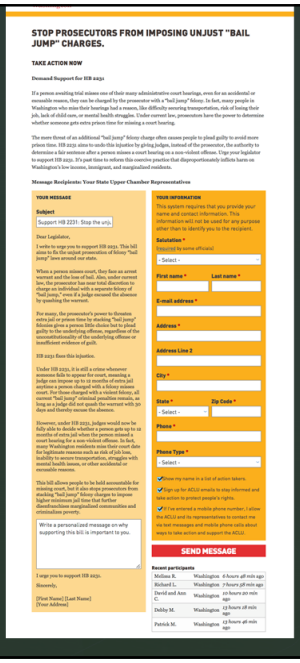
The mere threat of an additional “bail jump” felony charge often causes people to plead guilty to avoid more prison time. HB 2231 aims to undo this injustice by giving judges, instead of the prosecutor, the authority to determine a fair sentence after a person misses a court hearing on a non-violent offense.

https://action.aclu.org/send-message/wa-unjust-sentences-HB2231?ms_aff=WA&initms_aff=WA&ms=button&initms=button&ms_chan=eml&initms_chan=eml



STOP PROSECUTORS FROM IMPOSING UNJUST "BAIL JUMP" CHARGES.

TAKE ACTION NOW

Demand Support for HB 2231

If a person awaiting trial misses one of their many administrative court hearings, even for an accidental or excusable reason, they can be charged by the prosecutor with a "bail jump" felony. In fact, many people in Washington who miss their hearings had a reason, like difficulty securing transportation, risk of losing their job, lack of child care, or mental health struggles. Under current law, prosecutors have the power to determine whether someone gets extra prison time for missing a court hearing.

The mere threat of an additional "bail jump" felony charge often causes people to plead guilty to avoid more prison time. HB 2231 aims to undo this injustice by giving judges, instead of the prosecutor, the authority to determine a fair sentence after a person misses a court hearing on a non-violent offense. Urge your legislator to support HB 2231. It's past time to reform this coercive practice that disproportionately inflicts harm on Washington's low-income, immigrant, and marginalized residents.

Message Recipients: Your State Upper Chamber Representatives

YOUR MESSAGE

Subject

Support HB 2231: Stop the unj...

Dear Legislator,

I write to urge you to support HB 2231. This bill aims to fix the unjust prosecution of felony "bail jump" laws around our state.

When a person misses court, they face an arrest warrant and the loss of bail. Also, under current law, the prosecutor has near total discretion to charge an individual with a separate felony of "bail jump," even if a judge excused the absence by quashing the warrant.

For many, the prosecutor's power to threaten extra jail or prison time by stacking "bail jump" felonies gives a person little choice but to plead guilty to the underlying offense, regardless of the unconstitutionality of the underlying offense or insufficient evidence of guilt.

HB 2231 fixes this injustice.

Under HB 2231, it is still a crime whenever someone fails to appear for court, meaning a judge can impose up to 12 months of extra jail time for missing court. But by limiting the charge in court "bail jump" criminal penalties remain, as long as a judge did not quash the warrant with 30 days and thereby excuse the absence.

However, under HB 2231, judges would now be forbidden from charging a person with a felony for failure to appear when the person missed a court hearing for a non-violent offense. In fact, many Washington residents miss their court date for legitimate reasons such as risk of job loss, inability to secure transportation, struggles with mental health issues, or other accidental or excusable reasons.

This bill allows people to be held accountable for missing court, but it also stops prosecutors from stacking "bail jump" felony charges to impose higher minimum jail time that further disenfranchises marginalized communities and criminalizes poverty.

Write a personalized message on why supporting this bill is important to you.

I urge you to support HB 2231.

Sincerely,

[First Name] [Last Name]
[Your Address]

YOUR INFORMATION

This system requires that you provide your name and contact information. This information will not be used for any purpose other than to identify you to the recipient.

Salutation *

required by some officials

- Select -

First name * **Last name** *

E-mail address *

Address *

Address Line 2

City *

State * **Zip Code** *

- Select -

Phone *

Phone Type *

- Select -

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Melissa R.	Washington	6 hours 48 min ago
Richard L.	Washington	7 hours 38 min ago
David and Ann C.	Washington	10 hours 20 min ago
Debby M.	Washington	13 hours 18 min ago
Patrick M.	Washington	13 hours 46 min ago

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