

# Contra Costa Co. Suspends Fees On Families With Kids In Juvenile Hall

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MARTINEZ (CBS SF) — The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday to impose a moratorium on fees charged to parents and guardians of **children** incarcerated or monitored in the juvenile justice system.

The county had charged parents up to \$30 for each night a child spent in the John A. Davis Juvenile Hall or the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility and up to \$17 per day for electronic ankle monitoring, with reductions in the fees for lower-income families.

Supervisor John Gioia said the fees have “onerous and negative impacts on the families of the young people who are in juvenile hall.”

Gioia also noted that the probation collections unit responsible for collecting the fees cost about \$500,000 annually but brought in a net revenue of less than \$300,000 per year, so relocating those workers to another position with the county would make more sense fiscally along with helping the families of the youth.

The moratorium was cheered in statements from the county’s **public**defender and youth justice advocates.

“I cannot overstate how pleased I am that the Board of Supervisors ... took the bold step to place a moratorium on charging families for the costs of incarcerating their children,” Public Defender Robin Lipetzky said.

“This county is making **great** strides towards smarter decisions about how we achieve justice, and the decision (Tuesday) was another step in the right direction,” Lipetzky said.

Rebecca Brown, founder and director of Reentry Solutions Group, said, “The research shows that ‘making parents pay’ is bad public policy. I am

impressed and grateful that the Board of Supervisors has read our research, listened to our community's input and unanimously voted to adopt this moratorium."

Alameda and Santa Clara counties also recently passed similar moratoriums.

"We have yet to find a county whose practices are both lawful and profitable, which is why counties that have examined the issue have done away with the fees altogether," said Stephanie Campos-Bui, clinical teaching fellow at the UC Berkeley School of Law's Policy Advocacy Clinic.

"Contra Costa County should be commended for stepping forward as a leader on the issue and for serving as a **model** for other counties across California," Campos-Bui said. The Contra Costa County moratorium will go into effect on Nov. 1.

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