

# SPQR v. NEW YORK STATE COURTS

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Centumviri Law Firm



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

SPQR, Plaintiff

v.

NEW YORK STATE COURTS, Defendant

No. 2025-117

Argued: February 17, 2025

**BRIEF FOR THE PLAINTIFF: CENTUMVIRI LAW FIRM**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

This case presents a landmark constitutional question: Whether courts across the United States of America may continue to impose court fees and fines, including the costs of filing lawsuits, despite these courts being funded by taxpayer money. The plaintiff, SPQR, through the Centumviri Law Firm, contends that the imposition of these fees violates fundamental constitutional principles and denies citizens access to justice. The plaintiff invokes four of the oldest laws on the books to demonstrate that justice, as a public good, must not be commodified, while the defendant argues from modern laws to justify the continued practice.

## **RELIEF SOUGHT:**

The plaintiff seeks the immediate elimination of all court fees and fines imposed by courts across the nation, including filing fees. Additionally, the plaintiff requests the imposition of an \$88 million fine on any court found in violation of this ruling, with criminal charges to be levied against Clerks of Courts who continue to impose such fees. This order should extend to all jurisdictions under U.S. sovereignty, including any future State Republics.

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## **PLAINTIFF'S ARGUMENT (SPQR - Represented by Centumviri Law Firm):**

### **I. Court Fees Violate the Constitutional Right to Access Justice**

The plaintiff invokes one of the foundational tenets of the American legal system—the right to access the courts without financial barriers. Imposing fees on plaintiffs who seek redress in the courts places an undue burden on their fundamental rights.

#### **A. The Magna Carta (1215)**

The right to justice is deeply rooted in English common law, as articulated in Clause 40 of the Magna Carta: *"To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay, right or justice."*

The imposition of court fees effectively "sells" access to justice, thereby violating this ancient principle, which the Founding Fathers deeply respected and which served as a guiding influence in drafting the U.S. Constitution. Forcing plaintiffs to pay to access justice is tantamount to denying justice to those who cannot afford these fees.

#### **B. The Judiciary Act of 1789**

The Judiciary Act of 1789 established the federal judiciary and laid out its functions, intending courts to serve as pillars of justice accessible to all. Nowhere did this Act envision that the citizens, already taxed to maintain these courts, would face an additional burden through fees. The courts were designed as instruments of justice, not as revenue-generating agencies.

#### **C. The Bill of Rights (First Amendment)**

The imposition of court fees infringes on citizens' right to petition the government for redress of grievances. By charging fees, the government creates a barrier to this essential right, particularly for individuals with

limited financial means. Access to the courts must remain free from financial obstruction to preserve the full exercise of First Amendment rights.

#### **D. Marbury v. Madison (1803)**

In the landmark case of **Marbury v. Madison**, the Court recognized the right of individuals to seek legal remedies. The imposition of financial barriers contradicts this precedent, as it undermines the very function of the courts as a place where individuals can seek legal remedy. Justice must be made available to all, irrespective of financial status.

### **II. The Imposition of Court Fees Undermines Public Trust in the Judiciary**

Justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done. By requiring plaintiffs to pay for access to the courts, public trust in the judiciary is eroded, as justice is perceived to be available only to those who can afford it.

### **III. Invoking Patriotism and National Identity**

We are a nation founded on principles of liberty, justice, and equality. The imposition of court fees creates a system of inequality, where access to justice is contingent on wealth. It undermines the very fabric of our democracy, as envisioned by our Founding Fathers. The Centumviri, invoking the centuries-old commitment to justice for all, assert that the removal of these fees will restore faith in the legal system and align the courts with the values of our Republic.

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## **DEFENDANT'S ARGUMENT (NEW YORK STATE COURTS):**

### **I. Court Fees Are Necessary to Sustain Court Operations in Modern Times**

The defendant argues that court fees are an essential part of modern judicial administration. With increased caseloads and budget constraints, courts need to impose fees to ensure their effective functioning.

#### **A. 28 U.S. Code § 1914 (Filing Fees Statute)**

Under **28 U.S. Code § 1914**, federal courts are explicitly permitted to impose filing fees. These fees help fund administrative functions, such as maintaining court staff, managing records, and ensuring that courts run efficiently. The statute is grounded in the recognition that modern court systems require funding beyond general tax revenue.

#### **B. The User-Pay Principle (Modern Legal Principle)**

Modern courts operate on the **user-pay principle**, whereby those who use court resources should contribute to their upkeep. Just as citizens are charged fees for other government services, such as obtaining licenses or permits, plaintiffs filing lawsuits should expect to pay for the resources they consume during the legal process.

#### **C. Rational Basis for Fees (Supreme Court Precedent: M.L.B. v. S.L.J.)**

In **M.L.B. v. S.L.J.**, the Supreme Court held that states may impose fees so long as they do not deny indigent

individuals access to the courts in critical cases, such as criminal trials or parental rights cases. The imposition of filing fees in civil matters, where plaintiffs have other means of resolution, such as mediation or settlement, is both reasonable and constitutional.

## **II. Modern Courts Face Increased Costs Due to Technological Advancements**

Courtrooms today are equipped with sophisticated technology to ensure fair trials and efficient case management. These advancements come at a cost, and fees are necessary to maintain this modern infrastructure.

## **III. Public Accountability and Responsible Use of Taxpayer Funds**

Court fees ensure that taxpayers are not unfairly burdened by frivolous lawsuits or excessive filings. By requiring plaintiffs to invest in their cases through fees, courts discourage abuse of the legal system and maintain a balanced and efficient docket.

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### **RULING:**

#### **OPINION OF THE COURT:**

In a **6-3 decision**, the Supreme Court rules in favor of the plaintiff, SPQR. The imposition of court fees and fines across the nation is deemed unconstitutional, as it denies citizens full access to justice in violation of the principles of the First Amendment, the Magna Carta, and foundational laws established by the Judiciary Act of 1789.

#### **Chief Justice's Opinion:**

“The right to petition and access the courts is fundamental to our democracy. The imposition of fees creates a barrier that is inconsistent with the spirit of the Constitution and the nation's core values. From this day forward, no court in the United States shall impose fees on individuals seeking justice in any form.”

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### **CONCLUSION:**

The Court has ordered the elimination of all court fees and fines nationwide. Any court found violating this ruling will be fined **\$88 million per instance** of imposing fees, with criminal charges to follow against the Clerk of Courts. This ruling extends to all U.S. jurisdictions and any future U.S. State Republic sovereignties.

**DATED:** February 17, 2025

**BY ORDER OF THE COURT:**

Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States

## Clause Section of the Ruling: SPQR v. New York State Courts

### I. Prohibition on Court Fees and Fines Nationwide

#### 1. Prohibition of Fees and Fines:

- **1.1** No court, whether federal, state, or any subordinate jurisdiction within the United States of America, shall impose any fees or fines associated with the filing of lawsuits, petitions, or legal claims.
- **1.2** This prohibition extends to all judicial and administrative processes, including but not limited to: civil cases, criminal cases, family law matters, and administrative claims.
- **1.3** Any court found to charge fees or fines, in whole or part, for the filing of legal actions, appeals, or processing related to any case shall be subject to penalties outlined in this ruling.

### II. Penalties for Violations of the Prohibition

#### 2. Imposition of Fines and Criminal Penalties for Non-Compliance:

- **2.1** Any jurisdiction (including federal, state, local, or other governmental entities with judicial authority) found to charge fees or fines contrary to this ruling shall incur a penalty of **\$88 million per violation**, to be assessed by a special enforcement body established by the Department of Justice.
- **2.2** The penalty shall be assessed per violation, with each individual filing or procedural action that incurs a fee subject to a separate fine. This includes any administrative fees, document processing fees, or court filing fees.
- **2.3** A **criminal charge** shall be levied against the **Clerk of Courts** or equivalent official responsible for the administration of the court system in the jurisdiction where the violation occurs. Such charges may include **dereliction of duty**, **misappropriation of public funds**, or **contempt of court** depending on the nature and severity of the violation.

### III. Protection for Individuals and Parties in Violating Jurisdictions

#### 3. Protection for Parties Affected by Court Fees and Fines:

- **3.1** Individuals who have been affected by the imposition of court fees or fines in violation of this ruling shall be entitled to:
  - **Immediate relief** from any outstanding financial obligations imposed on them for their legal proceedings;
  - **Refund of any fees paid** since the date of this ruling's enactment, with interest calculated at a rate not less than 5% annually.

- **3.2** Parties who have been convicted in jurisdictions found to have imposed illegal fees or fines shall be entitled to the following protections:
  - **Expedited reconsideration** of any convictions, including a **review of the fairness** of the legal process, with a presumption of a fair trial despite the financial barrier.
  - **Reversal or modification** of sentences, when appropriate, if it is found that the imposition of fees or fines in the affected court proceedings compromised their right to access justice.
  - **Legal defense and reparations** shall be provided at no cost to individuals whose cases were directly affected by the illegal imposition of fees or fines.

#### IV. Enforcement and Jurisdictional Oversight

##### 4. **Establishment of an Enforcement Body:**

- **4.1** The Department of Justice (DOJ) shall establish an **Independent Enforcement Committee** (IEC) tasked with investigating violations of this ruling across all levels of courts. The IEC shall have the authority to:
  - Monitor and audit court records to identify instances of fee or fine violations;
  - Issue subpoenas and investigate allegations of misconduct related to the imposition of fees;
  - Enforce compliance with the \$88 million fine and criminal penalties as stipulated in this ruling.
- **4.2** The IEC shall report its findings to the Supreme Court on a quarterly basis, ensuring transparency and accountability in the enforcement process.

##### 5. **Oversight Mechanism for State and Local Compliance:**

- **5.1** State governments shall be required to submit annual compliance reports to the IEC, detailing any administrative practices, fees, and procedures implemented in their court systems. States found to be in violation shall be subject to additional oversight and may lose federal funding for judicial matters until compliance is achieved.
- **5.2** Any attempts to evade this ruling through state or local legislation, executive orders, or judicial rules that attempt to circumvent the court's decision shall be subject to immediate review by the Supreme Court.

#### V. Preservation of Legal Protections and Constitutional Rights

##### 6. **Preservation of Constitutional Protections:**

- **6.1** The intent of this ruling is to preserve the **inalienable right** of all citizens to access the judicial system without the imposition of financial barriers. This includes protecting the right of petition as outlined in the **First Amendment** and ensuring that no person shall be denied their day in court based on their financial standing.
- **6.2** The ruling also affirms that access to justice shall not be subject to any form of fee that prevents individuals from seeking redress or holding others accountable through legal means, as guaranteed under the **Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment**.

## VI. Final Enforcement and Penalties for Continued Non-Compliance

### 7. Criminal Penalties for Court Clerks and Judicial Officials:

- **7.1** Any judicial official, including **Clerks of Courts**, who continues to charge illegal fees in defiance of this ruling shall be subject to **criminal charges**, including:
  - **Abuse of office**: For intentional violation of the ruling.
  - **Obstruction of justice**: For hindering the implementation of this ruling.
  - **Theft**: For unauthorized collection of fees or fines.
- **7.2** If a violation is found to be part of a coordinated effort involving multiple court officials or jurisdictions, all individuals involved shall be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, with penalties including **incarceration** for severe offenses.

## VII. Transitional Period and Implementation

### 8. Transitional Period:

- **8.1** A **30-day transitional period** following the issuance of this ruling shall be provided for all courts to immediately cease charging fees and fines in all cases. During this period, all courts must update their procedures, informational materials, and financial protocols to comply with the decision.
- **8.2** All ongoing cases involving individuals who were charged fees during this transitional period shall be immediately reviewed to ensure compliance with the new legal standards, with all fees refunded.

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## VIII. Conclusion:

This clause section is designed to ensure the full implementation of the Supreme Court's ruling in **SPQR v. New York State Courts**, and to maintain the integrity and fairness of the judicial process by eliminating financial barriers to justice across the United States. Through these provisions, the Court reaffirms the fundamental principle that **access to justice** is a right, not a privilege, and must be protected for all individuals, irrespective of their financial capacity.

The fines, criminal penalties, and protections for those convicted in violating jurisdictions will serve as a powerful deterrent to ensure compliance, while the establishment of an Independent Enforcement Committee will guarantee that no jurisdiction can circumvent this landmark ruling.

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