

No Price On Justice
NoPriceOnJustice.org

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May 17, 2021: Tax Day: Advocates & State Legislators to Rally In Buffalo For Bill to Eliminate Predatory Court Fines & Fees

After Passing New Taxes on the Wealthy, Policymakers Seek to Undo Harms of Extracting Revenue Through Police & Courts

This morning, advocates, and people impacted by New York's predatory court fines and fees gathered outside the City Court Building in Buffalo to demand an end to the criminalization of poverty and passage of the End Predatory Court Fees Act.

Photos available upon request.

The [End Predatory Court Fees Act](#) would eliminate court, parole & probation fees, mandatory minimum fines, incarceration on the basis of unpaid fines and fees, and garnishment of commissary accounts.

New York imposes automatic court fees on every single criminal conviction. Court fees, mandatory minimum fines, and parole and probation fees fall disproportionately on poor, Black and Latinx communities, and those who actually pay are usually those who commit the lowest-level offenses. The No Price On Justice campaign's recent report — [New York's Ferguson Problem](#) — shows how the state's reliance on fines and fees revenue encourages policing-for-profit, criminalizes poverty, and endangers Black and brown lives.

Lawmakers who passed legislation to ensure New York's wealthiest pay their fair share through progressive taxation called on New York to now undo the harm of New York's regressive, ineffective and predatory revenue generation through the court system. Last year, California passed the most far-reaching fee elimination [reforms](#) to date, ending the collection of 23 fees charged to people in the criminal justice system — such as fees for public defenders, local booking fees, and probation and parole fees — and forgiving \$16 billion in court debt. Momentum is building in numerous states around the U.S. for similar reforms.

The rally featured Buffalonians impacted by onerous court fines and fees who are leaders of the No Price on Justice Campaign. The rally was organized by the Fair Fines and Fees Coalition as part of the [No Price on Justice](#) campaign.

"Court fees and fines are a part of an extractive criminal justice system that forces mostly low-level offenders and their families into economic hardship over petty crimes, exploiting people who can least afford them and turn criminal courts into debt-collection mills," **said Miles Gresham, a Policy Fellow with the Partnership for the Public Good and a former public defender.** "The end result is that overpoliced and underserved communities suffer the additional indignity of being forced into poverty by police and courts that use them as revenue generators."

“With this year’s budget, New York has begun to call on New York’s wealthiest to pay their fair share through progressive taxation,” **said Jalonda Hill of the Fair Fines and Fees Coalition.** “Now, it is time to undo the harm of New York’s extractive fines and fees that trap millions of residents in a vicious cycle of debt and criminalization.”

About the No Price on Justice Campaign

[No Price on Justice](#) is a coalition of economic and racial justice organizations, grassroots groups, and impacted people working to end New York’s predatory court fines and fees. Our mission is to end legal system fees and find more equitable ways to fund our government. Members of the [No Price on Justice](#) coalition include: Brooklyn Defender Services, Center for Community Alternatives, Color of Change, Community Service Society, Fiscal Policy Institute, Fines and Fees Justice Center, Legal Aid Society, New York Civil Liberties Union, The Partnership for the Public Good, The Fair Fines and Fees Coalition, and a dozen other organizations.