



AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

February 2, 2021

To: Honorable Senator Floyd Prozanski
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

From: Americans for Tax Reform

Re: ATR Supports SB 422 (Manning) – End Juvenile Administrative Fees in Oregon

Dear Senator Prozanski,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) and our supporters across Oregon, I urge you and your colleagues to support and approve Senate Bill 422, to end the assessment of fees to families with youth in Oregon's juvenile delinquency system.

Instead of putting public safety first, excessive fines and fees turn what is supposed to be a proportional punishment into an endless burden that contributes to people falling into a cycle of debt and often crime.

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. Given that, predictably, many of these families cannot afford the financial burden, harsh penalties for failure to pay juvenile fees lead to debt that only makes it harder for them to make ends meet and improve their circumstances.

It is dangerous to have the criminal justice system view citizens as revenue opportunities. This creates a twisted incentive to keep people entangled in the system and funding it. In the case of Oregon's juvenile justice fees, the bottom line does not even make sense.

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.

SB 422 will reform this failing, poorly-designed system that is not putting public safety first, and provide needed relief from fees for youth that aren't able to pay them, and their families that can't afford them.

For these reasons, ATR urges you and your colleagues to vote yes on SB 422.

Sincerely,

Grover G. Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform

722 12th Street N.W.

Fourth Floor

Washington, D.C.

20005

T: (202) 785-0266

F: (202) 785-0261

www.atr.org