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Cash Bail and the Endless Cycle of Poverty

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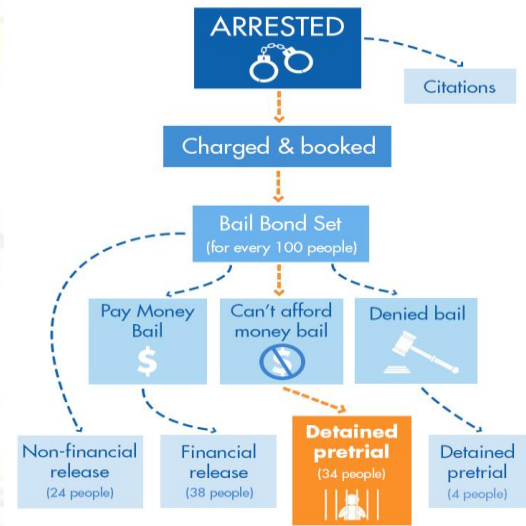
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THE PROBLEM

The system of cash bail is set up so that it **fails**: the ability to pay bail is **impossible** for too many of the people expected to pay it.

- There are 646,000 people locked up in more than 3,000 local jails throughout the U.S. 70% percent of people in local jails are being held pretrial — meaning they have not yet been convicted of a crime and are legally presumed innocent.
- Most people who are unable to meet bail fall within the poorest third of society.
- In 2015, people in jail had a median annual income of \$15,109 prior to their incarceration, which is less than half of the median for non-incarcerated people of similar ages. People in jail are even poorer than people in prison and are drastically poorer than their non-incarcerated counterparts.
- White men have the highest incomes before incarceration, while Black women have the lowest incomes before incarceration. The difference for Black men is particularly dramatic. Black men in jail have a pre-incarceration median income 64% lower than that of their non-incarcerated counterparts.

The Path from Arrest to Pretrial Detention



Cash bail requires payment for freedom, a costly burden for poor people of color.

BENEFITS OF ELIMINATING CASH BAIL

Bail reform legislation has already limited pretrial detention, saved money, and ensured court attendance, which are all undeniable benefits. It allows people who are accused of a crime an opportunity to return to their families and jobs, and allows for timely access to counsel.

BAIL REFORM EFFORTS

- In 2014, New Jersey and Washington D.C. became the first jurisdictions in the United States to eliminate cash bail.
- In NJ, as of January 2017, evidence-based and validated risk assessment tools are incorporated to accurately predict the impact the accused will have on public safety.
- The risk assessment is administered within 48 hours of being arrested. These assessments are to be used as a guide, and judges are still able to make a ruling that goes against the recommendation of the system. This flexibility allows judges to make what they consider the best decisions given the situations the defendants are in.
- New Jersey has seen a 20% drop in the number of defendants held in detention while awaiting trial. Washington D.C. is saving over \$338 million annually in prison operation costs since terminating money bail.

People in jail unable to meet bail (prior to incarceration)	DETAINING THE POOR	
	Men	Women
All	\$15,598	\$11,071
Black	\$11,275	\$9,083
Hispanic	\$17,449	\$12,178
White	\$18,283	\$12,954

