

The Ohio Model for Combating Modern Debtors' Prison

Mike Brickner
Jocelyn Rosnick



IN FOR A PENNY

The Rise of America's New Debtors' Prisons



A report by the
American Civil Liberties Union

OCTOBER 2010



Debtor's Prison Investigation, Part I



Huron County Jail Booking Report* May 2012 - October 2012

	Bookings for Failure to Pay	Total Bookings	% of Total
May	47	180	26.11%
June	52	206	25.24%
July	35	188	18.62%
August	53	239	22.18%
Sept.	33	185	17.84%
Oct.	39	173	22.54%
Total	259	1171	22.12%

**Approximate numbers based on ACLU of Ohio research*

Litigation: Not Always the Answer



- ▶ Two Big Problems:
 - ▶ Immunity
 - ▶ *Younger* Abstention Doctrine

Statewide Investigation



- ▶ Debtors' Prison:
 - ▶ Huron
 - ▶ Cuyahoga
 - ▶ Erie
 - ▶ Hamilton
 - ▶ Richland
 - ▶ Warren
 - ▶ Williams

Strategies for a Successful Investigation

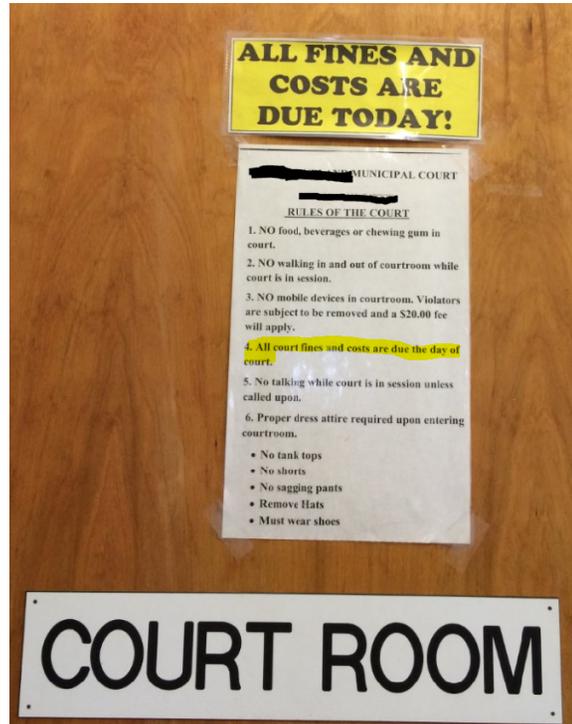
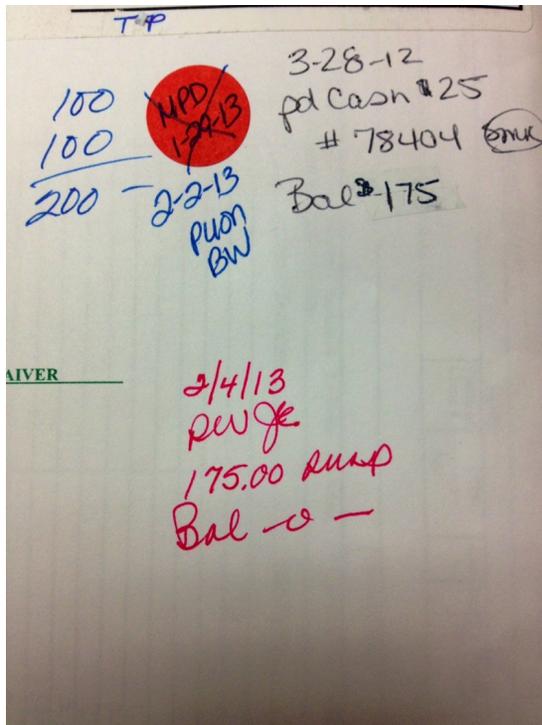
- ▶ Gather evidence
 - ▶ Send records requests
 - ▶ Analyze & verify the information
 - ▶ Look at court dockets



Gather evidence, *continued*

▶ Inspect Court Files

▶ Court Watch



Gather evidence, *continued*

- ▶ Request audio recordings
- ▶ Couple data with personal stories

John Bundren by the Numbers*

Fines Owed = **\$1,300.00** +
Costs Owed = **\$1,599.10**
Total = \$2,899.00

Collected by Huron County:
Total = \$525.00

Spent by Huron County:
Execution of Five Warrants = \$2,000.00 +
41 Days of Incarceration = \$2,378.00
Total = \$4,378.00

**Total Net Loss
to Huron County = **\$3,853.00****

*Approximate numbers based on ACLU of Ohio research



Jack's Story



Jack Dawley: Updates

Since then, Jack has

- Paid off nearly all his fines;
- Been able to find steady employment;
- His own apartment; and
- Been able to reinstatement his driver's license.





The Outskirts of Hope



How Ohio's Debtors' Prisons Are Ruining Lives and Costing Communities

A Report by the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio

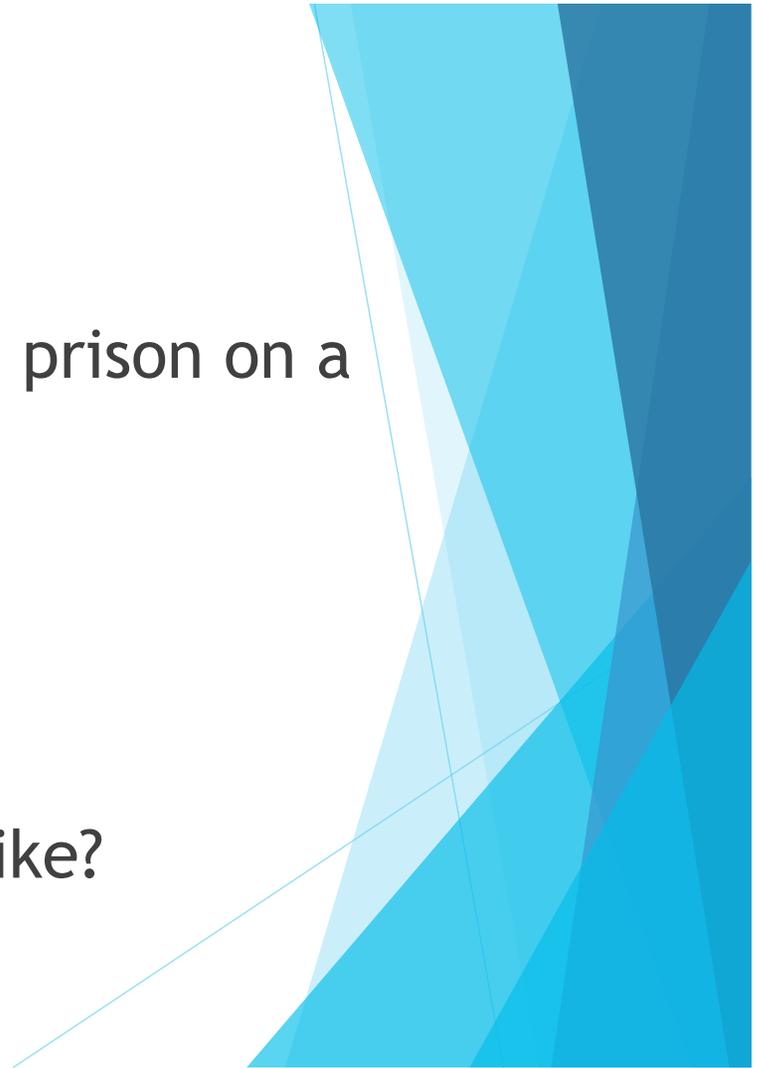
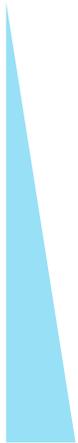
April 2013



www.actuohio.org

Group Activity

- ▶ How would you combat debtors' prison on a
 - ▶ Local level?
 - ▶ State level?
 - ▶ Federal level?
- ▶ What does your campaign look like?



Get Involved:

- ▶ For More Information
 - ▶ Visit www.acluohio.org/debtorsprison
- ▶ Take Action
 - ▶ Sign up for E-News Alerts
 - ▶ www.acluohio.org/advocacy
 - ▶ Become a member!
 - ▶ www.acluohio.org/membership
 - ▶ Get social!
 - ▶ www.facebook.com/acluofohio
 - ▶ Twitter @acluohio

