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## **Supreme Court Dismisses Discretionary Fines and Old Warrants in Minor Juvenile Matters**

The New Jersey Supreme Court has ordered the dismissal of hundreds of old juvenile warrants for minor matters and more than \$140,000 in discretionary juvenile fines.

[The order](#), effective today, follows up on an 8-page action plan the Supreme Court issued in July that identifies a series of reforms, including supporting juvenile rehabilitation, to ensure equal justice in the courts.

Up to 1,400 juvenile failure-to-appear warrants will be dismissed that are more than five years old and involve non-violent fourth-degree offenses. Once the warrants are dismissed, county prosecutors can determine whether to proceed with the underlying complaints.

Going forward, courts are instructed to periodically review and dismiss five-year-old juvenile failure-to-appear warrants issued for fourth-degree non-violent offenses.

Courts are not imposing additional discretionary fines in new juvenile adjudications in light of a law that went into effect July 1. Effective immediately, all outstanding discretionary juvenile fines are vacated. The order instructs courts to dismiss more than \$140,000 in discretionary fines imposed before July 1 owed by 592 juveniles.

“The young people who owe those fines – including disproportionate numbers of youth of color – overwhelmingly lack the capacity to make necessary payments, and the fines serve only to prolong involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems,” the Court wrote in an order signed by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner.

The fines being dismissed are discretionary and non-mandatory county and state assessments that were imposed prior to the new law.

No monetary obligations owed to victims for restitution are being dismissed and courts will continue to impose fines and penalties that are required by statute.

The Supreme Court in July released its [Action Plan for Ensuring Equal Justice](#) that identified nine reforms to eliminate disparities within the court system and remove institutional obstacles to justice. The plan recommended supporting juvenile rehabilitation by examining options for retroactively rescinding and prospectively eliminating court-imposed punitive fines and penalties where appropriate.

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