

Reform Prosecutors and the Footprint of the Criminal Justice System

By AMANDA AGAN, JENNIFER L. DOLEAC, ANNA HARVEY, ANNA KYRAZIS, AND LAUREN SCHECHTER*

ONLINE APPENDIX

Table A1 provides the list of reform prosecutors included in the main analysis, consisting of local prosecutors that both appeared on a list constructed by a nonprofit coordinating reform prosecutors and were covered by the CJARS JOE data (Finlay, Mueller-Smith and Team, 2024).

Table A2 presents tests of equal means comparing observable characteristics in eventually-treated counties that eventually elect a reform prosecutor to those that never elect a reform prosecutor. Column 1 indicates that counties that elect reform prosecutors are, on average, larger than those that do not. Columns 2-4 weight by population to account for differences in county size and test for differences in poverty rates, unemployment rates, and a health index covering county residents. These time-invariant context variables are provided in the CJARS JOE data and calculated using all years that a county appears in the data (Finlay, Mueller-Smith and Team, 2024). Never-treated counties are, in large part, similar to eventually-treated counties on these dimensions, with the exception of poverty rates in the felony sample — eventually-treated counties have poverty rates that are, on average, about 2 percentage points (14%) higher than never-treated counties.

Figures A1–A3 present event-study estimates of the effect of reform prosecutors on case outcomes, corresponding to the difference-in-differences estimates in Table 1 in the main text. Figure A1 shows charges per 100,000 residents per year (column 1 in Table 1), Figure A2 shows share of charges ending in a conviction (column 2), and Figure A3 shows convictions per 100,000 residents per year (column 3). Lastly, Figure A4 presents event-study estimates of reform prosecutors on charges per 100,000 residents by offense type, corresponding to Table 2 in the main text.

*

REFERENCES

Finlay, Keith, Michael Mueller-Smith, and The CJARS Team. 2024. “Justice Outcomes Explorer (JOE) [dataset].” Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

* Agan: Brooks School of Public Policy, Cornell University (amanda.agan@cornell.edu); Doleac: Executive Vice President of Criminal Justice at Arnold Ventures (jdoleac@arnoldventures.org); Harvey: Department of Politics, New York University (anna.harvey@nyu.edu); Kyriazis: Social Science Research Council and NYU Public Safety Lab (anna.kyriazis@nyu.edu); Schechter: Department of Economics and Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities, University of Notre Dame (lschecht@nd.edu).

Table A1—: List of reform prosecutors included in analysis samples

| Name | Title | Jurisdiction | State | Inauguration | Years | Coverage |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Buta Biberaj | Commonwealth's Attorney | Loudoun County | Virginia | 2019 | 2009-2019 | Both |
| John Chisholm | District Attorney | Milwaukee County | Wisconsin | 2007 | 2005-2018 | Misdemeanor |
| John Choi | County Attorney | Ramsey County | Minnesota | 2011 | 2009-2021 | Both |
| Laura Conover | County Attorney | Pima County | Arizona | 2020 | 2005-2021 | Misdemeanor |
| John Creuzot | District Attorney | Dallas County | Texas | 2019 | 2005-2012 | Both |
| Satana Deberry | District Attorney | Durham County | North Carolina | 2019 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| Parisa Dehghani-Tafti | Commonwealth's Attorney | Arlington County/Falls Church | Virginia | 2019 | 2009-2019 | Both |
| Steve Descano | Commonwealth's Attorney | Fairfax County | Virginia | 2019 | 2009-2019 | Misdemeanor |
| Matthew Ellis | District Attorney | Wasco County | Oregon | 2021 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| José Garza | District Attorney | Travis County | Texas | 2021 | 2005-2017 | Both |
| Joe Gonzales | District Attorney | Bexar County | Texas | 2019 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| Mark Gonzalez | District Attorney | Nueces County | Texas | 2017 | 2005-2012 | Both |
| Christian Gossett | District Attorney | Winnebago County | Wisconsin | 2007 | 2005-2018 | Misdemeanor |
| Jim Hingeley | Commonwealth's Attorney | Albemarle County | Virginia | 2019 | 2009-2019 | Both |
| Larry Krasner | District Attorney | Philadelphia | Pennsylvania | 2018 | 2009-2018 | Both |
| Karen McDonald | Prosecuting Attorney | Oakland County | Michigan | 2021 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| Stephanie Morales | Commonwealth's Attorney | City of Portsmouth | Virginia | 2015 | 2009-2019 | Both |
| Marilyn Mosby | State's Attorney | Baltimore City | Maryland | 2015 | 2005-2017 | Both |
| Melissa Nelson | State Attorney | Fourth Judicial Circuit | Florida | 2017 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| Harold Pryor | State Attorney | 17th Judicial Circuit | Florida | 2021 | 2005-2021 | Felony |
| Eli Savit | Prosecuting Attorney | Washtenaw County | Michigan | 2021 | 2007-2021 | Both |
| Mike Schmidt | District Attorney | Multnomah County | Oregon | 2021 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| Carol Siemon | Prosecuting Attorney | Ingham County | Michigan | 2017 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| Andrew Warren | State Attorney | 13th Judicial Circuit | Florida | 2017 | 2005-2021 | Both |
| Monique Worrell | State Attorney | 9th Judicial Circuit | Florida | 2021 | 2005-2021 | Both |

Note: List of reform prosecutors included in analysis samples, including the years for which a county in their jurisdiction appears in the CJARS JOE data. Counties appearing in the data only after the reform prosecutor's inauguration date are included in the comparison group.

Table A2—: Characteristics of counties with and without reform prosecutors

| | (1) Population | (2) Poverty Rate | (3) Unemployment Rate | (4) Health Index |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Panel A: Misdemeanor Sample</i> | | | | |
| Diff. in Means | 688102.3 | 0.0164 | -0.00328 | 0.0688 |
| (t-statistic) | (5.64) | (1.35) | (-1.10) | (0.39) |
| Mean (Never Treated) | 91220.6 | 0.142 | 0.0569 | -0.384 |
| Mean (Ever Treated) | 779322.9 | 0.158 | 0.0536 | -0.315 |
| Observations | 1019 | 1019 | 960 | 990 |
| <i>Panel B: Felony Sample</i> | | | | |
| Diff. in Means | 724934.9 | 0.0198 | -0.00185 | 0.131 |
| (t-statistic) | (5.04) | (1.77) | (-0.68) | (0.81) |
| Mean (Never Treated) | 100862.9 | 0.139 | 0.0572 | -0.388 |
| Mean (Ever Treated) | 825797.7 | 0.159 | 0.0553 | -0.256 |
| Observations | 1025 | 1025 | 962 | 1012 |

Note: This table presents county-level regressions of local characteristics — aggregated from Census data and reported in the CJARS JOE data — on an indicator for whether a county ever elected a reform prosecutor. Columns 2-4 are weighted by county population, as in the main analysis.

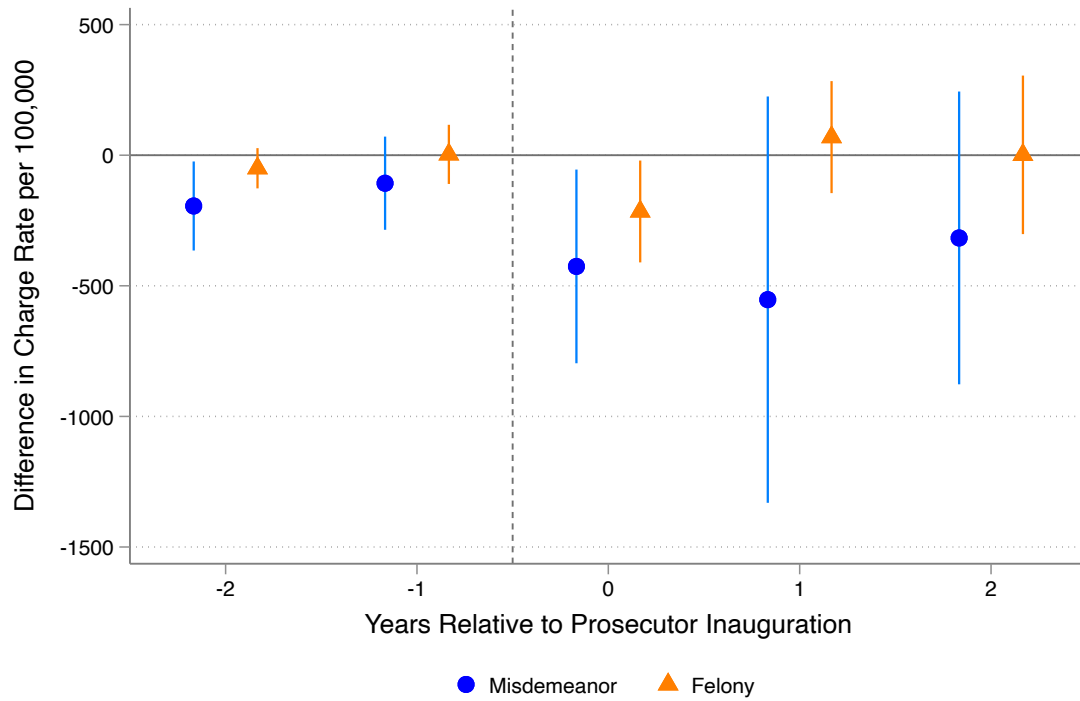


Figure A1. : Event study effects of reform prosecutors on misdemeanor and felony charges per 100,000 per year

Note: Event study of the effect of reform prosecutors' inaugurations on per capita charge rates. Time 0 is the inauguration year, and outcomes are measured for the year in which a case was initially charged. Figure generated by the csdid Stata package, using the event option and weighting by population.

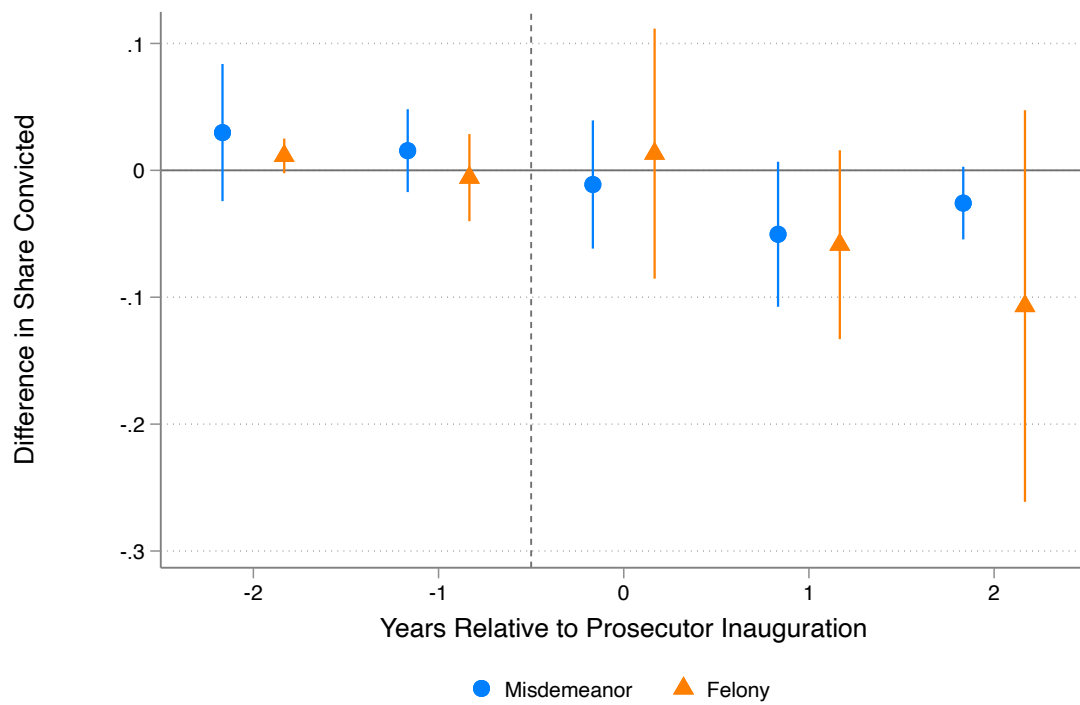


Figure A2. : Event study effects of reform prosecutors on shares of misdemeanor and felony charges resulting in convictions

Note: Event study of the effect of reform prosecutors' inaugurations on the shares of misdemeanor and felony charges ending in convictions. Time 0 is the inauguration year, and all case outcomes are measured for the year in which a case was initially charged. Figure generated by the csdid Stata package, using the event option and weighting by population.

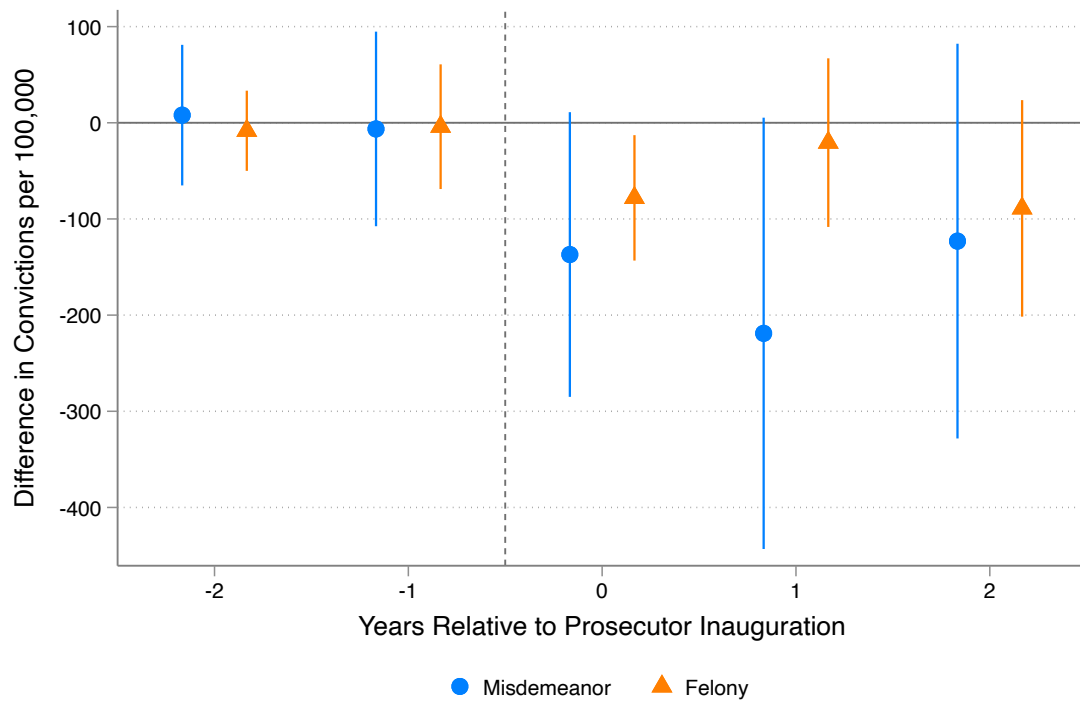


Figure A3. : Event study effects of reform prosecutors on misdemeanor and felony convictions per 100,000 per year

Note: Event study of the effect of reform prosecutors' inaugurations on per capita conviction rates. Time 0 is the inauguration year, and all case outcomes are measured for the year in which a case was initially charged. Figure generated by the csdid Stata package, using the event option and weighting by population.

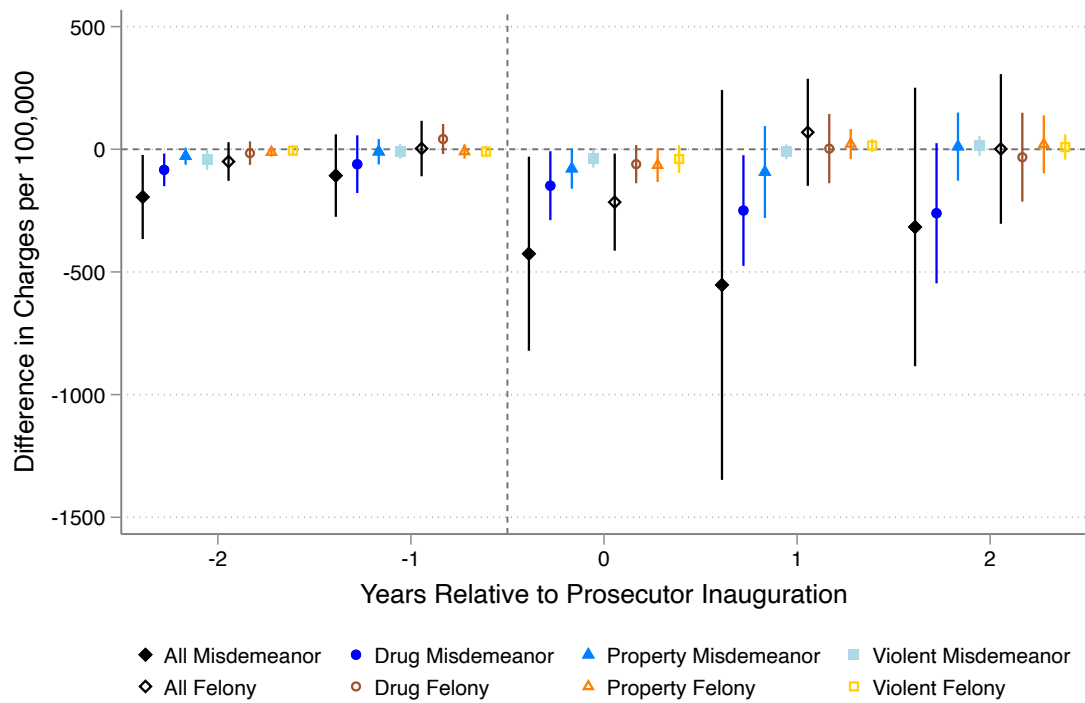


Figure A4. : Event study effects of reform prosecutors on charges per 100,000 per year, by offense type

Note: Event study of the effect of reform prosecutors' inaugurations on charges per 100,000 per year, by offense type. Time 0 is the inauguration year, and all case outcomes are measured for the year in which a case was initially charged. Figure generated by the `csdid` Stata package, using the `event` option and weighting by population.