrand (2007) identifies three specific pretrial functions that relate to legal and evidence-based practices: risk assessment, bail recommendations, and pretrial supervision.

Objective risk assessment is a basic principle of evidence-based practices and in Lake County formed the foundation on which changes were made in both the nature of bond recommendation decisions and the nature of pretrial supervision (see Cooprider, 2009). Officially implemented in March 2006, the Lake County Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (LCPRAI) is based on the Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument, nationally known as the Virginia Model (VanNostrand, 2003). The LCPRAI has been locally validated on the pretrial supervision population in Lake County (most

recently by Spruance & VanNostrand, 2013). The introduction of a research-based and empirically-validated pretrial risk assessment instrument helped to standardize the process of making a bond recommendation *by factoring into this process the same critical variables, thereby generating more consistent and uniform bond recommendations*. Moreover, when compared to bond recommendations made before implementing the objective risk assessment, the use of objective risk assessment persistently produced higher rates of non-financial release recommendations, a finding that corresponds to one of the goals of pretrial services programs: maximizing pretrial release with non-financial conditions of bond (see Mahoney et al., 2001).

The second aim of risk assessment was to establish a case classification system that would prioritize bond supervision in conjunction with the measured level of risk. Rather than supervising all defendants as if they all had the same level of risk, supervision varies in relation to the individual's risk level. High-risk defendants get high-risk supervision; low-risk defendants get low-risk supervision. The LCPRAI provided the empirical foundation for such a case classification system as well as reducing the number of face-to-face field contacts in half. Despite this reduction in contacts and the change in the definition of pretrial failure that, in effect, enlarged the measure of pretrial failure, there was no detrimental impact on violation rates: Aggregate violation rates declined and violation-specific rates, with the exception of new arrests, remained identical to or lower than the pre-implementation rates. In a sense, we are doing more with less while still maintaining another important goal of pretrial services: minimizing pretrial misconduct. What this suggests is that intensive and identical supervision of all PTBS clients is not an effective use of resources; differential levels of supervision based on objective pretrial failure risk and the individualization of bond recommendations will produce just as effective and more efficient outcomes.

Summary and Discussion

With the advent of pretrial services, bond reports and bond supervision have become important components of Lake County's criminal justice system. Growth and change have been hallmarks of the development of pretrial services. In both the bond report and bond supervision operations, increased workloads have been the general norm: Supervised pretrial release has grown at an annual rate of eight percent; bond reports at a one-percent rate. Other findings of the present research include:

1) Prior to 1998 the majority of defendants released to pretrial supervision had a bond report completed before their release; since 1998 the majority of supervised released defendants have not had a bond report completed before their release;
2) Defendants who are released to pretrial services for supervision without a bond report have higher violation rates than those defendants with a bond report completed before their pretrial supervised release;
3) The proportion of defendants released to supervision with a cash bond posted has increased; instead of operating as an *alternative* to a cash bond, PTBS has become a mechanism to be used *in conjunction with* a cash bond;
4) The overall trend has been towards supervising a defendant charged with a less-serious crime;
5) Nearly 100 percent of PTBS defendants are now ordered released with the condition of drug testing and nearly 9 out of every 10 defendants have curfew restrictions imposed as a condition of their release, despite individual differences in risk levels; and
6) Failing-to-appear for court represents the primary violation problem.

An important value attached to the optimal development of pretrial services is program self-assessment and ongoing empirical research of program operations. This particular review has been an attempt to do just that by describing various patterns of change over time in some of the functions and procedures in the pretrial services program in Lake County, Illinois. Some of the findings suggest that we are partially moving away from evidence-based practices (e.g., "blanket" release conditions), that an uninformed decision is not a good decision, and that enhancements in courtdate notification procedures may reduce the failure-to-appear problem. Moreover, this study suggests that it may be time to revisit some of the basic principles of pretrial justice, including the presumption for release on a personal recognizance bond, the imposition of the least-restrictive bond conditions to ensure court appearance and public safety, and the application of the risk principle. In short, it may be time for the Lake County stakeholders in pretrial justice—judges, attorneys, and jail and pretrial staff—to reconvene in order to assess the current practices and trends of the delivery of pretrial services as well as determine the direction of its future.

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