

Tyler Williams - Testimony S.B 416

My name is Tyler and I am a formerly incarcerated youth in Kansas and youth leader with Progeny.

My fines and fees testimony begins with my first charge against me, which involved an officer transporting me from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Junction City, Kansas. I was charged \$840 for that trip, on top of my court costs for that case. After my sentencing I was told to pay \$1,064 in total fines and fees from the County.

While I was adjudicated for almost 6 years, anytime money was sent from my family for my books, half was taken towards my debt. Once obtaining my first job half of my check would go directly towards my fines and fees. In total while incarcerated I only probably paid off \$200 towards my debt.

Upon my release there were things such as violent offender registration fees and probationary costs regularly. I was at the halfway house for 9 months with the belief that I would be there for at least a year to year and a half on probation until I was kicked out of my halfway house for "completing" probation. I had no heads up just a phone call from my ISO telling me that they were unable to get me my 3-month extension for probation and that I had completed probation and the next call I got was from the case manager of the halfway house telling me that because I am no longer on probation I can no longer stay there and I can stay there until midnight but I have to go.

Once released, I entered a cycle of collections calls every week demanding payment with the threat of wage garnishment and more. At this time I was homeless with a minimum wage job, struggling to get by. My story is just one example of the financial burdens placed on young people by the juvenile justice system in Kansas. I was lucky enough to have a strong support system and was able to assist me back on my feet. If we really want to help kids rehabilitate back into society after making a mistake, then we need to stop trapping them in financial crises with no feasible way out. We need to end the insanity of treating kids like adults.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.