

How Rich Counties Raise Costs for the State: A Snapshot of Penalty-Enhancing Bills Advancing in the 2025 Session

Lawmakers who sponsor higher penalties tend to represent richer counties less affected by jail bills

| Bill Number | Bill Title | Fiscal Note? | Finance Comm.? | Bill Status | Lead Sponsor | County | County Budget Rank (largest to smallest) | % of Allotted Jail Days County Used in 2024 | Jail Bills Equal to the Following % of County Budget |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|--|---|--|
| Senate Bill 121 | Updating language and increasing penalties for indecent exposure | No | No | Passed Senate | Sen. Ryan Weld | Brooke | 19th | 62.4% | 1.6% |
| Senate Bill 136 | Modifying parole eligibility for person serving sentence for first degree murder | No | No | Passed Senate | | | | | |
| Senate Bill 151 | Creating crime of assault on police dogs and other public safety animals | No | No | Passed Senate | | | | | |
| House Bill 2871 | Relating to the crime of negligent homicide | No | No | Passed House | Del. Joe Funkhouser | Jefferson | 8th | 53.1% | 1.7% |
| House Bill 2894 | Prohibiting human trafficking of illegal aliens | No | No | Passed Judiciary Committee (House) | Del. Bill Ridenour | | | | |
| Senate Bill 196 | Increasing penalties for drug possession and updating list of offenses | No | No | Passed Senate | Sen. Vince Deeds | Greenbrier | 16th | 70.1% | 2.3% |
| Senate Bill 864 | Clarifying inference of criminal intent in burglary prosecution | No | No | Passed Judiciary Committee (Senate) | | | | | |
| House Bill 2634 | To double the criminal penalty for anyone found guilty of sexual assault on a minor | No | No | Passed House | Del. Adam Vance | Wyoming | 27th | 81.5% | 3.1% |
| House Bill 2217 | Relating to penalties for conspiracy to commit murder | No | No | Passed House | Del. Brandon Steele | Raleigh | 11th | 63.5% | 3.7% |
| House Bill 2382 | To ban homeless camps in municipalities | No | No | Passed House | Del. Gino Chiarelli | Monongalia | 7th | 74.5% | 4.2% |
| Senate Bill 264 | Allowing death penalty for intentionally killing law-enforcement officer or first responder in line of duty | Yes | Yes | Passed Judiciary Committee (Senate) | Sen. Mike Stuart | Kanawha | 2nd | 75.8% | 4.5% |
| House Bill 2066 | Creating a crime for the destruction of first responder equipment. | No | No | Passed House | Del. JB Akers | | | | |
| House Bill 2437 | Clarification of penalties for offenses involving Fentanyl | No | No | Passed House | | | | | |
| House Bill 2434 | Relating to establishing the Stop Squatters Act | No | No | Passed House | Del. Mike Hornby | Berkeley | 3rd | 101.4% | 4.5% |
| House Bill 2123 | Modifying the criminal penalties imposed on a parent, guardian or custodian for child abuse | No | No | Passed House | Del. Doug Smith | Mercer | 17th | 87.8% | 5.5% |
| Senate Bill 138 | Enhancing penalties for fleeing officer | No | No | Signed by Governor Law in June 2025 | Sen. Bill Hamilton | Upshur | 28th | 173.5% | 9.4% |
| Senate Bill 240 | Updating crime of sexual extortion | No | No | Signed by Governor Law in June 2025 | | | | | |
| House Bill 3190 | Controlled Substances and arrestable offenses | No | No | Passed House | Del. David Green | McDowell | 43rd | 201.0% | 12.4% |

County Jail Bills, Fiscal Year 2024 – Ranked by Share of County Budget

| County | % of Jail Days Allotted Used by County FY 2024 | County Budget FY 2024 | Jail Bills FY 2024 | Jail Bills Represent Following % of County Budget |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Tyler | 57.9% | \$45,161,693 | \$108,718 | 0.2% |
| Marshall | 72.4% | \$74,454,688 | \$501,269 | 0.7% |
| Pendleton | 48.9% | \$8,792,460 | \$67,790 | 0.8% |
| Tucker | 41.4% | \$7,902,414 | \$63,365 | 0.8% |
| Wetzel | 122.9% | \$55,074,692 | \$455,391 | 0.8% |
| Monroe | 36.3% | \$10,579,718 | \$101,715 | 1.0% |
| Grant | 58.4% | \$11,428,028 | \$145,124 | 1.3% |
| Taylor | 81.7% | \$22,500,180 | \$309,550 | 1.4% |
| Pocahontas | 88.3% | \$11,198,468 | \$161,258 | 1.4% |
| Brooke | 62.4% | \$19,677,319 | \$318,540 | 1.6% |
| Ohio | 74.5% | \$44,047,385 | \$716,298 | 1.6% |
| Jefferson | 53.1% | \$41,554,475 | \$694,897 | 1.7% |
| Doddridge | 191.4% | \$25,298,901 | \$428,929 | 1.7% |
| Greenbrier | 70.1% | \$22,462,100 | \$524,049 | 2.3% |
| Ritchie | 136.4% | \$12,246,845 | \$305,528 | 2.5% |
| Wirt | 79.0% | \$3,638,685 | \$92,956 | 2.6% |
| Morgan | 94.3% | \$13,659,433 | \$378,322 | 2.8% |
| Pleasants | 110.7% | \$6,941,188 | \$209,838 | 3.0% |
| Wyoming | 81.5% | \$12,624,015 | \$396,706 | 3.1% |
| Putnam | 68.5% | \$27,531,636 | \$891,041 | 3.2% |
| Summers | 77.3% | \$6,360,820 | \$209,445 | 3.3% |
| Hardy | 104.9% | \$10,745,824 | \$364,666 | 3.4% |
| Lewis | 114.4% | \$13,870,068 | \$488,346 | 3.5% |
| Mineral | 54.2% | \$9,046,113 | \$330,733 | 3.7% |
| Raleigh | 63.5% | \$29,009,632 | \$1,072,156 | 3.7% |
| Hancock | 64.6% | \$11,352,798 | \$425,656 | 3.7% |
| Wayne | 67.1% | \$15,499,037 | \$592,653 | 3.8% |
| Hampshire | 85.5% | \$11,795,155 | \$454,284 | 3.9% |
| Gilmer | 105.5% | \$4,865,342 | \$192,107 | 3.9% |
| Monongalia | 74.5% | \$42,641,743 | \$1,786,246 | 4.2% |
| Mason | 85.7% | \$11,868,340 | \$500,722 | 4.2% |
| Jackson | 100.4% | \$15,677,721 | \$663,668 | 4.2% |
| Braxton | 109.5% | \$7,537,404 | \$336,180 | 4.5% |
| Kanawha | 75.8% | \$68,903,040 | \$3,106,148 | 4.5% |
| Berkeley | 101.4% | \$65,362,786 | \$2,961,809 | 4.5% |
| Preston | 77.9% | \$11,800,243 | \$603,047 | 5.1% |
| Mercer | 87.8% | \$21,919,023 | \$1,212,516 | 5.5% |
| Boone | 104.6% | \$9,573,321 | \$553,109 | 5.8% |
| Cabell | 103.6% | \$40,820,578 | \$2,361,049 | 5.8% |
| Fayette | 103.4% | \$17,443,724 | \$1,010,019 | 5.8% |
| Wood | 93.5% | \$31,651,042 | \$1,859,722 | 5.9% |
| Harrison | 111.3% | \$29,000,553 | \$1,821,840 | 6.3% |
| Barbour | 144.6% | \$8,989,731 | \$602,400 | 6.7% |
| Calhoun | 146.1% | \$3,549,507 | \$245,782 | 6.9% |
| Logan | 181.2% | \$21,659,559 | \$1,675,247 | 7.7% |
| Roane | 134.0% | \$5,786,810 | \$496,203 | 8.6% |
| Randolph | 177.1% | \$15,509,644 | \$1,395,291 | 9.0% |
| Upsher | 173.5% | \$12,309,730 | \$1,162,305 | 9.4% |
| Webster | 151.0% | \$3,187,583 | \$345,207 | 10.8% |
| Nicholas | 132.6% | \$7,911,388 | \$857,599 | 10.8% |
| Lincoln | 107.2% | \$4,680,335 | \$535,661 | 11.4% |
| McDowell | 201.0% | \$8,950,484 | \$1,113,765 | 12.4% |
| Mingo | 195.6% | \$10,393,656 | \$1,327,277 | 12.8% |
| Marion | 162.5% | \$18,681,673 | \$2,530,564 | 13.5% |
| Clay | 286.3% | \$1,756,421 | \$701,449 | 39.9% |
| All Counties | 96.7% | \$1,086,885,151 | \$42,766,155 | 3.9% |

Sources: WVCBP analysis of WV State Auditor - Local Government Services Division, [County Budgets 2023-2024](#); WV Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation, [Invoices by County Summary July 2023 through June 2024](#).