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**ORLEANS PARISH JUVENILE COURT CONTINUES TO TAKE STEPS, LEADING THE SOUTH BY, IMPLEMENTING REFORMS TO END THE CRIMINALIZATION OF LOW-INCOME YOUTH**

NEW ORLEANS--- By a vote of the Judges of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court on December 19, 2018, New Orleans Juvenile Court will no longer impose bail/bonds as a condition of pre-trial release, effective immediately.

Exactly five months after adopting a policy to stop charging discretionary fees to youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system, the Judges have implemented another policy that will eliminate the imposition bail/bonds in delinquency cases before the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.

Chief Judge Anderson said, “Moving forward in New Orleans, youth will not be detained when the only impediment to release is indigence.”

Louisiana law declares all juveniles indigent for the purpose of appointment of counsel. *La. Ch. Code art. 320A.* The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court has expanded indigent status to all juveniles for the purpose of fees. In a continuation of previous work with Ahmed Lavalais Clinical Teaching Fellow at Berkeley Law’s Policy Advocacy Clinic, the court is committed to eliminating policies that base personal liberty on financial ability rather than likelihood to appear in court or the potential for future delinquent behavior.

Eliminating bail is as much about reducing the youth detention population and addressing racial disparities in juvenile justice as it is about financial issues, said Judge Anderson. The new resolution will provide for [1. The release of youth on personal recognizance of parents, unless there is an established likelihood of failure to appear or danger to themselves or others, 2. No cash bail or financial conditions for release, 3. No detention of youth based only upon an inability of the youth or the family to pay a bill, and 4. Assurance that conditions of release are directly related to court appearance/failure to appear.]

Ranord J. Darensburg, Judicial Administrator of Orleans Parish Juvenile Court echoed Judge Anderson’s comments. “With the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act and the passage of the First Step Act, criminal justice reform is currently at the top of the list of priorities. Orleans Parish Juvenile Court is determined to implement policies and practices that maximize the potential for success and reduce the disparate treatment of disadvantaged youth and families.”

The new policy is effective immediately. According to Chief Judge Anderson “Orleans Parish Juvenile Court is committed to ensuring accountability and public safety, but lack of money cannot be a factor in determining whether a child is held in detention pre-trial.”