



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives  
Representative Walt Blackman (R-6)  
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Wednesday, January 5, 2022  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Blackman Introduces Bill to Help Prevent Young People from Falling into Cycle of Debt and Poverty for Mistakes Made During Childhood

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – State Representative Walt Blackman today introduced [HB 2033](#), legislation in the upcoming session aimed at helping prevent young people from falling into a cycle of debt and poverty for mistakes they made during childhood.

Juvenile courts can charge fees to children and their families for legal representation, detention, probation, and costs related to court-ordered treatment. These fees range from \$20 to hundreds of dollars each and can add up to thousands of dollars for just one case.

**“Thousands of children in Arizona interact with the juvenile system each year, and these onerous fees only serve to set them up for failure later in life,”** said Representative Blackman. **“HB 2033 eliminates nonpunitive fees and costs for children in the juvenile justice system, while protecting punitive tools like fines and victim restitution. Additionally, it establishes a process whereby individuals who are currently in debt for these fees can petition the courts to vacate the debts and civil judgements. Doing this would go a long way to help young people succeed in turning their life around for the better.”**

Often levied irregularly, such fees impose dire financial strain on children and families during challenging formative years. Compounding the problem, the incurred debt will convert to civil judgements when a youth turns 18, undermining their future success by impacting their ability to obtain student loans, rental leases, and car loans.

Under HB 2033, courts and counties would receive \$2.5 million in funding to offset any lost revenue and ensure that our public institutions can continue to provide important services to youth in the system.

**“This legislation is the culmination of more than a year of meaningful work, research, and stakeholder meetings involving many in the criminal justice reform community and advocacy organizations that work directly with low-income youth. I am immensely proud and grateful of their efforts, and I will do everything I can to see that it is passed into law.”**

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