

Plenary on Social Safety Net  
Getting Out Ahead of Vulnerability?

Paul Gowder  
University of Iowa College of Law

This is a preliminary exploration (very much a think piece) about a potential space for policy interventions, revolving around the following ideas: 1) Poverty renders its victims more vulnerable to a wide variety of forms of victimization and domination, both more gendered (such as domestic violence) and less gendered (such as exploitation by landlords and employers). 2) Victimization impairs victims' ability to access income support services that might reduce their vulnerability. 3) For the near future, we live in a political environment in which income, housing, and other supports necessary to reduce vulnerability will be scarce in most jurisdictions. 4) We also live in a scientific and technological environment in which predictive analytic techniques are becoming increasingly sophisticated. 5) Therefore, researchers ought to focus their efforts on finding predictors for victimization in people suffering from poverty, and 6) policymakers ought to develop programs to preemptively offer interventions to those who are empirically at risk of victimization.