



Responsible Policy. Real Prosperity.

January 25, 2018

Heidi Holliday, Executive Director
Kansas Center for Economic Growth
Testimony in opposition to House Bill 2453
House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee

Chairman Jennings and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Center for Economic Growth is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that conducts research and analysis to promote balanced state policies that help all Kansans prosper. We oppose HB 2453, which would allow a fee to be assessed for application to immediate intervention programs, as it has the potential to weaken the community-based alternatives to youth incarceration championed through the passage of SB 367.

A 2016 report from the Juvenile Law Center shows that Kansas juveniles involved in the judicial system are already subject to fees related to care, court process, evaluation, expungement, fines, probation, and restitution. Kansas already imposes more fees on juvenile defendants than nearly any other state.

SB 367 was a monumental bill to reduce juvenile incarceration in the state and to reinvest those savings to fund evidence-based, community-based programming alternatives to incarceration. Research shows these types of programs are more effective at reducing recidivism than incarceration. However, we also know that the addition of fees for a juvenile within the justice system can have the opposite effects -- additional fees can increase recidivism. Kansas legislators saw the potential of SB 367 to reduce recidivism and to invest in programs that work. Kansas should not move backward by creating a barrier for juveniles to participate in effective programs to help them integrate with their communities. The juvenile justice system should be doing all it can to encourage participation, not constructing additional obstacles.

We urge the committee to continue to move in the direction of providing juveniles access to the most effective and cost-efficient programs and alternatives to incarceration. The legislature, through SB 367, affirmed that community-based programs benefit public safety and reduce costs. Kansas can lower public costs through increased participation, without increasing fees. Sticking juveniles and their families with an additional fee, on top of the many fees they already encounter during their interaction with the justice system, will act as a deterrent to participating in opportunities for growth.

*To preserve our donor dollars and decrease our waste, we opted not to reprint our letterhead.
Please note our new address: 709 S. Kansas Ave, Suite 200, Topeka, KS 66603*