Understanding the Impact of Criminal Legal System Fines and Fees on People and Communities

Speaker Biographies

Aravind Boddupalli is a research associate in the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. He has led various Urban Institute projects examining the prevalence and consequences of fines and fees on the well-being of families across the US, state and local reliance on fines and fees revenues, and the allocations and costs from speeding and parking tickets. Boddupalli graduated summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, with a BA in economics and political science. He served on the Fines, Fees, and Restitution workgroup of Baltimore City's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. He is also an inaugural Fellow in Annie E. Casey Foundation's Rising Leaders for Results program, for leaders working to improve the life trajectory of children and their families most at risk for poor educational, economic, social and health outcomes.

Michael Johnson is a Senior Policy Analyst with the DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI). His research and advocacy primarily focuses on extractive policies and revenue generation through the courts and carceral institutions. Michael joined DCFPI as State Policy Fellow in 2021, a two-year fellowship through the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and continued with DCFPI as a Policy Analyst following the conclusion of the fellowship. Prior to joining DCFPI, Michael received his Master of Public Policy (MPP) from the University of Chicago and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Philosophy, Politics, Economics & Law (PPEL) from the University of Richmond.

Peter Jones is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Broadly, his research focuses on the public budgeting processes and financial management of local and state governments, courts, and special districts. He has authored several academic articles and has a strong record of funded research. Currently, he is a co-Principal Investigator for the Price of Justice Initiative, a federally funded grant through the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. Beyond his service to academia, Dr. Jones co-leads the Alabama Chapter for Scholars Strategy Network (SSN), a national organization of university-based scholars who work to bridge the gap between research and policy, and he has also served on the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama Roundtable and the Alabama State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. A native of Kentucky, Dr. Jones received his Ph.D. in public policy and administration from the University of Kentucky.

Leah Nelson joined Alabama Appleseed in 2017 and is now the organization's research director. She documents the experiences of people who are caught up in the criminal legal system and collaborates with quantitative researchers to use data to contextualize these findings and inform policy. Leah has six years of experience translating research findings into recommendations for evidence-based policy and practice at all levels of government. Her current work focuses on fines and fees. Leah is the founder and co-principal investigator of the Jefferson County Equitable Fines and Fees (JEFF) Project, a collaboration between the Appleseed, the 10th Judicial Circuit, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, MDRC, and the Center for Justice Innovation to use data to identify opportunities to improve the fair administration of justice with respect to fines and fees in Jefferson County, Alabama. She is also a consultant on the Price

of Justice Initiative, a federally funded initiative which supports jurisdictions around the country wishing to examine the efficiency and fairness of their fines and fees systems.

Susan Nembhard is a senior research associate in the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute. She has nearly a decade of experience working directly with, or on research projects related to, victim-survivors of different forms of violence. Her work takes a mixed-methods approach to understand experiences of harm, explore perceptions of safety and justice for different populations, and evaluate strategies to address community safety needs. Nembhard conducts mixed-methods research on victimization, community safety and policing, and crime reduction, with a focus on racial equity and community-based approaches to safety. Before joining Urban, Nembhard was a police misconduct investigator in Washington, DC. She has also conducted research as a part of Seattle University's evaluation of the Micro-Community Policing Plans project with the Seattle Police Department. Nembhard received her bachelor's degree in criminology and criminal justice from the University of Maryland, College Park, and her master's degree in criminal justice with a victimology specialization from Seattle University. She is a criminal justice PhD student at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York Graduate Center.

Marie Pryor is the Senior Program Manager of Innovation & Community Justice Reform Initiatives at Microsoft's Justice Reform Initiative. In this role she manages corporate social responsibility efforts, supporting nonprofits that use data and technology to promote racial equity. Marie's background is in research and program evaluation for government, academic, and nonprofit sectors. Before joining Microsoft, Marie was the Senior Director of National Policy at the Center for Policing Equity, where she worked with state and federal legislative staff and policymakers to develop standards for police data collection on stops, arrests, and uses of force. Before that, she served as the Chief Program Analyst for a statewide reentry and workforce program in New Jersey, managing the data department and overseeing program evaluation & grants management to support persons who were formerly incarcerated. Marie has been appointed to several advisory roles, including the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns (2017-2019), the Washington State Attorney General Law Enforcement Data Collection Advisory Group (2021-2022), and the Advisory Council for the Center for Business & Social Justice at BSR (2023-2024).

Lily Robin is a senior research associate in the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where their work focuses on community-driven approaches to safety and well-being, the school-to-prison pipeline, prosecutorial discretion and decisionmaking, and the intersection of racism and ableism disability in the criminal legal system. They apply community-engaged mixed-methods approaches to identifying and evaluating strategies to address the harms of violence and the criminal legal system. Before joining Urban, Robin worked in criminal legal system research and technical assistance, with a focus on law enforcement interventions. They hold a bachelor's degree from New York University, with a concentration in the school-to-prison pipeline, and an master's of public policy from the George Washington University, with a concentration in mixed-methods program evaluation.