



Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association
P.O. Box 5276
Peoria, Illinois 61601-5276

To Gabriela Conley

August 17, 2022

Good Afternoon Ms. Conley,

On behalf of the Illinois State Crime Stoppers Association of which I represent, I wish to voice our concerns to the Court Fee Task Force for the upcoming public hearing to be held on August 30. Our State organization represents sixty five local programs throughout the state that assist local Law Enforcement by accepting anonymous tips and forwarding them on to law enforcement in regards to known and unknown crime(s) as well as the location of wanted suspects. In exchange for that information, the tipster is eligible for a cash non-taxable reward if an arrest is made from the information received. This non-tax allowance was granted by the IRS decades ago. Globally, Crime Stoppers organizations have been in existence for over thirty years. While we might differ in business practices, the one common denominator among us is the ability to receive court-ordered fees to keep our programs afloat. This brings me to point of my letter.

Customarily, the local State's Attorney requests an anti-crime fee to be paid by the convicted party and the Judge has the authority to approve or deny the fee. That fee (if approved) is collected by the Circuit Clerks office and then paid to the local Crime Stoppers. Admittedly, we think this is an excellent method because the Subjects who commit the crime(s) sustain the programs! For over two years now, those funds have been drastically reduced because those ordered to pay the fees can apply for a 'Hardship Waiver' to have the ordered fees reduced or eliminated all together. My own local program, Crime Stoppers of Morgan, Scott & Cass Counties have seen a forty percent reduction over that time. My neighbors, Sangamon & Menard along with Logan County Crime Stoppers have seen similar financial decreases.

The President of Ford County Crime Stoppers has informed me his group normally receives twenty-five dollars a month from the court now. It's difficult to assist in fighting Crime with that budget. I have been contacted directly regarding the same issues from Cook, Shelby, Rockford, Vermillion, Naperville, Jefferson, Peoria, DeKalb, Adams and Two Rivers Crime Stoppers. Two Rivers represent Jersey, Greene and Calhoun counties.

Unfortunately, McLean and Henry County Crime Stoppers could not withstand the cuts in the court fees and eliminated their programs. Statistics show Crime goes up where there is no existing Crime Stopper program. In addition to these challenges that I spoke of, many programs throughout the state are in fear that this will only get worse with the 'No Cash bail' system being put into effect January 1. Crime rates from New York State are alarming after they made this law.

I urge the legislature to amend this law and reinstate the funding we so desperately require to fulfill our mission statement to assist law enforcement and that has been successfully doing so for over three decades. I can present those statistics over that time if you would like.

I appreciate this opportunity to voice our concerns with the task force. Members of my state board and I are always available to discuss this in person if requested. Additionally; our 2022 Training conference will be held in Schaumburg Illinois on Friday September 16. This very topic is on our agenda to discuss. We cordially invite you or a member of your staff to join us at the Marriott that afternoon.

Sincerely Yours,
Loren Hamilton
Illinois State Crime Stoppers
President

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