

Eliminate Juvenile Court Fees & Fines

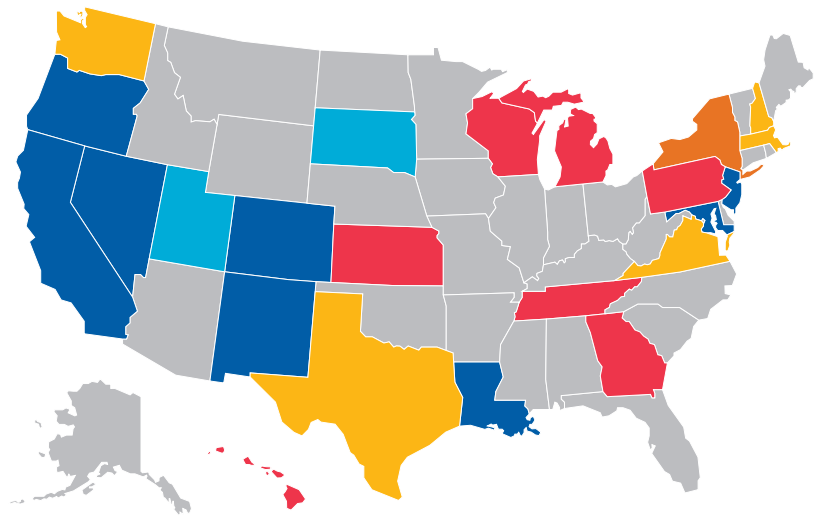
Support SB3621 (Peters)

SB3621 eliminates fees and fines for court-involved youth and their families, ceases all collection activity, and cancels all unpaid outstanding debt. By passing SB3621, Illinois will join a bipartisan coalition of 21 states that have eliminated juvenile court fees and fines to increase the well-being of communities and allow youth to focus on their education, family, and future goals.

ELIMINATING JUVENILE FEES & FINES IS **NOT** A PARTISAN ISSUE

Many states across the country – both majority Democratic and majority Republican – have reduced or eliminated juvenile court fees and fines. Since 2015, 21 states have reduced or eliminated fees and fines for juvenile court, while New York State has never assessed juvenile fees and fines.¹ In 2022, advocacy organizations are expected to introduce bills in about 10 states to eliminate fees and fines in juvenile court.

- Eliminated juvenile fees and/or fines
- Eliminated some juvenile fees and/or fines
- Local juvenile fee reform
- Capped some juvenile fees
- Never charged juvenile fees and fines



JUVENILE FEES & FINES ARE **NOT** SOUND FISCAL POLICY

Illinois law authorizes counties to charge fees and fines to youth and their families at every stage of the juvenile court process.² Fees and fines in juvenile court range from \$25 to over \$800 and can quickly add up to thousands of dollars for a single family. They contradict the rehabilitative goals of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, they unfairly punish youth and families living in poverty, and they create bureaucratic waste, because assessments are difficult to collect since families cannot afford them.³

Juvenile court fees and fines are **NOT** the same as victim's restitution.

By definition, juvenile court **fees** include administrative costs for probation services, public defender services, detention costs, DNA tests, and other administrative costs related to running juvenile courts.

These fees and fines are unrelated to victim's restitution, and they do not help victims of crime. Instead, they result in

minimal revenue, contribute to bureaucratic bloat, and they place dire financial strain on families. These fees and fines are racially discriminatory, undermine youth success, and can create barriers to successful completion of court ordered obligations.⁴ Juvenile court debt interferes with a young person's ability to reintegrate with their community and limits future opportunities, exacerbating poverty and taxing the systems supporting those in poverty.

In Illinois, a family could be charged **\$1,430** for a standard misdemeanor.

Detention room & board - \$10/day (25 days)	\$250
Counseling fee - \$60/session (8 sessions)	\$480
Crime lab fee	\$100
Probation supervision fee - \$50/month (12 months)	\$600
Total	\$1,430

Based on maximum fees allowed by Illinois law and counseling fees charged in DuPage County.⁵

JUVENILE COURT FEES & FINES DO NOT BENEFIT COUNTIES

Juvenile court fees and fines create bureaucratic waste in a regressive cycle that generates minimal revenue for counties. While most counties do not disaggregate fees and fines revenue to show juvenile versus adult data, the Association of Circuit Clerks confirmed that eliminating juvenile fees and fines will not have a substantial revenue impact on the counties or State.

- Juvenile case filings in Illinois account for less than 1% of all circuit court cases, and juvenile cases are declining statewide.⁶
- Nearly 60% of all Illinois counties average fewer than 100 juvenile case filings per year, which suggests these counties generate minimal revenue from juvenile court fees and fines.⁷
- The majority of annual county funding is derived from taxpayer revenue or intergovernmental revenue transfers.⁸
- Juvenile fees and fines do not empirically support youth re-integration goals⁹ and do not empirically support the rehabilitative goals of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.¹⁰

HOWEVER, JUVENILE COURT FEES & FINES CAN DEVASTATE FAMILIES

Research shows that juvenile court fees and fines are racially discriminatory, and they interfere with a minor's ability to fulfill court-ordered obligations.¹¹

- Unpaid fees and fines can become a civil judgment after a minor turns 18, harming their credit and eligibility for student loans, rental leases, or car loans.
- Unpaid fees and fines and the consequences of civil debt can lead to wage garnishments and tax withholdings for youth and their parents or guardians.¹²
- Black and Latino/a youth are referred to juvenile court and detained at much higher rates, which means low-income families of color bear a disproportionate burden of fees and fines in juvenile court.¹³

Juvenile fines and fees result in minimal revenue, contribute to bureaucratic bloat, and place dire financial strain on families. **Putting an end to this practice, SB3621 will:**

Eliminate fines and fees against minors and their families.

Stop all collection activity on fines and fees against minors and their families.

Vacate orders and cancel all unpaid outstanding debt for fines and fees within one year of the effective date of SB3621.

Citations to references are available at stand.org/JuvenileFeesandFinesCitations

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