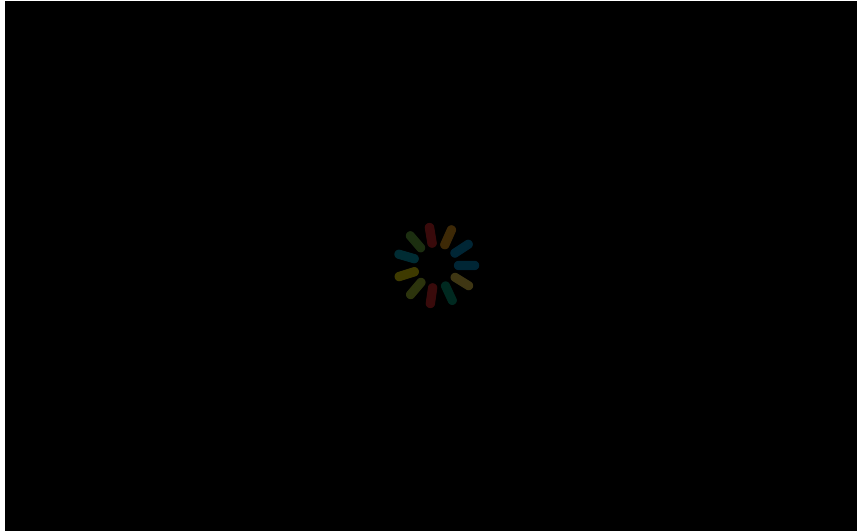


El Paso Law Firm Attempts to Collect \$52 Million in Unpaid Traffic Fines and Warrants



Summary: A Texas Law firm is fighting to collect millions in unpaid traffic tickets and warrants.

One law firm in El Paso, Texas is fighting to collect over \$52 million in unpaid traffic tickets and warrants, KVIA ABC 7 reports. Since mailing out collection letters in May, they've received \$2.3 million for the city, and they'll get to keep 30% of that. That means El Paso keeps \$1.8 million while the firm gets \$552,214.

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In January 2016, Delgado, Acosta, Spencer, Linebarger, & Perez Law Firm took over collection duties from GC Services; and the firm soon got to work. In May, they mailed thousands of Texans notices about their outstanding tickets and warrants, and the money immediately started to roll in. In May alone, 5,000 tickets were paid, and that amount was almost half a million dollars.

Unlike the previous collection agency, the new firm was ruthless when it came to collecting--meaning people who thought their tickets were too old and therefore forgotten received a rude awakening. Some of the collection letters were even for tickets issued in the 1990s! According to the city, collection memos were sent for at least 300,000 tickets and warrants that were at least ten years old.

"We did exactly what the city requested," Carmen Perez, Managing Partner at Delgado, Acosta, Spencer, Linebarger & Perez said to KVIA in May. "They requested for us to mail on every outstanding fine or citation that was out there and that's what we did."

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One El Paso man received a notice, and he told KVIA ABC 7 that he thought it was a "scam" because the letter was in regards to a ticket issued to his dead father. He said he probably wouldn't pay it.

Another man said that he received a notice to pay \$800 for a ticket that was 16 years-old.

Others said they received letters for tickets they had already paid. They complained that they did not keep receipts of their payment because the tickets were so old. City of El Paso Chief Financial Officer Dr. Mark Sutter said that the city and firm were reviewing those claims and the data transfer process.

In April, El Paso Times reported that a lawsuit was filed against the city. The Texas Civil Rights Project alleged that the rights of low-income individuals were violated because they could not afford the 25% minimum down payment for tickets. A BuzzFeed News investigation found that the city sometimes jailed those non-compliant people, and the lawsuit said that it was illegal to jail people because they were too poor to pay. They should have been offered a community service alternative.

What do you think about unpaid tickets? Should they expire after a certain point? Let us know in the comments below.

Source: KVIA ABC 7