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Climate Justice and New Environmental Policies: Binghamton, New York

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CLIMATE JUSTICE: A Study on the Success of the Blue Bag Garbage System in Binghamton

Eve Citron

INTRODUCTION

Despite being the most targeted by climate change effects, recent sustainable policy seems to be disproportionately and negatively impacting low-income people and families who cannot afford to give up their habits and lifestyles. The blue bag garbage system in downtown Binghamton charges individuals on the bags they purchase, rather than requiring them to pay a tipping fee tax. Ever since its application, little has been explored regarding the success of this system in terms of its sustainable implications and effects on the residents of Binghamton. This research seeks to identify the equity and efficiency of this system.

METHODS

- Conducted literature review on research regarding climate justice and new sustainable policies
- Surveyed residents on their trash behavior since the systems implementation
- Compared data on percentage of residents income spent on trash bags in Binghamton versus New York state
- Interviewed residents on their experiences with the trash bag system

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the effects of climate policy and its relationship between sustainability and equality
- Identify a potential correlation between the application of the blue bag garbage system and a higher economic burden
- Recognize the merit of this new sustainable measure in its trash reduction incentive, as well as its faults given the location of its application and current failures

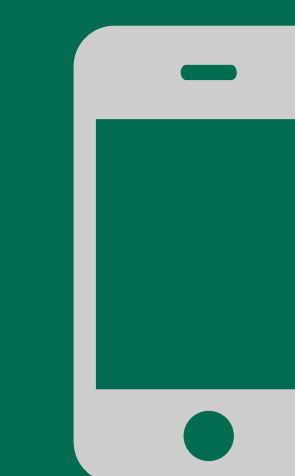
SIGNIFICANCE

The results from this research are helpful in:

- Mitigating future sustainability policy changes
- Implementing crucial environmental changes while ensuring sustainable adjustments do not excessively burden low-income people
- Expanding the Environmental Justice Movement
- Analyzing other environmental policies with regards to equity

The blue bag garbage system in Binghamton has not proven successful in its abilities to promote sustainability and benefit the lower income community.

“Until the city can figure out how to encourage environmentalism without burdening its residents, [I don't see] anyone putting sustainability over the safety and health of their families.” (Anonymous)

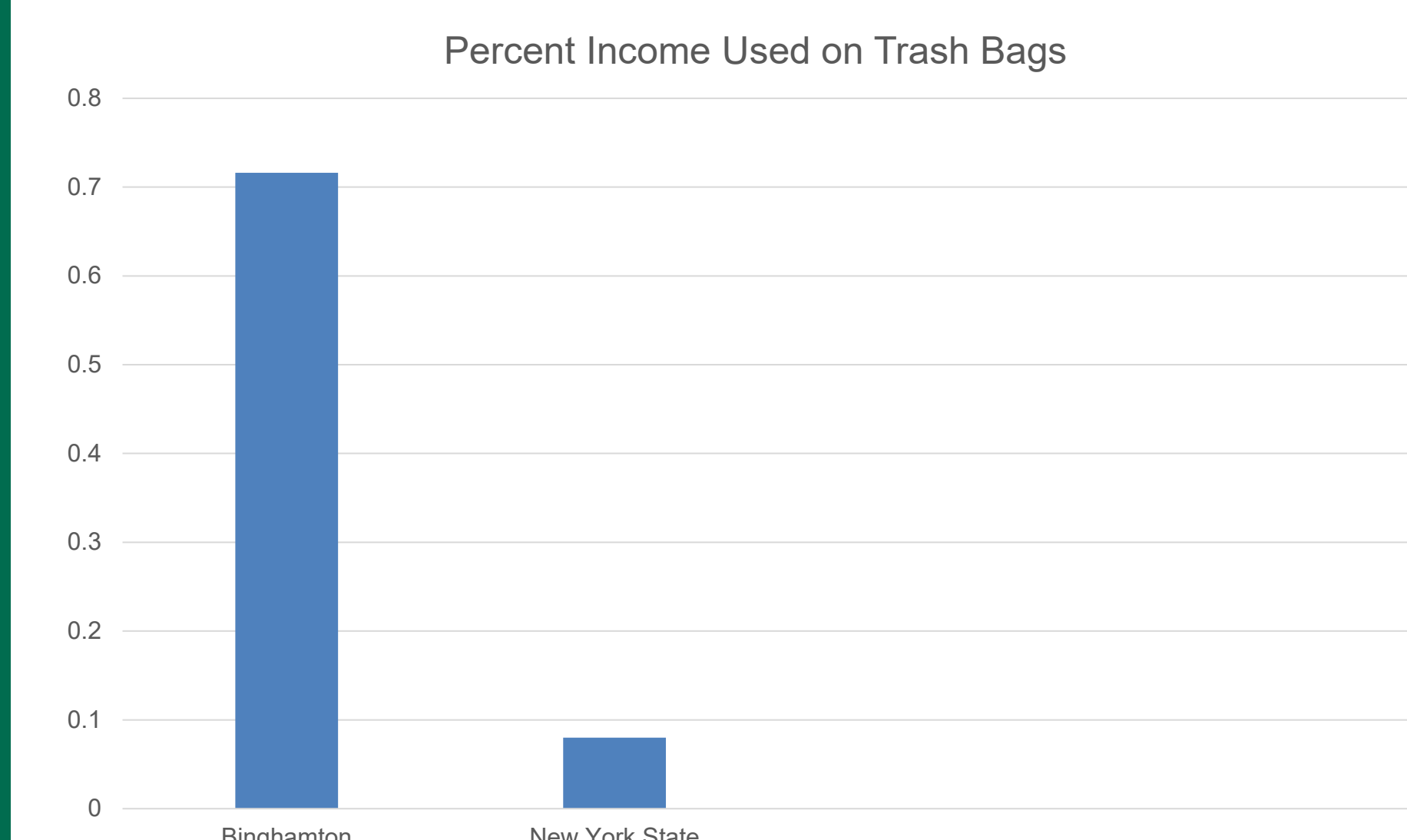


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RESULTS

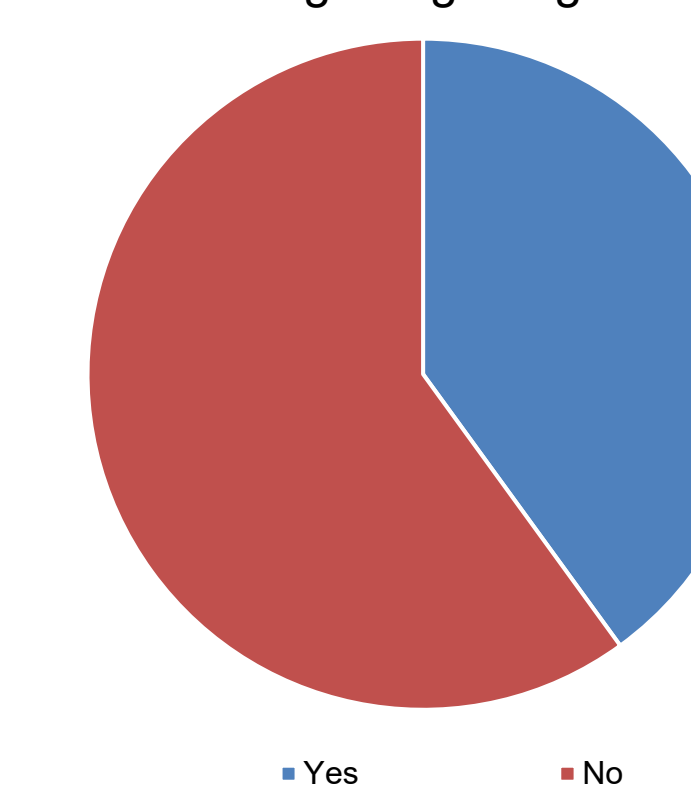
My data set consisted of approximately 50 anonymous residents on the Northside of downtown Binghamton.

Equity:

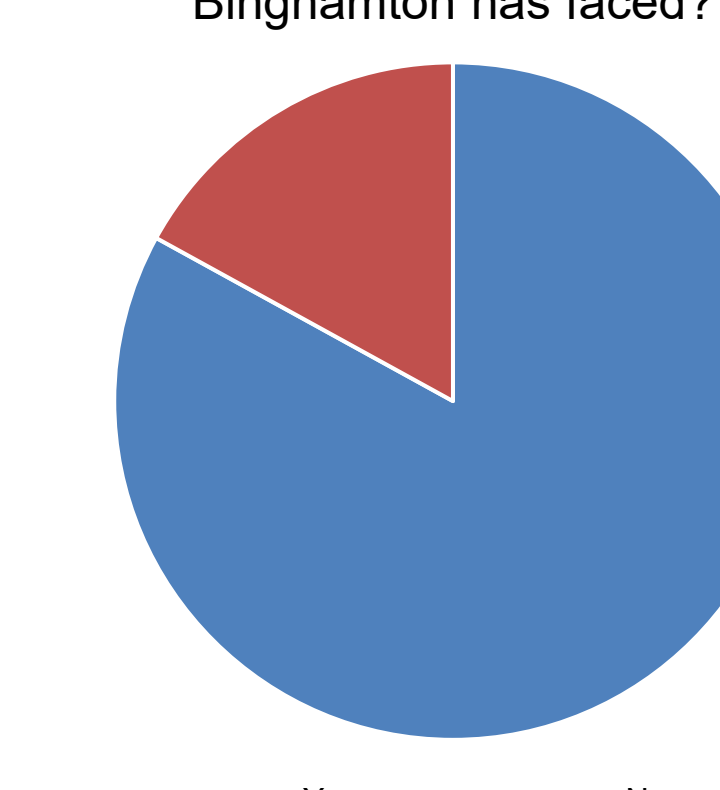


Efficiency:

Are you more mindful of the trash you generate because of the higher expense of garbage bags?



Do you think the high cost of garbage bags is unfair given the historical economic problems Binghamton has faced?



CONCLUSION

Based on my results,

- Binghamton residents spend 0.895% times more of their incomes on trash bags
- The majority of Binghamton resident spend between \$30-\$40 on trash bags per month
- More than half of Binghamton residents are not more mindful of the trash they generate because of the higher expense of garbage bags
- Over 75% of Binghamton residents think the high cost of garbage bags is unfair given the historical economic problems Binghamton has faced