



## Local, State, and National Advocacy Organizations Call for an End to Fees and Fines For Youth September 2021

We are a group of local, state, and national organizations and advocates calling for an end to the assessment and collection of fees and fines imposed on young people and their families by the justice system.

The murder of Michael Brown and the resulting [investigation](#) into Ferguson, Missouri by the Department of Justice found that local law enforcement was more focused on revenue generation than community safety needs. Unfortunately, Ferguson was not unique. Nearly [every state](#) authorizes courts and localities to charge fees, fines, and other monetary sanctions to youth and their families.

Fees – costs charged to young people and their families for their involvement in and contact with the justice system – force families to pay for their child’s detention, electronic ankle monitors, probation supervision, and even a court-appointed public defender. Fines – punishments imposed on youth for certain behavior – can be levied against families and young people for truancy, curfew violations, and other status offenses.

Both fees and fines drown youth and their families in debt and can come with steep consequences for nonpayment, including tax refund intercepts, wage garnishment, and continued involvement with the justice system. These fees and fines operate as a regressive tax by burdening low-income youth and families. In addition, due to targeted policing and oversurveillance, Black, Brown, and Indigenous youth are overrepresented in the justice system. As a result, they face more fees and fines and often higher amounts, which only exacerbates existing inequities in communities of color. Fee and fine abolition is fundamentally both a racial and economic justice issue.

Further, research indicates that fees and fines are [linked to higher rates of recidivism](#), undermining the system’s stated goals of youth rehabilitation. Additionally, fees and fines are simply an ineffective and unsustainable revenue source. Jurisdictions often [spend more money](#) attempting to collect fees and fines from families than they are able to recover. Even if fees and fines were fiscally efficient for state and local governments, relying on youth and their families to generate potential revenue creates a [perverse incentive](#) for officials to keep youth entangled in the system.

Advocates across the country are working to abolish fees and fines for youth and their families in the justice system. (See the most recent map of state and local advocacy efforts [here](#).) This issue has gained widespread and bipartisan support and we are hopeful that more jurisdictions will take action to end this practice. We urge state and local elected leaders to take a crucial step towards racial and economic justice for our communities by abolishing all fees and fines imposed on young people in the justice system and their families.

The following organizations have signed on<sup>1</sup> in support of ending fees and fines imposed on youth in the justice system:

#cut50

1Hood Media

A New Way of Life Reentry Project

ACLU National

ACLU of California

ACLU of Hawaii

ACLU of Kansas

ACLU of Nevada

ACLU of Pennsylvania

ACLU of West Virginia

ACT for Women and Girls

Adolescent Health Working Group

Adolescent Representation Clinic Columbia Law School

Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus

Advocates for Children and Youth

African American Juvenile Justice Project

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

Alianza for Youth Justice

All of Us or None/Legal Services for Prisoners with Children

Allegheny County Controller's Office

Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

Alliance for Police Accountability

Amachi Pittsburgh

American Children's Campaign

Anti-Recidivism Coalition

Arizona Justice Alliance

Arkansas Advocates for Children

Arts for Healing and Justice Network

B-More Awesome Inc.

Bay Area Community Resources

Berkeley Underground Scholars

Black Girls Equity Alliance

Black Women for Positive Change

Black Women's Policy Agenda

Boston College Civil Rights Clinic

Brilliantly Blessed Community Health and Wellness

Bronx Defenders

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<sup>1</sup> This includes organizations that signed on to an April 2020 [statement](#) calling for a moratorium on fees and fines for youth and/or a June 2021 [letter](#) to the Department of Justice asking for an reissuance of an advisory to eliminate fees and fines for youth.

Brooklyn Defender Services  
Burns Institute  
Calamari Productions  
California Asset Building Coalition  
California Attorneys for Criminal Justice  
California Coalition for Women Prisoners  
California Public Defenders Association  
Campaign for Youth Justice  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Children, Law & Policy at the University of Houston Law Center  
Center for Children's Law and Policy  
Center for Disability Rights  
Center for Employment Opportunities  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Center for Juvenile Justice Reform  
Center for Juvenile Law and Policy, Loyola Law School  
Center for Responsible Lending  
Center for Science and Justice, Duke University School of Law  
Central Phoenix National Lawyers Guild  
Child Advocacy Program, Harvard Law School  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children and Adults Developmental Agency Programs  
Children and Family Justice Center, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law  
Children's Advocacy Alliance  
Children's Campaign  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Legislative Policy Initiative  
Children's Policy and Law Initiative of Indiana  
Children's Rights Clinic  
Church Of Inclusion International Ministries  
Citizens for Juvenile Justice  
Civil Rights & Mediation Clinic, Washington University School of Law  
Civil Rights & Police Accountability Project of the University of Chicago Law School  
Civil Rights Corps  
Civitas ChildLaw Center at Loyola University Chicago School of Law  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
College & Community Fellowship  
Color of Change  
Colorado Criminal Defense Bar  
Colorado Juvenile Defender Center  
Colorado Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel  
Columbia Legal Services  
Columbia University Justice Lab  
Communities in Schools Pittsburgh

Community Advocacy Lab, Columbia Law School  
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto  
Community Works  
Connecticut Justice Alliance  
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office  
Criminal Defense Clinic, Texas A&M Law  
Criminal Justice Policy Program, Harvard Law School  
Criminal Justice Program, UCLA School of Law  
Cultivating Resilient Youth  
Deep Center  
Delaware Center for Justice, Inc.  
Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center  
Destination Innovation Inc for Progeny  
Disability Rights Arkansas  
Drug Policy Alliance  
Due Process Institute  
East Bay Community Law Center  
Ecolucion  
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights  
Empower Mississippi  
Equal Justice Under Law  
Equality Federation  
Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC)  
Family Law Practice Clinic of CUNY School of Law  
Fines and Fees Justice Center  
First Focus on Children  
Florida Juvenile Resentencing and Review Project  
Forum for Youth Investment  
Foundation of HOPE  
Generation Progress  
Georgetown Juvenile Justice Clinic and Initiative  
Girls for Gender Equity  
Growing Greatness  
Health Justice Innovations, LLC  
Healthy Start, Inc.  
Human Rights for Kids  
Idaho Justice Project  
Illinois Juvenile Defender Resource Center  
Indiana Public Defender Council  
Insight Center for Community Economic Development  
Intercultural Development Research Association  
Jomoworks  
Just Cities  
Justice Action Network

Justice for Children, Moritz College of Law  
Justice For Families  
Justice Reinvest Coalition of Alameda County  
Justice2Jobs Coalition  
Juvenile Justice Clinic, University of Michigan Law School  
Juvenile Justice Initiative of Illinois  
Kansas Action for Children  
Kansas Appleseed  
La Raza Centro Legal Inc.  
Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, Inc.  
Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime & Incarceration  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the SF Bay Area  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Legal Clinics at Southwestern Law School  
Legal Rights Center  
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children  
Lone Star Justice Alliance  
Louisiana Center for Children's Rights  
Maine Center for Juvenile Policy and Law  
Maine Youth Justice  
Maricopa County Public Defender's Office  
Maryland Office of the Public Defender  
Michigan Center for Youth Justice  
Midwest Juvenile Defender Center  
Mississippi Center for Justice  
MomsRising  
Mountain State Justice  
NAACP  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers  
National Center for Access to Justice  
National Center for Law and Economic Justice  
National Consumer Law Center  
National Crittenton  
National Juvenile Defender Center  
National Juvenile Justice Network  
National Network for Youth, Inc.  
National Parents Union  
New Hour for Women and Children-Long Island  
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice  
New Jersey Office of the Public Defender  
New Jersey Parents Caucus Memories  
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty

New Mexico Voices for Children  
North Carolina Community Bail Fund of Durham  
North Carolina Fines & Fees Coalition  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh  
Office of Ramsey County Attorney John Choi  
Operation Restoration  
Oregon Justice Resource Center  
Out For Justice  
Pa'lante Restorative Justice Program  
Pacific Juvenile Defender Center  
Peace and Justice Committee of St. Michael's Episcopal Church  
Pennsylvania Coalition for Justice  
Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness  
Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges' Commission  
Performing Statistics  
Pitt County Coalition Against Racism  
Pittsburgh Board of Public Education  
PolicyLink  
Progeny  
Public Counsel  
Public Justice  
Public Justice Center  
R Street Institute  
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT  
Rights4Girls  
RISE for Youth  
Riverside All of Us Or None  
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights  
Root & Rebound  
Rubicon Programs  
Rutgers University Center on Youth Justice and Human Development  
Rutgers Criminal and Youth Justice Clinic  
Ruth's Way, Inc.  
RYSE Center for Youth  
San Francisco Financial Justice Project  
San Jose State University Record Clearance Project  
Schuylkill Public Defender  
Searcy Consulting, LLC  
Seton Hall Law School Center for Social Justice  
SF Financial Justice Project  
Silver Moon Strategies  
Silver State Equality  
Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
Southern Center for Human Rights  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Southwest Juvenile Defender Center  
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network  
Stand for Children  
Stand for Children AZ  
Stand for Children CO  
Stand for Children Dallas  
Stand for Children Illinois  
Stand for Children IN  
Stand for Children LA  
Stand for Children OR  
Stand for Children TN  
Stand for Children WA  
Starting Over, Inc  
Strategies for Youth  
Students for Sensible Drug Policy  
Take Action Mon Valley  
TeamChild  
Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers  
Texas Appleseed  
Texas Civil Rights Project  
Texas Fair Defense Project  
The Architects of Justice  
The Choice Program at UMBC  
The Commonwealth Institute  
The Fortas Foundation  
The Gathering for Justice  
The Green Life Earth Island project  
The Honorable Mik Pappas, MDJ  
The Institute for Compassion in Justice  
The Legal Aid Society of New York  
The New York Law School Post Conviction Innocence Clinic  
The Sentencing Project  
Touro Law Center Education and Youth Justice Clinic  
Tulane Juvenile Law Clinic  
Tzedek DC  
Ubuntu Village NOLA  
UCLA Law COVID Behind Bars Data Project  
UCLA Law Criminal Justice Program  
UCLA Prison Law and Policy Program  
Underground GRIT  
Underground Scholars Initiative - UC Riverside

Underground Scholars Initiative, Irvine  
University of Miami School of Law Children & Youth Law Clinic  
University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing  
University of St. Thomas Criminal and Juvenile Defense clinic  
USI/ Reziliency  
Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys  
Vanderbilt Law School Youth Opportunity Clinic  
Voices for Children  
Voices for Utah Children  
W. Haywood Burns Institute  
Washington U Law School Civil Rights Clinic  
West End P.O.W.E.R.  
Western Center on Law and Poverty  
Women & Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania  
Woodland Hills School District  
Wyoming Children's Law Center  
YogaRoots On Location  
Young Women's Freedom Center  
Youth First Initiative  
Youth Justice Clinic University of North Carolina School of Law  
Youth Law Center  
Youth Leadership Institute  
Youth Sentencing and Reentry Project  
Youth, Education, and Justice Clinic, University of Maryland Carey School of Law  
Youth, Rights & Justice