

The Complexities of Reforming Indiana's Bail System

Kiara Goodwine

Why does the bail system exist? What purpose does it serve? Why should those who can't pay bail be required to stay in jail when awaiting trial? What do you consider the advantages and disadvantages of this system?

How should the government go about determining what kinds of "criminal justice scientific research" to consider when making these statistical predictions? Are there some considerations or evidence that we can't justify using? Why or why not?

Would it be unfair, for example, to require bail from some individuals but not others for the same crime? If, for example, research suggested that one ethnic group was more likely than another to commit other crimes or flee the country before their trials, would we be justified in requiring that all members of that group to pay higher bail?

Prisoners have a number of their rights curtailed. For example, prisoner's right to privacy is significantly diminished. They are not protected from warrantless searches, and their mail is inspected for contraband. Even upon release, some restrictions to one's rights remain in place. In some states, for example, past felons aren't allowed to vote. But how should we go about determining what rights should be forfeited when convicted, and which rights should never be limited?