


The Detention Compensation Act

Reparations for people who are detained pre-trial but never found guilty of a crime.

The Problem

Pretrial detention system is people who are factually and legally presumed innocent are held pretrial without bond. Which causes immediate harm that is prevalent but preventable. Pretrial detention causes immediate harm to many people who are never actually convicted of a crime. People can be put in jail for days, months, or even years then be acquitted or have their cases dismissed. And Black people are the most harmed.



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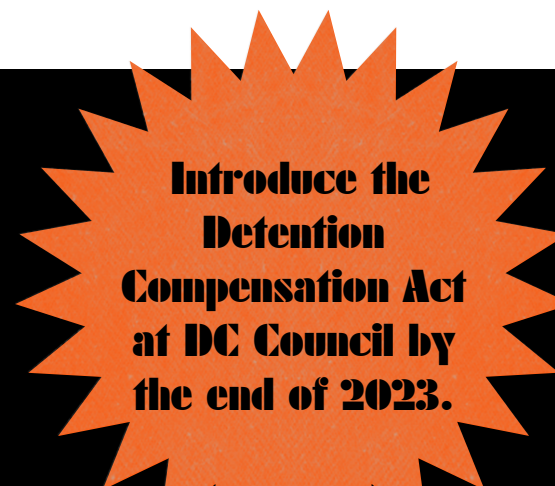
The Impact:

Black people are the most impacted by these policies. Black people are disproportionately represented in DC Jail. 92% of DC jail residents are Black and 60% of them are being held pre-trial. People often lose their jobs and resources while incarcerated for a few days or even just a few hours.

In October 2019, the Jails and Justice Task Force reported that more than 1,800 people in 2018 were detained for over a week pre-trial at the Department of Corrections (DOC) but then released without a guilty plea or conviction. According to the DC Pretrial Services Agency, between 2017 and 2021, people spent an average of 131 days awaiting trial. Post-covid, that average increased to 214 days.

The Solution

DC should compensate anyone who is detained for even one night for their time if they are found not guilty of a crime or their case is dismissed. Anyone held for more than 7 days in DOC custody who is released without a conviction should be compensated for loss of wages, etc.



Introduce the Detention Compensation Act at DC Council by the end of 2023.