The Right to Counsel at Scale

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Abstract

We assess how the Right to Counsel affects housing stability. The Right to Counsel ensures that low-income tenants facing eviction have access to free legal representation. We exploit the recent adoption of this policy in some, but not all, zip codes in Connecticut. We show that legal representation improves court & housing outcomes for those currently housed but adversely effects those currently unhoused. We use linear regression analysis for the intent-to-treat and IV estimates. We confirm our results using fine-tuned large language models and cluster regularized neural networks. We also provide insight about the type of tenants most likely to respond to the policy and how lawyers' strategies affect their clients housing outcomes.

Keywords: Evictions, Large Language Models

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