



April 5, 2021

Via E-Mail Delivery

Representative Jamie Becker-Finn, Chair
House Judiciary and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
559 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Representative Peggy Scott, Lead
House Judiciary and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
335 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Lead Scott:

On behalf of the Justice Action Network, the nation's largest bipartisan criminal justice reform organization, I am writing in support of legislation introduced in the House and Senate and included in the House Judiciary Finance bill, HF1030 (Representative Becker-Finn). The legislation – HF306 (Representative Frazier) and SF902 (Senator Latz) – waives the \$75 surcharge on traffic tickets for individuals who do not have the ability to pay as determined by the Courts. HF306/SF902 includes several bipartisan co-authors.

Court fines and fees have significant impact on individuals with limited or no financial ability to pay. Lack of payment of fines and fees may result in other adverse actions against individuals and runs counter to efforts ensuring public safety. Fines and fees are often evaluated by policymakers from the perspective of revenue raised, yet there are other costs not readily considered. For example, the time law enforcement spends on individuals with outstanding fines and fees could be better spent responding to 911 calls.

We also know that revenue projections for fines and fees often fall short, and the cost of collecting the revenue is expensive. According to a report from the Brennan Center for Justice issued in November 2019, jurisdictions spent more than \$0.41 for every dollar they collected during the period studied in the report. By comparison, it costs 121 times more to collect criminal fines and fees than it costs the IRS to collect federal taxes.

Thank you for including HF306 in the House Judiciary Finance bill. Please feel free to contact our organization's government relations representatives, Chas Anderson at chas@parkstreetpublic.com and Ade Salami at ade@parkstreetpublic.com, with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jenna Bottler
Deputy Director, Justice Action Network