

Abolish North Carolina's Drug Tax

Over \$175 million

have been seized from NC families since the tax was established

75%

of the tax goes to the police department that reports the drugs to the state

33 states

have deemed the drug tax unnecessary, unjust, or unconstitutional

NC's Drug Tax is taxation without legalization

The Unauthorized Substances Tax ("NC Drug Tax") is a tax on the possession of certain drugs. This law requires people in possession of a certain amount of a drug to purchase stamps and place the stamps permanently on the substance. Almost no one, besides stamp collectors, actually purchases these stamps; most people either don't know the stamps exist or they are wary about giving their information to the Department of Revenue. As a result of this scheme, over four thousand people annually, on average, are exposed to thousands in back taxes, interest, and penalties. The **average assessed drug tax is \$8,872**, but **some end up owing up to \$5 million**.

The Drug Tax extracts millions from low-income communities and communities of color every year

Like most features of the War on Drugs, the Drug Tax disproportionately harms low-income communities and communities of color--communities that are routinely over-policed and under-resourced. When a person has an unpaid tax assessed against them, the state can seize the person's property and garnish their wages until the full amount is paid. NC extracts approximately **\$6-11 million annually** from poor and marginalized neighborhoods with this scheme.

The Drug Tax perversely incentivizes over-policing the under-resourced

Since 75% of the back taxes, interest, and penalties go to the reporting police department, police are incentivized to prioritize searching for drugs over more serious public safety concerns. Since poorer people have fewer resources to challenge police misconduct, police are further incentivized to target low-income neighborhoods where people of color are disproportionately represented. Thus, the **Drug Tax enforces and perpetuates structural inequality and systemic racism**.

President Reagan assumes office and massively expands the War on Drugs

1981

Arizona institutes first drug tax to penalize people who evade criminal charges

1983

NC and several other states follow suit, pass drug tax acts

1989

Most states start repealing drug tax acts

1995

Only 109 stamps purchased in NC since 1989, mostly by stamp collectors

2010

The NC Drug Tax remains in effect

2021

The North Carolina General Assembly should repeal the Unauthorized Substances Tax

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