

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-encourages-jails-follow-multi-county-correctional-center-and-abandon-pay-stay>

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[Skip to main content](#)

COLUMBUS The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio issued a statement praising the decision by Multi-County Correctional Center in Marion to eliminate the jails pay-to-stay program. Pay-to-stay fees are charges assigned to people by county jails in the form of booking fees or daily fees while they are incarcerated.

Balancing jail budgets on the backs of people in poverty will simply never work, said Mike Brickner, senior policy director for the ACLU of Ohio. In fact, pay-to-stay fees can send people hurling back into the criminal justice system by loading them with debt that makes it that much harder to successfully return to our communities. These policies can take a simple traffic offense and spiral it into thousands of dollars in debt.

At a meeting of the Multi-County Correctional Center Board two people who had been subject to pay-to-stay fees spoke to board members about how these practices impacted their lives and urged the board to eliminate them altogether.

Many of the people in our jails are struggling with addiction and mental illness, Brickner said. Charging these fees means that those same people are now being harassed by collections agencies after their sentence is over, and have few options or resources to seek treatment.

Read the report: "[In Jail & In Debt: Ohio's Pay-to-Stay Fees.](#)"

Last November, the ACLU released the report *In Jail & In Debt: Ohio's Pay-to-Stay Fees* that looked at the devastating effects these practices have on low-income people. Since the release of the report, three more counties have eliminated daily fees for people in their jails.

Corrections officials and criminal justice advocates have the same goals to keep people out of jail, and rehabilitate those who are there, Brickner said. The dozens of other jails around the state that charge these fees should stop immediately. State officials should reexamine the law and eliminate pay-to-stay jail fees entirely, so we can support those who are returning to our communities and work towards depopulating our overcrowded jails.

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