



February 2, 2021

To: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
From: Zach Winston, Policy Director

Re: Support for SB 422 – End Juvenile Administrative Fees in Oregon

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Justice Resource Center supports the passage of Senate Bill 422 (Sen. Manning) to end the assessment of fees to families with youth in Oregon's juvenile delinquency system.

The goal of the Oregon Justice Resource Center is to promote civil rights and improve legal representation for communities that have often been underserved in the past: people living in poverty and people of color among them. We work in collaboration with like-minded organizations to maximize our reach to serve underrepresented populations, to train future public interest lawyers, and to educate our community on issues related to civil rights and civil liberties.

Thousands of young Oregonians and their families are currently charged a wide range of administrative fees by courts, state agencies, and local entities. Research shows that juvenile fees undermine the financial and psychological well-being of youth and their families. Harsh penalties for failure to pay juvenile fees compound the economic and emotional harm.

Juvenile fees also disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous and low-income youth, who are overrepresented at all stages of the juvenile system. For example, Black and Indigenous youth are three times more likely than White youth to be committed to the Oregon Youth Authority.

Despite the significant and racially disparate harm they impose on youth and their families, juvenile fees generate little or no net revenue for counties, courts, or the state. Across the board, revenue is declining while collection costs are substantial and increasing over time. In some cases, because families cannot afford to pay, collection costs exceed revenue.

Passing SB 422 will relieve vulnerable youth and families of regressive and racially discriminatory fees without significant cost, if any, to the government.

The Oregon Justice Resource Center urges you and your colleagues to vote yes on SB 422.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Zach Winston' in a cursive script.

Zach Winston
Policy Director