

I am a Public Defender in Lane County and I am writing to urge you to pass SB 422. As an attorney who has represented children for ten years, I have seen how poverty exacerbates trauma, and trauma exacerbates maladaptive and sometimes criminal behavior. Often poverty is generational, as is the trauma in the family. It has been said that the real gateway drug is trauma, and I have to agree. While we already support families in rehabilitation services and provide cognitive or behavioral interventions, SB 422 provides a totally practical way to reduce barriers to healing and rehabilitation. It cannot be overstated how much financial stress can negatively impact family functioning. Eliminating fees for juveniles adjudicated in delinquency cases opens up resources that parents or guardians can put back into their families and reduces the global stresses that challenge the healing process required for substantive change.

I urge you to vote yes on SB 422.