

Bill Cheat Sheet Guide & Template

We created this guide as part of a series of resources to support community advocates in building state and local campaigns to abolish youth fees and fines by sharing strategies from Debt Free Justice (DFJ) campaigns. See more resources at debtfreejustice.org/resources.

This is a guide to creating a bill cheat sheet that includes [background](#) and a [template](#). If you have questions about this resource, write to info@debtfreejustice.org.

Background

What is a Bill Cheat Sheet?

- A bill cheat sheet accompanies a bill and outlines what each section of the bill does, including which state codes are repealed, amended, or added. It is specifically intended to help guide someone with technical knowledge through understanding legislation and can be a public or a more private document.
- A bill cheat sheet may also include a high-level bill concept summary.

Why Create a Bill Cheat Sheet?

- Fee and fine repeal bills can be long and dense. Cheat sheets help your organization and coalition members quickly refer to the content of a bill without having to dig through the entire bill. They are typically for supportive audiences and can also be shared with legislators, lobbyists, and technical experts.

Where Can I See Examples of Bill Cheat Sheets from Other DFJ Campaigns?

- Browse debtfreejustice.org/resources to see examples of bill cheat sheets used in past DFJ campaigns.

Can I Use a Template for a Bill Cheat Sheet?

- Below is a template you can copy to create a bill cheat sheet.

Template

[BILL #]: [TITLE (AUTHOR)]

Last Updated: [DATE]

Bill Summary

[Summarize your bill here. Begin by stating what the current law authorizes. Consider defining “fees” and/or “fines.” Include a bulleted list of what the bill amends. Consider including a bulleted list of what the bill does not impact (ex: restitution).]

Bill Provisions

[Below are examples of columns to consider including in a bill cheat sheet. Add, remove, or reorder these columns to suit your campaign’s needs. Consider your audience and whether you’ll only be using this document internally or if it will be publicly available. Filter what you include accordingly.]

Bill Section	State Code §	Description	Amendment / Change	Notes / Rationale