

My name is Tyler Williams and I am a formerly adjudicated youth in the Kansas juvenile Justice system. I am a youth leader and staff with Progeny, which is a program dedicated to youth touched by the juvenile justice system or impacted by that system. We are a branch under Destination Innovation Inc.

I am here today to tell you my reason for why you should vote no to House Bill 2021. During my adjudication in the Kansas juvenile correctional complex I remember countless times of youth, who are called "frequent flyers" by the staff, coming in and out of the facility for probationary violations. I remember one youth who was so used to coming in and out of the facility that he just didn't even care anymore. I was in kjcc for my first part of my stay for almost a year and I remember seeing that youth leave and come back three times before I was transferred to Larned. One time he said that he got fired from his job and knew that his PO was going to hit him with a PV so he just didn't care and decided to smoke and get drunk before he went into the Po's office the next day when she called him in. He had become so accustomed to being in jail that he didn't even care anymore and it was a second vacation for him. This is only one of the youth but this was not the only story. Over my stay of just shy of 6 years I saw this with countless youth.

HB 2021 will only continue the previous legacy of conditioning youth for a future in jail cell. Conditioning them to being separated from loved ones, having to restart their life repeatedly and now continuing on a rap sheet that will forever mark them from any good job, house or anything sustainable. I believe that if we want to get to the root cause of the issue. We should continue the legacy of 2016 Senate Bill 367 and open funding towards preventing youth from coming into the system and giving them the tools needed to make the best choices in their life. Please review progeny's blueprint report on how both us and the community feel we can make the best changes here in Kansas. Treating kids like adults will never help them grow into functional adults, only broken ones. So vote no on House Bill 2021.