

# We shouldn't have to *hope* for more crime to fund essential services

It's time to provide stable revenues for public services and end Delaware's dependence on unreliable fines and fees

## Court fees aren't about accountability.

They are hidden taxes, surcharges added to violations that are used to fund government services. They disproportionately impact low-income Delawareans and communities of color – and when added to minor infractions, they make **small mistakes** into **big deals**.

## Example: Forgetting your EZ Pass

### Toll Due: \$0.50

Administrative Fee: \$25.00

Ambulance Co. Fee: \$10.00

Fund to Combat Violent Crimes: \$15.00

**Total w/ fees: \$50.50 (>100x increase!)**

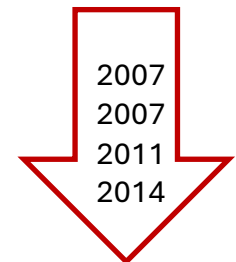
**Delaware collects far more in fees than it does in fines.** As of November 2023, Delaware Courts reported the following outstanding debt from criminal cases for defendants:

Fines:	\$9,770,815
<b>Fees:</b>	<b>\$19,215,619</b>
Total:	\$29,986,434

**Fees fund vital services – DE residents depend on violations to fund government**

## Today, Delaware depends on fees – but it hasn't always been this way:

- + Fee for bailiffs and other court security
- + Fee for DELJIS, central system for criminal and driving records
- + Fee for overtime and weaponry for state and local police
- + Fee for firefighter and ambulance services



## This system is inefficient...

- Where fees have been closely studied in other jurisdictions, they actually *cost more money to collect than they take in*
- As crime has gotten lower the past few years in Delaware, vital services have had their funding destabilized

## ...and cruel.

- 85% of defendants in Delaware courts are “indigent,” and thus already struggling financially
- 56% of warrants for unpaid fines and fees in 2017 were to Black defendants; fees disproportionately impact Black communities
- Being unable to pay fees can ruin your credit, keep you from renewing a driver's license, and prevent you from getting an expungement – making keeping your job or finding housing impossible

## Let's change it.

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**END** DEBTORS' PRISON