

## Conservative, Center-Right, and Libertarian Organizations Support Ending Fees and Fines for Youth

We are organizations and advocates that share in a desire for a free and open society that limits government interference and supports individual liberties. We are calling for an end to the assessment and collection of fees and fines for young people in the justice system and their families.

Fees – costs imposed on youth and their families for a young person’s involvement in the justice system – operate in part as a regressive tax on vulnerable communities. These fees include charges for diversionary programs, probation supervision, parent training programs, miscellaneous court costs, and more. Fines – monetary penalties imposed on youth and their families for a certain behavior – can range widely in scope from penalties for status offenses like truancy to more substantial delinquency fines. Both fines and fees often come with harsh consequences for nonpayment, exacerbating their impact on youth and families.

Studies show that fees and fines create additional barriers for youth and families, often trapping them in cycles of debt and court involvement. Further, fees and fines are linked to higher recidivism rates and lower levels of positive social spending, undermining community safety and youth rehabilitation.

Research consistently shows that jurisdictions generate little to no *net* revenue from fees and fines, which they collect at low rates with high costs. Still, relying on system-involved youth and families to generate *potential* government revenue creates a perverse incentive to entangle youth in the system. Ending fees and fines for youth would reduce the financial and bureaucratic burden on the agencies administering these programs, and localities could see long-term fiscal savings.

Conservative and free-market voices have played a key role in ending fees and fines for young people and their families in every region of the country. See the latest states to pass legislation [here](#). A wide variety of stakeholders—including [judges](#), [district attorneys](#), [probation officials](#), [youth correctional officers](#), and [law enforcement leaders](#)—have also called for the reduction or elimination of fees and fines for youth.

We are hopeful that states will continue to stand as leaders on this common-sense juvenile justice reform with widespread bipartisan support. We urge lawmakers to act on behalf of our communities and the youth and families impacted by our justice system by eliminating all fees and fines imposed on young people.

