

be looking to foundations, non-profits, or private companies to be saviors” (196). Instead, this move toward “meaningful safety and support” (201) will require policy changes that increase state funding for social goods like family assistance, affordable housing, education, and empathetic, nonjudgmental forms of mental healthcare, thereby shifting the focus from punishment to prevention.

The Myth of the Community Fix is a thoughtful and well-reasoned book that should be required reading for scholars interested in questions of juvenile justice reform at the state and local level in the United States. But it also speaks to scholars interested in the pitfalls of privatizing essential government services more broadly. I strongly recommend this highly accessible book for undergraduate classes and graduate seminars in US politics, public policy, and criminal justice.

Response to Michael J. Sullivan’s Review of *The Myth of the Community Fix: Inequality and the Politics of Youth Punishment*

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— Sarah D. Cate 

I am deeply grateful to Michael Sullivan for his generous review and insightful questions. The review pushes us to consider more deeply which avenues are most capable of resolving the injustices of the criminal legal system—a goal both our books clearly share and seek to advance. To this end, I will respond to his questions regarding restorative justice and the relative advantages of community-led reforms.

In comparing the Pennsylvania legislation to the ideals of restorative justice, the law falls well short. The inclusion of the “restorative” portion of the “Balanced and Restorative Justice” (BARJ) legislation was rooted in the victims’ rights movement, one of the many diverse ideological strands of the restorative justice movement that A. W. Dzur delineates in his 2011 article, “Restorative Justice and Democracy.” The emphasis on a “balanced approach,” however, signaled the shift *away* from a more ostensibly rehabilitative focus for juvenile corrections to a punitive accountability model. Pennsylvanian lawmakers viewed punitive accountability as entirely compatible with principles like “victim restoration” and “youth redemption.” Although gesturing to these values might seem better than a purely punitive accountability approach, the inclusion of the “restoration” language ultimately bolstered and legitimized what was fundamentally a slate of harsh punitive policies that passed that year. The Pennsylvania bill’s incorporation of “restorative justice” at the margins—rather than in place of retribution—represents one of the potential pitfalls of the restorative justice movement that Dzur warns about.

I appreciate Sullivan highlighting the promise of restorative justice broadly, and I consider his book an excellent call for this movement. There is great value in orienting our response to criminal acts around repair, prioritizing the full needs of both offenders and victims, and shifting away from the stigmatizing and cruel approaches used predominantly by the United States. However, reversing the effects of neoliberalism—principally the destruction and privatization of public goods that have resulted in extreme inequality—is critical to realizing the goals of the restorative justice movement. It is necessary to consider the broader economic, social, and political context in which restorative justice programs take place. In other words, what contexts are people being “restored” to? I am wary of approaches to restorative justice that embrace libertarian impulses and that risk exacerbating and reproducing the prejudices and significant power differentials that facilitated punitiveness in the first place.

My book too shows that the most critical aspect of policy design is not whether it is “government-run” versus “community-based.” For example, it was the organizing efforts of local labor unions, teachers, and parents that helped pass the “government-led” solution of wage increases and greater investment in schools (an example of a positive intervention that serves the needs of young people described on p. 198). Conversely, a purportedly “community-based” self-help program in Texas is run by a for-profit company, is subsidized by the state government, and is the result of a large charitable foundation pushing a model of reform with little input from Texans. What is key to charting a successful path forward are public policies capable of overturning the current neoliberal economic arrangements and geared toward providing for the public good. Policy interventions capable of such significant transformations will have to come through major governmental initiatives—the only way to amass the resources and power capable of addressing current state and market systems—but these types of government-funded initiatives will only be won through fights waged by popular majorities. I hope that this leads us to think more critically about the term “community” and how it is often used to mask privatized policies that are deeply undemocratic.

Born Innocent: Protecting the Dependents of Accused Caregivers. By Michael J. Sullivan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. 264p. \$83.00 cloth.

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In 2018, Americans were captivated by media attention that spotlighted the practice of family separation at the southern border under the Trump administration.