

Date: January 25, 2018

To: House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee

From: Will Hanna and Progeny

Subject: HB 2453

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of myself and Progeny, a youth-led youth advocacy organization made up of young people with first-hand experience with the juvenile justice system, I want to express my concern with HB 2453 which aims to charge fees to youth that are applying to immediate intervention programs.

This proposed imposition of fees makes little sense to me for the following reasons:

1. A price tag is being put on being involved in a positive program. When the State enacted SB 367 and reformed the juvenile justice system, they enacted policy that recognized that immediate intervention programs were an effective use of tax dollars - ultimately saving the State money in the long run by reducing recidivism. This is a fact that remains unchanged, and I see no reason to charge additional fees for a program that is already saving the State money.
2. Even though the proposed legislation says that someone that can't afford the fee won't have to pay, I feel this is still problematic for two reasons:
 - a. Even though that is the stated case, I still believe – in practice—that the presence of a fee will be a financial burden for youth and their families and make it harder to successfully complete the immediate intervention program.
 - b. If those that can't afford it won't have to pay, why charge anyone a fee? If the program can operate for those that can't pay without charging a fee, why risk a youth's success for an unnecessary fee?
3. I don't believe that collecting a fee of \$100 or less from some of the youth participating will do anything to substantially offset the costs of the programs. In fact, I believe there is evidence to suggest that collecting a nominal fee from only some participants could actually cost the State money through the man hours it would require for someone to work on collecting the fee. Beyond that, I believe that a system that would result in some youth paying a fee and other youth being allowed to not pay the fee could create a detrimental effect on the inter-youth relationships of participants.
4. I believe the State started down the correct path with the passage of SB 367 by beginning to limit and move away from a fee based system, and towards a system where the State invests tax dollars in programs that are effective and ultimately save tax payers' money down the road. Many fees still exist in Kansas for youth and their families that find themselves involved in the juvenile justice system – by my count, Kansas currently charges more fees in this realm than

many other states. I urge that we remain on the path laid out by SB 367 and reject the notion of imposing more fees.

Due to the above reasoning, I urge you to reject HB 2453 and keep Kansas on the path towards building a better juvenile justice system.

Thank you for your courtesy and consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Hanna