



**Center for  
Employment  
Opportunities**

## **CEO'S POLICY AGENDA**

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### **Eliminate policies that criminalize poverty through the legal system.**

Money owed to the government is a tremendous barrier to people reentering into society, reducing opportunities to build financial capital and credit. Because of racial bias in the criminal legal system, these fines and fees disproportionately strip resources from communities of color.

There are several changes the federal, state and local government can implement to improve people's financial opportunity.

**Change  
that works.**  
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### **End the collection of the legal system's fines and fees as a government revenue strategy and eliminate uncollectible debt.**

Many state and local governments fund large aspects of their law enforcement and court systems on fines and fees, creating a financial incentive for government officials to use this form of punishment. This is particularly relevant for supervision fees.

### **Reform laws that restrict people's ability to get drivers licenses.**

This is particularly relevant for license suspensions as a result of unpaid fines and fees and government owed-debt. Eliminate the option to take away people's drivers licenses (or prevent them from getting one) for non-driving related legal infractions. It is also important to require assessments of a defendant's ability to pay prior to instituting any monetary penalties and eliminate incarceration as a punishment for failure to pay.

### **Place caps on the accumulation of government-owed child support debt and write off uncollectible debt.**

Write off all outstanding public benefits repayment child support debt, since 95 percent of it has been deemed difficult to collect or uncollectible. It is also critical to automatically end the accrual of interest on unpaid fines and fees, including publicly owed child support debt, during incarceration, and ensure child support orders are based on a parent's financial circumstances.

### **Make cash assistance a key element of the reentry process.**

Immediate financial support to people when they are coming home provides immediate stability for the individuals and their families, and can open multiple pathways to economic mobility.