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Accessibility of Police Officer Conduct Records in Montana and Policy Solutions to Move Toward Transparency

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Accessibility of Police Officer Conduct Records in Montana and Policy Solutions to Move Toward Transparency

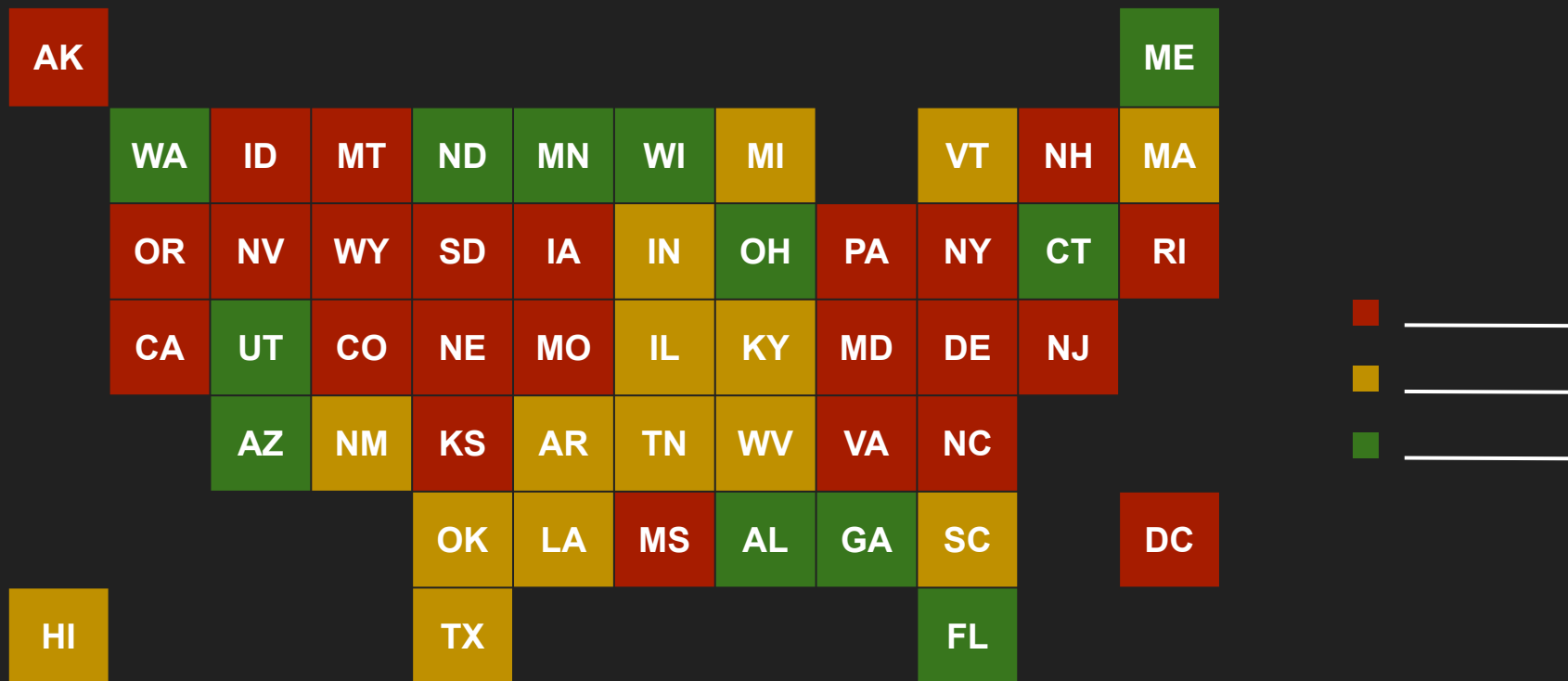
Gillian Oneil, Sophia Speckert, John Bazant, Izy Lyon
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Soazig Le Bihan

Background

- Summer protests put a spotlight on policing

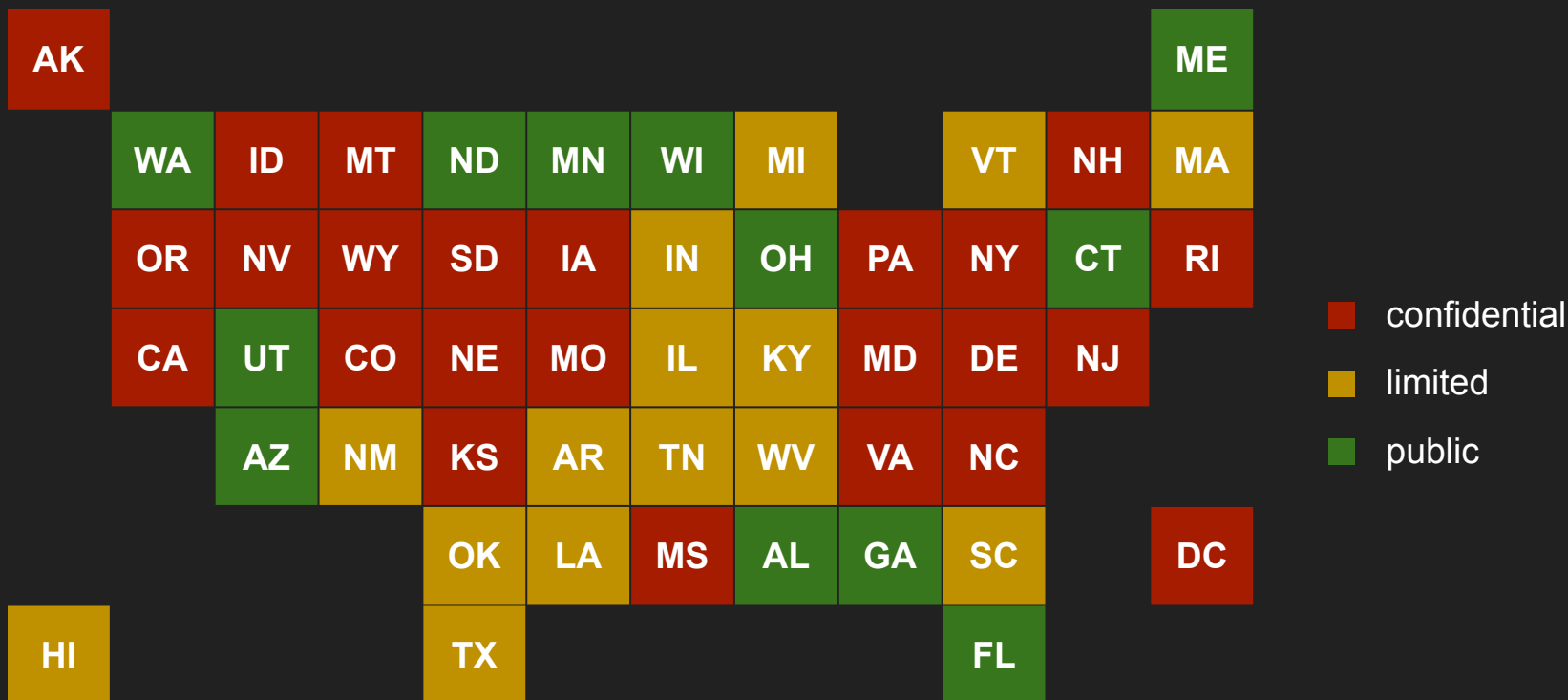
Guiding Question:

“If an officer with the same record of complaints were working in my community, could I find out?”



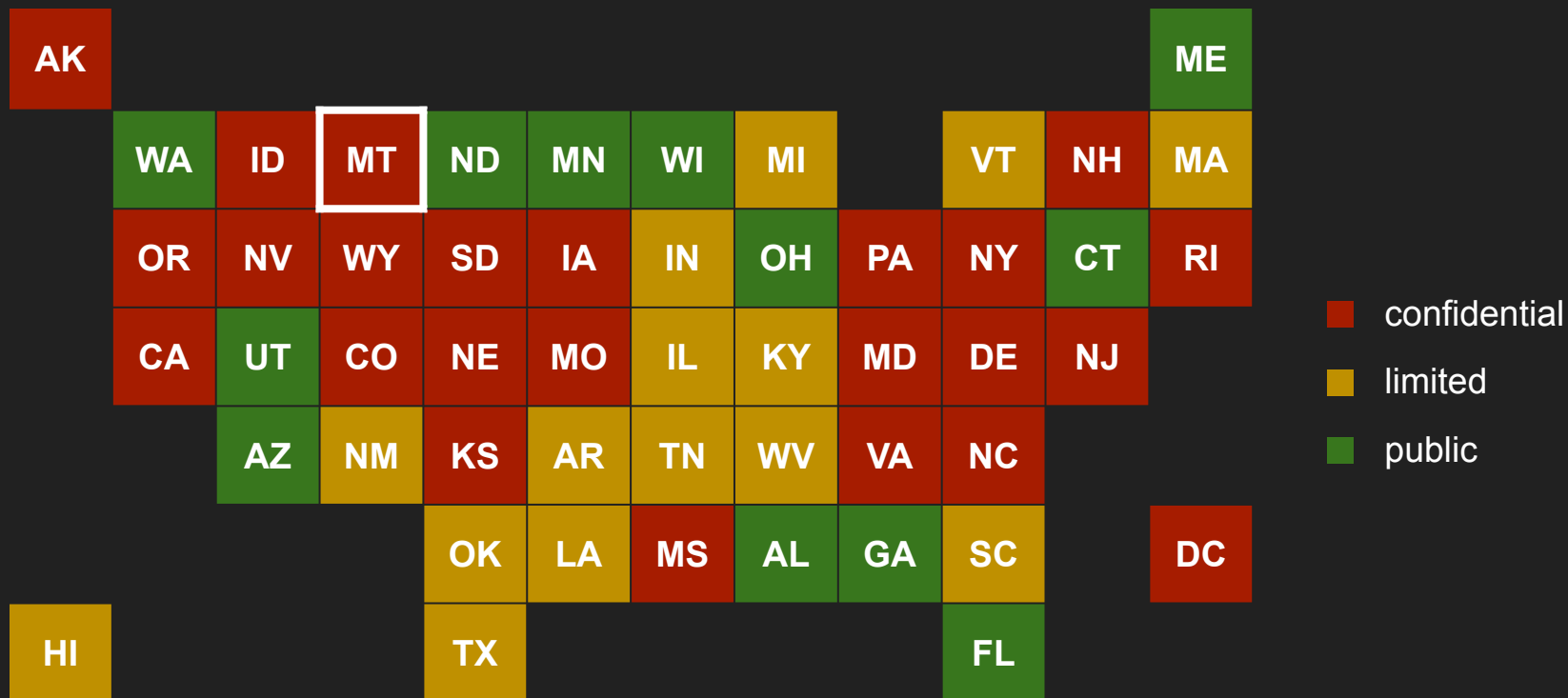
Source: WNYC

Police Disciplinary Record Accessibility



Source: WNYC

Police Disciplinary Record Accessibility



Source: WNYC

- What does “confidential” mean in Montana?
- Why does it matter?
- How can we fix it?

What does “confidential” mean in Montana?

- Request personal criminal records to be expunged or sealed
- Police departments can refuse to provide records related to officer conduct

Why does it matter?

- Police officers have unparalleled power and influence in their communities
- Expanded authority necessitates expanded transparency
- The effects of policing differ by race
- Montanans care about transparency

How can we fix it?

California State, Legislature. Senate Bill No. 1421. California State Legislature, 20 Sep. 2018

- 1) discharge of firearm at person,
- 2) use of force causing great bodily injury or death
- 3) violent assault by an officer
- 4) sexual assault by an officer
- 5) dishonesty relating to one's official duties.

Montana Supreme Court precedent supports this

- Great Falls Tribune v. Cascade County Sheriff,
- Citizens to Recall Whitlock v. Whitlock
- Bozeman Daily Chronicle v. City of Bozeman Police Dept.

Conclusion

Guiding Question:

**“If an officer with a record of complaints were working
in my community, could I find out?”**

Thank you:

- Dr. Le Bihan
- UMCUR organizers and judges

Sources

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