

NATIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE NETWORK

To: Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice

From: The National Juvenile Justice Network

Date: January 24, 2018

Re: Testimony in opposition to HB 2453: Imposing fees to be assessed for application to immediate intervention programs

Dear Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice,

On behalf of the National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN), a membership network comprised of advocates in 44 states and D.C. working to advance more fair and effective responses to youth behaviors, we want to express our concern with HB 2453 which looks to charge fees for youth applying to immediate intervention programs.

HB 2453's proposed imposition of fees for access to intervention programs stands in opposition with steps other states have taken to create fairer and more just juvenile justice systems. For example, in both 2015 and 2016, the Missouri General Assembly passed legislation limiting collection and enforcement of fines and fees.¹ And just this past legislative session, California, Pennsylvania, and Utah passed reforms to limit fines and fees.²

This trend is fueled in part by bi-partisan recognition³ of the ineffectiveness of fees to generate revenue⁴ and enhance public safety. Specifically, the imposition of fines and fees has been found to increase youth recidivism thereby decreasing public safety.⁵ In addition, research has shown that fees negatively impact youth, placing financial burdens on their families and putting youth and families at risk of further system involvement due to financial inability to pay.⁶

¹ <http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Microsites/Files/Trends%202017/Trends-2017-Final-small.ashx> (page 4)

² <http://njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/2017%20NJN%20Legislative%20Advances%20Snapshot.pdf> (Page 4)

³ <http://rightoncrime.com/2017/03/a-rising-chorus-of-texas-leaders-calling-for-reform-of-excessive-court-imposed-fines-and-fees>

⁴ <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Making-Families-Pay.pdf> (pg 18)

⁵ <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1541204016669213>

⁶ <https://debtorsprison.jlc.org/documents/JLC-Debtors-Prison-executive-summary.pdf> (pg 2)

With the passage of Kansas' major youth justice reform bill, SB 367, the legislature recognized that for eligible youth, intervention programs lead to improved public safety and lower cost to taxpayers than either incarceration or non-diversion legal proceedings.⁷ In sum, this proposal puts youth in jeopardy and is likely to cost the state more in the long run.

We respectfully ask the Committee to vote against HB 2453 in order to ensure that youth have access to the resources they need to thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Bryer".

Sarah Bryer
President and Director of NJJN

⁷ <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2017/06/kansas-2016-juvenile-justice-reform>