

Ticket scofflaws owe Calif. \$10.2 billion

By Teri Sforz, Orange County Register

In the next year, about 20 percent of drivers will be convicted of speeding, rolling through stop signs or failing to stop at red lights, while another 8 percent will likely get off with a warning, and many more will be ticketed for parking illegally, having expired tags or some other bit of minor motor malfeasance.

Drivers will pay millions in fines and those millions may mingle in a kitty with fines and restitution paid by criminals. But California's courts and counties are doing a spotty job of collecting this money, and the Legislative Analyst's Office isn't even sure it's being counted correctly.

California's crooks and scofflaws – including drivers who haven't paid off tickets – owe, according to the LAO, \$10.2 billion in court-ordered fines and fees.

The more sobering news, perhaps, is not necessarily that officials have collected only a fraction of the total – a comparably wee \$1.8 billion – but that it's hard to know precisely how much they've collected, due to “incomplete and inconsistent reporting ... minimal data ... miscalculation of performance measures ... and a lack of evaluation,” the LAO said.

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