

POLICY PROJECTS

Students in Public Policy Methods complete policy analyses on randomly assigned issues. Over the course of the semester, they do memorandum exercises intended to help them apply concepts introduced in [Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice](#) to their issues. Near the end of the semester, each student submits a fifteen page policy analysis (exclusive of an executive summary and an *unlimited* number of pages of appendices) to me and to one other student. The other student writes a collegial critique and I prepare a more comprehensive evaluation following a [template](#) that helps me cover important points systematically.

Projects for 1998 randomly assigned from the following list:

United Airlines recently announced plans to enforce stricter restrictions on carry_on luggage. Should the Federal Aviation Administration change its regulations regarding the setting and enforcement of carry_on luggage policies by airlines? *Client: Commissioner of the Federal Aviation Administration*

Women often complain that they must often wait in much longer lines than men to use rest rooms at public facilities such as stadiums, arenas, and public buildings. What actions, if any, should New York State take to achieve greater "potty parity" at places of public gathering? *Client: Commissioner, New York State Division of Human Rights*

Some states, including New York, require residents to pay sales tax on items purchased overseas and declared to customs. Should the federal government prohibit, permit, facilitate, or discourage such efforts? *Client: Chairman, House Commerce Committee*

New York State currently requires that registered motor vehicles undergo safety inspections each year. Should New York change the timing, content, or process of motor vehicle inspection? *Client: Commissioner, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles*

Many states have adopted "charter school" that allow teachers, parents, or others to establish publicly funded schools that operate under more flexible regulations than those applied to school districts. Should New York State adopt a law to permit the creation of charter schools? *Client: Governor George Pataki*

Should New York State changes its policies governing the establishment of paternity for babies born to unwed teenagers? *Client: Commissioner, Office of Children and Family Services, New York State Department of Family Assistance*

Should New York State allow its dairy farmers to join the federally_authorized compact among six New England states intended to increase the price of drinking milk? *Client: Commissioner, Department of Agriculture and Markets*

Should New York State legalize the medical use of marijuana? *Client: Commissioner, New York State Department of Health*

Sport fish in many bodies of water in New York State contain chemicals that may be harmful to those who eat them. The risks appear to be especially great to pregnant women. Should the Department of Health change the way that it gathers and disseminates information about these risks? *Client: Commissioner, New York State Department of Health*

The Speaker and the Chair of the Higher Education Committee of the New York State Senate recently appointed a blue_ribbon panel to study need_based financial aid for New York State college students. Frame and evaluate options for revising the state's Tuition Assistance Program. *Client: Paul Volcker and Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., Co_Chairs, Commission on New York State Student Financial Aid*

Several hundred school districts in the United States are currently under court orders to achieve greater racial desegregation. Some of these court orders have been in effect for many years. Should uniform criteria for ending court orders be established by federal law? *Client: Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary*

The Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act of 1992 imposed restrictions on the sale of tobacco products in vending machines and strengthened enforcement against sales of tobacco products to minors in New York State. Recently, legislation passed the New York State Senate that would impose penalties on minors for possession of tobacco products. Should the Assembly adopt this legislation or make any other revisions to the 1992 law? *Client: Commissioner, New York State Department of Health*

Objections are often raised to the rating factors, such as age and sex, that are used by underwriters to set premiums for automobile insurance. Should New York State require insurers to base premiums on milage as a substitute or supplement for some currently used rating factors? *Client: Superintendent of Insurance, New York State Insurance Department*

The New York State Public Service Commission has responsibility for regulating the quality of telephone services. Consider options for improving the way it monitors, assesses, and disseminates information on service quality. *Client: Chairman, New York State Public Service Commission*

The Office of Professional Medical Conduct investigates complaints against New York State physicians and places information about its affirmative findings in the public record. Should information on complaints as well as findings be part of the public record? *Should greater efforts be made to disseminate findings to the public? Client: Commissioner, New York State Department of Health*

Many people who move to New York State complain about he complexity of real estate transactions. In particular, they complain about the various lawyers (for the seller, buyer, and mortgage holder) who must participate in closings on residential properties. Can the process be streamlined and still protect the interests of the various parties? *Client: Director, Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform*

New York State drivers' licenses currently allow their holders to indicate their willingness to donate organs upon death. Should New York State take any additional steps to increase the harvest of transplant organs? *Client: Commissioner, New York State Department of Health*

Groups of indigenous people in Alaska, Washington State, and Canada traditionally hunted whales for subsistence. Several of these groups wish to renew whaling. Under what conditions, if any, should the International Whaling Commission allow whaling by indigenous peoples? *Client: International Whaling Commission*

Maryland recently adopted a strategy of "coerced abstinence" that involves frequent drug tests, escalating sanctions for failing them, and treatment for addiction for prison parolees and people on probation. Should New York State adopt a policy of coerced abstinence? *Client: Commissioner, Division of Criminal Justice Services*

Residents and zoning boards often block the creation of group homes for the mentally retarded in residential neighborhoods. Should New York State take any action to facilitate the opening of such group homes in residential neighborhoods? *Client: New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council*

The Clinton Administration has proposed extending Medicare eligibility to early retirees. Consider alternatives for making health insurance more affordable for those who retire before they qualify for Medicare. *Client: Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging*

Breast feeding is generally considered superior to bottle feeding in terms of the health of the child. Although a majority of women begin breast feeding, only a small fraction continue beyond a few months. For example, a recent study found that while almost 60 percent of women in the Rochester area initiate breast feeding, less than 20 percent continue through six months. Should New York State adopt any policies to promote breast feeding? *Client: Commissioner, New York State Department of Health*

The Jones Act requires that all shipping between U. S. ports be done using U. S. ships and crews. Should it be repealed or revised? *Client: Legislative Affairs Office, National Association of Manufacturers*

Should the federal government expand, reduce, modify, or eliminate the tax subsidies that it provides to ethanol as a fuel additive? *Client: Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources*

Tom Golisano, independent candidate for governor, has proposed the elimination of tolls on the New York State Thruway. Evaluate this proposal. *Client: Director, New York State Division of the Budget*