



PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFETY & JUSTICE

**Submitted to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
March 16, 2021**

**Testimony in Support of SB 817
By Shannon Wight, Deputy Director, Partnership for Safety & Justice**

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

At Partnership for Safety & Justice, we advocate for public safety and criminal justice policies that ensure accountability, equity, and healing for people convicted of crime, crime survivors, and the families and communities of both. For over 20 years, our work has promoted public safety with policies that keep families together, reduce racial disparities, and invest in communities across Oregon.

Partnership for Safety and Justice supports the passage of Senate Bill 817, co-sponsored by your colleague Senator Manning, to end the assessment of fees to families with youth in Oregon's juvenile delinquency system.

Justice system involvement is traumatic for youth, families, and victims of crime. Not only are they faced with a system that is almost incomprehensibly complex and often dehumanizing, everyone involved has to take time off of work or out of school to participate in the proceedings. This often leads to less income and increased costs – collect phone calls, transportation to and from correctional facilities, and possibly legal fees. Because the criminal legal system disproportionately impacts poor people and people of color, this financial burden falls on people who may already be facing hardships.

The most important goal of the criminal legal system is safety and healing. To achieve this, the people involved need to be set up for success, not for continued challenges that make their pathways more difficult. In line with these values, our state already took an important step in ending drivers license suspension for people who cannot afford to pay fines and fees, and states across the country are considering and enacting other reforms to fine and fees.¹ Oregon should also eliminate assessment fees to further relieve families of economic barriers to success.

Eliminating fees for youth under the supervision of the Oregon Youth Authority is an important next step in ensuring our legal system is creating opportunities to succeed rather than setting up barriers.

Partnership for Safety and Justice urges your aye vote for SB 817.

¹ <https://finesandfeesjusticecenter.org/covid-19-policy-tracker/reform-tracker/>