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CONTACTS:

Jared Busker
Associate Director
Children's Advocacy Alliance
(775) 440-1767
jared.busker@caanv.org

Savannah Reid
Policy Advocacy Clinic
UC Berkeley School of Law
(702) 544-2047
sreid@clinical.law.berkeley.edu

Dagen Downard
Policy Advocacy Clinic
UC Berkeley School of Law
(801) 404-4559
ddownard@clinical.law.berkeley.edu

GROUPS HAIL HISTORIC AND BIPARTISAN JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM BILL

CARSON CITY—Yesterday, Governor Steve Sisolak signed [Assembly Bill 439](#), a major, bipartisan juvenile justice reform bill that will improve youth rehabilitation and increase public safety. The [Children's Advocacy Alliance](#) proposed AB 439 to end the harmful and costly practice of charging fees to families with youth in the juvenile delinquency system.

AB 439 repeals state laws that previously authorized counties to charge fees to parents and guardians for almost every aspect of their children's involvement in the juvenile system, including attorney's fees, drug and mental health treatment and evaluation, detention, court programs and costs, and administrative assessments.

AB 439 was sponsored by the Assembly Committee on Judiciary chaired by [Steve Yeager](#) (D-Clark County). The bill was supported by juvenile court judges, probation departments, public defenders, and community groups working to improve outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system.

Assemblymember Yeager noted that "AB 439 is a foundational piece of criminal justice reform underway in Nevada. Our justice system is meant to help lift up, not set back, young people. By ending juvenile fees, this legislation will offer a brighter future for young people in our state."

"We applaud Governor Sisolak and legislators from both parties who continue to lead the nation in their work to foster rehabilitation and reduce recidivism in the juvenile justice system," said Jared Busker, Associate Director of the Children's Advocacy Alliance (CAA).

[Research](#) by the [Policy Advocacy Clinic](#) at the UC Berkeley School of Law documented how such fees in Nevada generate little net revenue for counties and the state, disproportionately impact low-income people of color, and undermine youth, families, and public safety.

According to clinic students and native Nevadans Dagen Downard and Savannah Reid, who conducted the research, "With this historic action, Nevada becomes the second state in the nation to abolish juvenile fees. We hope other states will follow our home state's lead in ending these regressive and racially discriminatory practices."

The co-chairs of Nevada's [Juvenile Justice Oversight Commission](#) (JJOC), Second Judicial District Court Judge [Egan Walker](#) and Chief Executive Officer [Joey Orduna-Hastings](#) of the Reno-based [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) both registered their formal support of AB 439 during the legislative process.

Bill proponents worked closely with the JJOC and the [Nevada Association of Juvenile Justice Administrators](#) (NAJJA) to develop the legislation, including Washoe County Juvenile Services Director Frank Cervantes. According to Cervantes, "this important reform will help us focus on our primary mission, which is to support positive outcomes for children, families and the community."

AB 439 will end all juvenile fees as of July 1, 2019. "We look forward to working with counties on the implementation of this legislation and are ecstatic that some of Nevada's most vulnerable families will have a chance for a fresh start," said CAA's Busker.

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