

Getting the State Out of Our Pockets: Eliminating Fines and Fees in the State of Kansas

A Research Proposal Presented By:
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The PERSONAL is POLITICAL



Nykia Gatson, 21, became justice-involved at age 10 and lost both her parents while she was locked up in the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex. She was left to pay fines and fees on her own. "As a young person in the community who's paying that out of pocket, and sometimes isn't even legal to work, it kind of makes it hard," Gatson said. [Read a Q&A with Gatson](#). (Photo by Aundre Larrow)

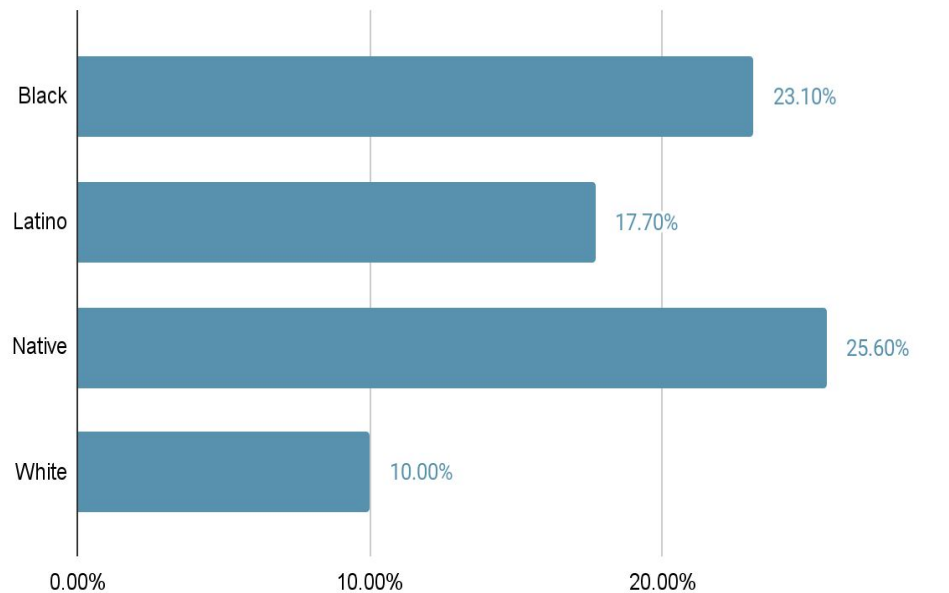
Fines and fees in Kansas are affecting employment, education and housing, systemic cycle of funding the systems that harm young people such as over-funding the police. I should know, because it happened to me

Research Question

In what ways do juvenile fines and fees in Kansas impact the financial, physical, and emotional wellness of families and communities?

State of Kansas Childhood Poverty Rates

State of Kansas Childhood Poverty Rates U.S. Census 2020



Research Finding 2

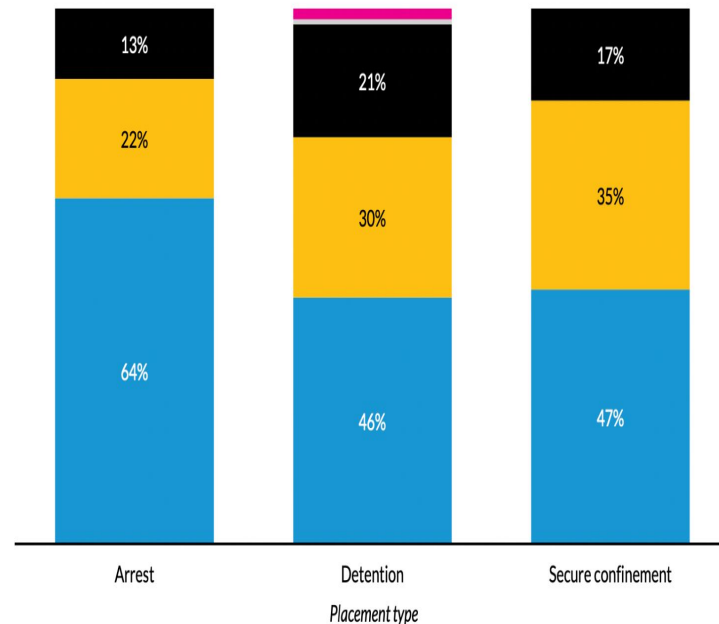
What is a novel/important research finding that came from your data?

FIGURE 7

Racial/Ethnic Disparities across Kansas's Juvenile Justice System, FY 2018

Shares of youth

■ White ■ Black ■ Latino ■ Asian ■ American Indian



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Source: Data are for FY 2018 and are from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's "Kansas Disproportionate Minority Contact Data," available at <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/states/kansas>.

Note: Asian youth make up 1 percent and American Indian youth make up 2 percent of Kansas's detained youth.

What are the different types of fines and fees?

Types of Fines and Fees:

- Confinement, supervision, and treatment costs;
- Court appointed attorney fees;
- Court docket fees and costs;
- Drug and alcohol evaluation fees;
- Infectious disease testing;
- Expungement docket fees;
- Fines per offense;
- Probation and supervision fees; and Restitution.
- Urinalysis fees

Background Research 2

Research Source	How this source contributes to my understanding of fines and fees
National Center for Access to Justice, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCAJ researched state and local laws in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. and graded the jurisdictions on a scale of 0 to 100 according to how their policies measure up, creating the Fines and Fees Justice Index. In short, no state did well. Only three states scored higher than 50 out of 100 and no state received a passing score.
Court Fines and fees hurt kansas Children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State law also allows courts to increase the amount above the proposed statutory amount, unlike in other states where that is fixed.
KU School of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Importantly, juvenile fines and fees also excessively burden communities of color.^[5] Children of color are both more likely to get arrested and more likely to be fined higher amounts.^[6] Because these families are often unable to pay, they cannot get out from under the weight of the juvenile justice system.
OPINION: Charging juvenile offenders fines they can't pay is not justice/ Cowley College data base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fines and fees are counterproductive. If we want young people who have committed crimes to change their lives and get on a better path, saddling them with an impossible debt only hinders that goal.fines and fees actually increase recidivism, pushing kids deeper into crime in order to avoid debt collectors.

Common Sense Alternatives for Fines and Fees

- Under the Kansas Juvenile Justice Code, youth can be held accountable via non-monetary alternatives including:
 - Community service;
 - Education programs;
 - Intervention programs;
 - Mediations; and
 - Community-based programs.

What this all means

WE CAN DO IT! BECAUSE THEY DID IT!

In 2021, Michigan's Macomb County Circuit Court abolished many fees and relieved youth and families of \$84 million of debt, and Georgia's Chatham County Juvenile court abolished discretionary fees and fines. In 2022, Wyoming's Albany County abolished youth diversion fees.

- Other states are continuously fighting during their campaigns to end fines and fees as well!
- After 2 years of fighting Illinois signed SB 1463 into law halting future assessment of juvenile fines and fees.

Research Methodology

How did you collect your data?

Surveys?

Focus groups?

Interviews?

Let's Get Debt-free! Survey

This survey is to help eliminate the debt that impacted youth have experienced in the juvenile system. Please take the time to complete this survey as it will help us better advocate and support our campaign.

nykiawatkins13@gmail.com [Switch account](#)

Not shared

Have you ever been detained or arrested by Law Enforcement?

- Yes
 No

As a result of any of your arrest. Did you ever have to pay fines and fees?

- Yes
 No

Please select the range that you were ordered to pay in fines or fees.

- \$0-\$500
 \$500-\$1,000
 \$1,000-\$2,000
 \$2,000-\$5,000
 \$5,000 or more

Research Plan

Phase 1: Survey Responses

Phase 2: Interviews with key respondents

Phase 3: Facilitate a small intervention program with young people in proximity to the juvenile system

List of sources (references/works cited page)

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