



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 1 – PREMIER AND FINANCE

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Supplementary questions

Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance

Premier

(Minns)

Hearing: Wednesday 26 February 2025

Answers due by: 5.00 pm Tuesday 25 March 2025

Budget Estimates secretariat

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BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Questions from Dr Amanda Cohn MLC

Psychiatrist resignations

- (1) Have you met with staff specialist psychiatrists who have resigned from NSW Health or their representatives?
 - (a) If so, when, and who attended the meeting?
 - (b) If not, why not?
 - (c) If not, will you?

Questions from Hon Chris Rath MLC on behalf of Opposition

Moree Place-Based Initiatives

- (2) On 12 March 2025, your government announced as part of the ‘placed-based response in Moree’ a 6-month Action Plan for Moree. Has this plan been completed?
- (3) Is the action plan publicly available?
 - (a) If so, when will it be released?
 - (b) If not, why not?
- (4) What actions does the plan recommend?
- (5) Will the government be reporting on the action plan?
 - (a) If so, when?
 - (b) If not, why not?

General questions

CFMEU meetings

- (6) Given ministerial diary disclosures do not include all meetings and provide exceptions to disclosures, since 28 March 2023, have you met with the CFMEU?

ETU meetings

- (7) Given ministerial diary disclosures do not include all meetings and provide exceptions to disclosures, since 28 March 2023, have you met with the ETU?

Ministerial disclosures to The Cabinet Office

(8) On what date did you last update/make a ministerial disclosure to The Cabinet Office?

Department(s)/Agency(s) Employees

(9) How many redundancies were processed by each Department(s)/agency(s) within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?

(a) Of these redundancies, how many were:

i. Voluntary?

ii. Forced?

(b) What was the total cost of all redundancies in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?

(c) On what page are redundancies published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports?

(10) Are any secretaries, deputy secretaries, executive directors or directors employed by the Premiers Department or Cabinet Office former staff members of former labor ministers and or premiers?

(a) If so, who?

Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports

(11) On what date were the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio published?

(12) Were the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio printed?

(a) If yes, what was the printing cost(s) for each department / agency?

(13) Did the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio use in part or full an external production / body / consultant to draft?

(a) If yes, what was the cost(s) for each department / agency?

(14) In what month will the 2024-25 annual report(s) for each department / agency in your portfolio be published?

(15) Will the 2024-25 annual report(s) for the department / agency in your portfolio include a printed copy?

- (a) If yes, how much is budgeted for printing in 2024-25 for each department / agency?

State Records Act

- (16) Have you and your ministerial office had training and/or a briefing about the State Records Act from State Records NSW and/or The Cabinet Office and/or Premier's Department?

- (a) If yes, when?

Advertising

- (17) On what page is advertising published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) annual report(s)?

Department(s)/Agency(s) Gifts and Hospitality Register

- (18) Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) have a gifts and/or hospitality register?

- (a) If yes, is it available online?
i. If yes, what is the website URL?

Ministerial staff disclosure of gifts and/or hospitality

- (19) Does your ministerial office keep a register of gifts and/or hospitality for staff to make disclosures?

- (a) If yes, what is the website URL?

- (20) Have any staff members in your office been the recipient of any free hospitality?

- (a) What was the total value of the hospitality received?
(b) Are these gifts of hospitality declared?

Ministerial Code of Conduct

- (21) Since 28 March 2023, have you breached the Ministerial Code of Conduct?

- (a) If yes, what was the breach?

Credit Cards

- (22) Have you ever been issued with a credit card by a NSW Government department(s) and/or agency(s) since 28 March 2023?

- (a) If yes, under what circumstance?
(b) If yes, what items and expenditure was undertaken?

(23) Do public servants in your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) been issued with department/agency credit cards?

(24) If yes, what is the website URL of the credit card policy?

Department(s)/agency(s) desk or office

(25) Do you have a desk or office in your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) building(s)?

Senior Executive Drivers

(26) As at 1 February 2025, how many senior executives in your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) have a driver?

In office

(27) Has the Premier's Office or any Ministerial staff communicated with Labor Party campaign strategists, polling companies, or political consultants using government email, phone lines or government mobile phones, or IT systems?

GIPA Applications – Ministerial Office

(28) Has your Ministerial Office received a GIPA Application(s) since 28 March 2023?

(a) If yes, how many?

(b) If yes, what is the website URL of the disclosure log?

GIPA Applications – Department(s)/Agency(s)

(29) Since 28 March 2023, have you and/or your ministerial office given instructions to your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) in relation to Government Information (Public Access) Act application(s)?

(30) Since the 2023 election, how many complaints have been made to the Premier's Department regarding the handling of GIPA requests, including concerns about processing times, excessive costs, refusals, and claims that the department cannot accept card payments for fees?

(31) Has there been an increase in complaints since the Minns Labor Government took office, and what steps—if any—has the department taken to address concerns about transparency and accessibility in the GIPA process?

(32) Has the Premier's Department or Cabinet Office ever been directed—either formally or informally—to delay, obstruct, or slow-walk GIPA (Government Information Public Access) requests from the Opposition, media and or members of the public?

GIPA Act – Disclosure Log Website URL

- (33) What is the website URL for the GIPA Act disclosure log each of your portfolio department(s) / agency(s)?

TikTok

- (34) Are you on TikTok?
- (a) If yes, do you access TikTok from a NSW Government device?

Signal

- (35) Are you and/or your ministerial staff on Signal?
- (a) If yes, do you and/or your ministerial staff access Signal from a NSW Government device?
- (b) If yes, does Signal comply with the State Records Act?

Training

- (36) Since 28 March 2023, have you had training from an external stakeholder that included an invoice and payment paid for using your ministerial budget?
- (a) If yes, what is the description of training?
- (b) If yes, how much?

Cabinet documents

- (37) Since 28 March 2023, have you shared Cabinet documents with your Parliamentary Secretary?

Parliamentary Secretary

- (38) Does your Parliamentary Secretary have pass access to your ministerial office?
- (39) Does your Parliamentary Secretary have a desk in your ministerial office?
- (40) Has your Parliamentary Secretary ever used your Ministerial Vehicle?

Media releases, statements, media intelligence, media management

- (41) Are all the ministerial media releases and statements issued by you publicly available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases>?
- (a) If no, why?

- (42) Is or has the Premier and or Ministers staff using/used WhatsApp to send statements to journalists versus not publishing on the website?
- (a) If yes, why?
- (43) Before the 2023 election, the then-NSW Opposition—now the Minns Labor Government—had access to NSW Coalition Government-funded Meltwater alerts. Can the Premier’s Department confirm which Deputy Secretary, Executive Directors or Directors, in their role leading Communications within the then-Premier and Cabinet, approved this Meltwater arrangement while Labor was in Opposition?
- (44) After the change of government in 2023, why did rules change to stop the now-Opposition of the same access?
- (45) Has the Premier’s Office or any Ministerial Office directed Department Secretaries or Deputy Secretaries and or their teams to use third-party apps such as WhatsApp and Signal for official communications instead of email?
- (a) If so, what is the justification for this shift?
- (46) Has any department secretary, deputy secretary, executive director or director or related teams, at any stage since the 2023 election, directed department staffers to use third-party apps such as WhatsApp or Signal for communications with team members, Ministerial staff, or the Premier’s Office?
- (a) If so, why was this done instead of using the official government email network?
- (47) Have Premier’s Department staff ever been required to chaperone or introduce guests to the media—particularly in situations where this should be handled by the Premier’s Media Team?
- For example, was it appropriate for a Deputy Secretary to personally introduce Brett and Belinda Beasley to the media, despite them being official guests of the NSW Premier?
- (a) Why were department staff involved?
- (48) How many media releases and statements has the Premier’s Department prepared or issued on behalf of the Premier’s Office and Ministerial Offices each week, each month, and each year since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (49) How many speeches has the Premier’s Department written for the Premier’s Office and other Ministerial Offices each week, each month, and each year since the Minns Labor Government took office?

- (50) How many staff are currently employed in the Premier's Department Communications Team?
- (51) In the Premier's Department Communications Team how many of these are executive-level positions, and what are the specific bands for each executive staff member?
- (52) Has there been any increase in staffing levels or executive appointments in the Premier's Department Communications team since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (53) How many staff are currently employed as speechwriters within the Premier's Department?
- (54) How many staff are currently employed in internal communications roles across the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office?
- (55) Can the department provide a breakdown of these staff by role, band, and function? Has the number of internal communications staff increased since the Minns Labor Government took office, and if so, what is the justification for this expansion?
- (56) How many brochures, leaflets, documents, and other materials has the Premier's Department's Creative Studio produced since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (a) Can the department provide a full breakdown, including:
- i. The total number of materials created and their purpose
 - ii. The number of hours spent each week and each month on these projects
 - iii. The total cost associated with producing these materials, including design, printing, and distribution
- (57) Has the Premier's Department ever provided coaching, training, or media prep sessions for the Premier or Ministers ahead of media appearances, interviews, Question Time or Budget Estimates?
- (58) Have any Premier's Department communications team staff provided background briefings or off-the-record information to journalists on government matters, rather than this being handled by Premier's Office or Ministerial staff?
- (a) If so, what, and why?
- (59) Have any Premier's Department or Cabinet Office Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, Directors or members of the department's communications team monitored, listened in, watched for announcements or attended the NSW State Labor Conference since the Minns Labor Government took office?

- (a) If so, what staff, and what is the justification?
- (60) Have any Premier's Department or Cabinet Office Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, Directors or members of the department's communications team shared on email, or any third party messaging apps (such as WhatsApp, Signal) any documents, announcements from any State Labor Conferences since the 2023 Election?
- (a) If so, what staff, what was shared and what was the justification?
- (61) Will any Premier's Department or Cabinet Office Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, Directors or members of the department's communications team be monitoring, listening in or attending the NSW State Labor Conference this year?
- (a) If so, what staff, what is the justification?
- (62) When a media inquiry comes into the email address media@premiersdepartment.nsw.gov.au what is the process to answer these inquiries, are emails hidden when they come in, who answers these emails.
- (a) Have journalists complained on answers and response duration times?
- (b) What executive level staff are across the inquiries given a Director of Communications exits?
- (c) Is the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Executive Directors copied into email correspondence when a media outlet makes an inquiry.
- (63) Has the Premier's Department Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Executive Directors or Directors directed any of its staff to monitor social media accounts of Opposition MPs, journalists, or political commentators?
- (a) If so, who authorised this, what is the justification?
- (b) Has iSentia been set up this way?
- i. If so, who authorised this, what is the justification?
- (c) Who are the political figures that the Premiers Department and or Cabinet Office are monitoring outside the caretaker period?
- i. What is being monitored?
- (64) How much has the Premier's Department and or the Cabinet Office spent on external consultants, PR firms, and advertising campaigns promoting government policies since the Minns Labor Government took office?

- (a) Please provide a list of consultants/agencies/firms engaged
 - i. And the amounts billed
 - ii. The Subject matters
- (65) How much has the Premier's Department spent on CCH Political Alerts since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (a) Can the department provide a full breakdown, including:
 - i. The total cost of subscriptions or services
 - ii. The number of staff or Ministerial offices receiving these alerts
 - iii. Whether these alerts are being used for public service purposes or for political monitoring
 - iv. Has there been an increase in spending on CCH Political Alerts under this government, and if so, what is the justification for using taxpayer dollars to fund political intelligence gathering?
- (66) Does the Premier's Department (Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, Directors or any staff) actively send the Premier's and Ministerial staff media releases from the Opposition?
- (a) If so, when sending political media releases of the Opposition to the Premier's Office or Ministerial staff what is the justification for (Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, Directors or any staff) doing this who should be a-political for sending this?

Premier's Department

- (67) Have any staff within the Premier's Department and or Cabinet Office, at any level or in any role, engaged in political work, such as sharing the locations of Opposition members of parliament in chat groups (such as WhatsApp, Signal), Microsoft Teams, distributing opposition media releases, or other activities unrelated to their official job descriptions?
- (a) If so, what is/was their role and team in the department?
 - (b) What is the justification?
 - (c) Are these staff members, members of the labor party, or their family donors to the Labor Party?

- (68) Do job descriptions for departmental staff at any rank explicitly state that they should be tracking or sharing information on the Opposition, the opposition media releases, their movements, or political activities?
- (69) What is the total cost of the office renovations at 52 Martin Place for the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office?
- (a) Can the department provide a detailed breakdown of these costs, including design, construction, furniture, and any associated consultancy fees
- (70) When are staff expected to return to 52 Martin Place?
- (71) Will staff be expected to work 5 days a week from a newly renovated office?
- (72) Are all staff of the Premier's Department and Cabinet Office employed actually living in NSW?
- (a) If no, where are they are living, what are their working arrangements?
- (73) Can the Premier's Department and Cabinet Office provide a full breakdown of the number of staff currently working in-office:
- 5 days per week
- 4 days per week
- 3 days per week
- 2 days per week
- 1 day per week
- How many staff are working remotely for the majority of their time?
- (74) Can the Premier's Department provide a breakdown of how often Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, and Directors physically attend the office each week:
- 5 days per week
- 4 days per week
- 3 days per week
- 2 days per week
- 1 day per week
- Please identify their bands and how many of these senior executives work remotely?

- (75) Has the Premier's Office or any Premier's Department Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors or officers, or directors, directed staff to review or examine the driver logs of the former government at any time since the 2023 election?
- (76) If so, why was this done? Was this a legitimate operational requirement?
- (a) Do job descriptions say that this is part of their role?
- (77) Has the Premier's Department always adhered strictly to merit-based appointments, or have political affiliations and leanings influenced hiring decisions – across all appointments and classifications/bands.
- (a) Have any promotions taken place based on political affiliations, and or families being donors to the NSW Labor Party.
- (78) Can the department provide a full breakdown of senior appointments since the Minns Labor Government took office, including whether any individuals appointed to key roles have prior political connections to Labor ministers, MPs, or staffers?
- (79) Has the screenshot function on mobile apps such as Outlook been disabled for Premier's Department or Cabinet Office staff?
- (a) If so, when was this change implemented, who authorised it, and what was the justification?
- (80) How many staff are currently employed in the Premier's Department Protocol Team? How many of these are executive-level positions, and what are the specific bands for each executive staff member?
- (81) Has there been any increase in staffing levels or executive appointments in the Premiers Office and The Cabinet Office since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (82) What has been the total overtime expenses incurred by the Premier's Department for key government guest visits, Australia Day events, VIVID, and other activities held outside normal business hours since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (83) Have Department Secretaries or Deputy Secretaries ever been invited to or attended Premier's Office or Ministerial staff events, such as farewells, birthdays, or other office gatherings?
- (a) If so, how frequently has this occurred and what for?

- (84) How much has the Premier's Department spent on smoking ceremonies, Welcome to Country events, and other cultural acknowledgments since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (85) Can the government provide a breakdown of costs, including payments to individual providers?
- (86) How many internal diversity-related groups, committees, and advisory bodies currently exist within the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office?
- (87) What are the names, purposes, and membership structures of these groups? How much funding and resourcing has been allocated to them since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (88) Do staff within the Premier's Department and Cabinet Office take time away from their core duties to participate in these internal diversity-related groups, committees, and advisory bodies?
- (89) How many staff are involved, how frequently do they participate, and what are their respective bands? Additionally, which executive-level staff members sponsor or oversee these groups?
- (90) How much staff time each week, month is spent away from their day-to-day jobs is spent in these groups?
- (91) What is the total cost of expense claims made by the Secretary, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, and Directors within the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (92) Can the department provide a breakdown of these expenses, including categories of spending, specific costs incurred, and the bands of the staff involved?
- (93) How many staff within the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office currently hold a NSW Government PCard (corporate card/credit card)?
- (a) Can the Department provide a full breakdown, including:
- i. The roles and bands of staff issued with a PCard
 - ii. The credit limit assigned to each card
 - iii. The total amount spent on these PCards since the Minns Labor Government took office

- iv. A breakdown of purchases made on these cards
 - v. The total amount of fees incurred for late payments
- (94) How much money has the Premier's Department spent on diversity-themed lanyards, merchandise, and related materials since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (a) Can the government provide a breakdown of:
 - i. The total expenditure on diversity lanyards and similar items
 - ii. The number of items purchased and their purpose
 - iii. The suppliers used and procurement process followed
- (95) Has the Premier's Department or Cabinet Office set up any private or informal meeting spaces—either within government buildings or externally—for Ministerial staff to conduct sensitive discussions outside of official records?
- (a) If so, where, when, and why?"
- (96) Has the Premier's Department compiled or maintained any files, dossiers, or briefing notes on members of the Opposition, including personal background, social media activity, or media history?
- (a) If so, who requested this information, for what purpose, and how does this align with the department's official responsibilities?
- (97) Has the Premier's Department engaged any external consultants, public relations firms, or social media strategists to advise on political messaging, media strategy, or crisis management for the Premier or Ministers?
- (98) Has the Premier's Department ever arranged or funded private catering, fine dining, or exclusive hospitality for the Premier, Ministers, or their senior staff?
- (a) If so, what was the cost, which venues were used
- (99) Has the Premier's Department and or Cabinet Office required any staff, contractors, or consultants to sign non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) relating to government operations, internal discussions, or projects since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (100) Has the Premier's Department or any of its senior executives ever used non-government email accounts, private messaging apps, or personal devices to discuss government business?
- (a) If so, why and what matters were discussed.

- (b) Is this in breach of government guidelines and rules.
- (101) Have any Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, or Directors within the Premier's Department or Cabinet office purchased alcohol for staff at events such as Christmas parties, internal office drinks, or other gatherings and then claimed these expenses back through the department?
- (a) If so, which band of the executive, how much and what was purchased?
- (102) What is the formal relationship between the Premier's Department and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet?
- (a) How do their roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines differ?
 - (b) Has the Premier's Department ever received direction—either formally or informally—From the Office of the NSW Premier to work with Office of the Prime Minister or any federal government agency?
 - i. If so, what were the nature and purpose of these directions?
 - ii.
- (103) Has any staff member within the Premier's Department—at any level—charged personal expenses to a government credit card, departmental account, or travel allowance, even if later repaid?
- (a) If so, what is their band and the nature of the charge and amount
 - (b) Were they disciplined
- (104) Has the Premier's Department (Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors, or Directors within the Premier's Department or Cabinet office) ever provided briefings, inside information, or advanced notice of policy decisions to lobbying firms with direct links to the Labor Party?
- (105) How much floor space within the Premier's Department and Cabinet Office, including at 52 Martin Place, are currently leased or paid for but remain unused, underutilised, or occupied by staff who work remotely the majority of the time?
- (106) Has the Premier's Department or Cabinet Office, Premier's Office or any Ministerial Office ever sought to influence or interfere with independent agencies, statutory bodies, or watchdogs in relation to politically sensitive issues?

- (a) If so, which agencies have been approached, and what was the nature of these interactions?
- (107) Has the Premier's Department ever approved or funded private security services—outside of standard police protection—for Ministers, senior government figures, or political events?
 - (a) If so, what is the total cost, who authorised these arrangements, and why were public resources allocated in this manner?
- (108) How much has the Premier's Department spent on purchasing or leasing artwork, sculptures, or decorative items for government offices, including the Premier's Office, since the Minns Labor Government took office?
- (109) Has the Premier's Department allowed government buildings, meeting rooms, or event spaces to be used by the Labor Party or affiliated groups for political meetings, fundraising events, or campaign activities?
- (110) Has the Premier's Department ever provided confidential departmental advice, draft reports, or policy briefings to Labor-affiliated think tanks, lobby groups, or trade unions before they were released to the public or Parliament?
 - (a) If so, who what was the subject matter and justification?
- (111) Has the Premier's Department or Cabinet Office since the March 2023 election received any whistleblower complaints or internal grievances from public servants alleging political pressure, inappropriate directives, or unethical behaviour within the department?
 - (a) If so, what was the nature of the complaints
 - i. What was the band / grade of the complainants

Office Access – Premier's Department Access

- (112) Do any Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors and or Directors have or ever had security pass access to the Premier's Office and/or other Ministerial Offices?
- (113) If so, under what justification? Have they been granted access beyond their departmental roles?
- (114) Do Premier's Office staff and/or any Ministerial Office staff have or ever had unrestricted security card access to the Premier's Department or any other government departments at any time they need within 52 Martin Place?

(115) If so, why? Under what circumstances has this been deemed necessary, and does this raise concerns about political interference in the work of the public service?

(116) Beyond Departmental Liaison Officers (DLOs), has the Premier's Department, its Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries or senior management had an ongoing desk or seating arrangement within the Premier's Office or any Ministerial Office at any stage since the 2023 election?

(a) If so, what is the justification for this and how long for?

Overseas Travel

(117) As Minister, do you approve overseas travel for public servants from your portfolio department(s)/agency(s)?

Data Breaches

(118) Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) keep a register of data breaches in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection (PPIP) Act?

(119) If yes to 38, what is the website?

Discretionary Fund

(120) As Minister, do you have a discretionary fund?

(a) If yes, what department(s) / agency(s) administer it?

(b) If yes, what is the website URL detailing expenditure?

Qantas Chairman's Lounge

(121) Are you a member of the Qantas Chairmans Lounge?

Local Government Councillors

(122) How many of your Ministerial staff are local government councillor(s)?

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| Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC |
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Premier

(123) Council for Intellectual Disability NSW have consistently called for the NSW government to implement a strategy to ensure by 2026, 1% of jobs in the public sector and in government contractors are held by people with intellectual disability. Is the NSW government doing any work in relation to increasing the percentage of people with intellectual disability employed by the public sector?

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| Questions from Ms Sue Higginson MLC |
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Premier

Youth Justice

- (124) In 2020 you tweeted in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and criticised then Corrections Minister David Elliott's for distancing himself from the movement; how has your support for the BLM movement influenced policy in your Government?
- (125) You cited increases in the jail population since your election and declared you were "not done yet". What is your target jail population and when do you anticipate reaching it?
- (126) You have a number of members of your caucus with extensive experience in criminal law. Do you generally consult them about proposed legislative amendments to the criminal law?
- (127) Do you still support a treaty in NSW between the government and the First Nations community?
- (128) Were your youth bail amendments passed last year based on advice that they would reduce crime and victimisation in the community?
- (a) Can you provide the advice?
- (129) Can you point to any legislative amendment to the Bail Act 2013, since 2013, that has made bail harder to get, that has had a demonstrated positive impact on crime rates?