

**The Crime Report** | (<https://thecrimereport.org/2017/07/31/want-to-fix-a-ticket-in-louisiana-the-da-offers-a-deal/>)

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# Want to Fix a Ticket? In Louisiana, the DA Offers a Deal

By **Crime and Justice News** | July 31, 2017

The Lens examines (<http://thelensnola.org/2017/07/27/louisiana-das-offer-motorists-a-deal-write-us-a-check-and-well-dismiss-your-speeding-ticket/>) an unusual Louisiana process that allows traffic violators to avoid court by writing a check directly to local district attorneys under a mechanism known as DA Pre-Trial Diversion. These fines do not go through the court system, which divides revenue among several agencies. Instead, the money goes straight to the district attorney. Offenders pay no court costs, and there is no trace of the incident on driving records. Historically, pretrial diversion programs have been used to “divert” criminal defendants to drug rehab and counseling programs. But diverting traffic tickets is a newer phenomenon. Offenders are spared from higher insurance premiums that could result from speeding tickets.

Some jurisdictions, like West Baton Rouge Parish, simply require drivers to pay the DA’s office. Others, like St. Bernard Parish, also require them to complete an online class (<http://34thjdcpretrial.com/>) or read a pamphlet on safe driving. The state doesn’t track local traffic diversion programs, which makes it hard to measure their growth. But a sample of seven district attorneys, covering 11 parishes, suggested they are diverting as many as half of their traffic tickets. Statewide, there has been a 30 percent drop in tickets processed by courts over the past five years. This is having a direct impact on the state’s public defender system, which is funded through traffic fines.

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