

PULLING BACK THE MASK: Masks Do Not Conceal Government Policies and Private Towing Companies' Practices that Wound Poor Families and Damage Local Businesses

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 8, 2020 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Today, the [Fair Towing Alliance](#), has begun an intense period of records research and analysis in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland, to pull back the mask on government agencies and private towing companies that seize and often sell the cars of people who are poor – and for a profit.



WILLIAM WALLISH GORMAN

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This chain of events begins when a person does not have enough money to pay a parking ticket, a license plate registration renewal fee, or is forced to live in their car after falling on hard times. The result is often homelessness and unemployment for offenses that are non-criminal and non-safety related.

Pulling Back the Mask

If a person does not pay certain taxes the government sends them letters, takes them to court and may eventually garnish their wages or place a lien on their house. From start to finish there is an orderly and fair process.

If a person, for example, is too poor to pay a \$55 vehicle registration fee – the government can impound their car which is then held by a for-profit towing company until the government fines are paid. Assuming the person has the money to pay the government fines they then must pay exorbitant tow yard fees. If they do not have the money to pay those fees the tow company may take legal ownership of the car and sell it out from under the owner and at a profit. Simply put, reconciling one's fees with the government does not mean the person will ever get their car back from the for-profit towing company.

[William Wallish Gorman](#), the Founder of the [Fair Towing Alliance](#) stated "It is stunning that government agencies take numerous steps before filing a property tax sanction but will sanction the seizing of private property without warning and without adjudication and after a person commits no crime and poses no threat to others." Further, he stated "in a time of economic strain businesses should not have to worry about employees who are poor getting to work because their car was seized by the government and sold by a for-profit company."

Began Before COVID-19

[Studies have shown that](#) up to 25% of the cars in California, for example, are towed because of unpaid parking tickets, a vehicle registration that has expired, or for parking in the same spot for more than 72 hours. In San Francisco 50% of cars towed for these three reasons are never recovered. The owners simply abandon them. On average it costs about \$1,000 to retrieve a car after paying the tickets or renewing the registration when paying the tow and impound fees. Individuals who lose their car are more likely to lose their job, destabilize their family, and become dependent on the government. Trained and experienced employees not showing up for work and being fired is not in the best interest of the business community.

There Is Another Way

Some government agencies, such as the [Portland Bureau of Transportation](#), suspended the towing of vehicles that were "abandoned" and in which people lived to minimize the harm of COVID-19. Those individuals would be afforded an outreach for the provision of appropriate services. "Services and self-reliance are mechanisms for success," according to Gorman, "and vehicle seizures are mechanisms to increase government dependence."

As reported in 2019 by CityLab, several religious organizations and nonprofits have begun creating "safe parking areas" for people living in their vehicles. These services are extremely rare and most poor families are subject not only to losing their car, but hefty fines and fees as well.

The Fair Towing Alliance advocates for the change of public policy and that

procedures be amended so the government does not tow the cars of citizens for non-criminal and non-safety reasons. Doing so leads to unemployment among the working poor, harms local economies, and puts families at risk.

Current practices devastate poor families and force individuals into unsafe homeless shelters, during an epidemic, while government and towing companies profit.

The Fair Towing Alliance (<https://www.TowJam.org>) raises awareness of laws and policies regarding the towing of cars and their disproportionate impact on the poor.

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*PHOTO link for media:

<https://www.Send2Press.com/300dpi/20-0708s2p-william-gorman-300dpi.jpg>

*Photo caption: William Wallish Gorman.