

\*\*\*\*\*

Hon. Holly Brown  
Department 1

Hon. Mike Salvagni  
Department 2

Hon. John Brown  
Department 3

January 15, 2009

The Honorable Gary Perry, Jim Shockley, Aubyn Curtiss, John Esp, Greg Hinkle, Larry Jent, Carol Juneau, Cliff Larsen, Jesse Laslovich, Daniel McGee, Lynda Moss and Terry Murphy

RE: Senate Bill 191 to provide funding for court security

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

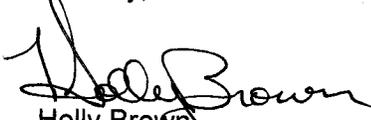
We ask your support of Senate Bill 191 to provide funding for court security by assessing a user fee in all criminal, civil and probate cases in municipal, justice and district courts in Montana.

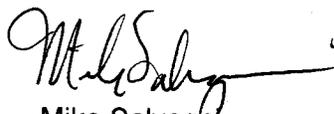
In 2006 the Montana Department of Justice issued a report based on their systematic inspection of every district court location. The report identified many facilities to be built in an era when there was minimal thought given to security measures and cited the counties lack of financial means to incorporate adequate security measures. This is often the case for municipal and justice courts as well. Court proceedings can be contentious and emotional and security is needed to ensure the safety of the parties involved, jurors, the public, court personnel and everyone inhabiting or visiting the facility. We believe the user fee is fair as it is an assessment to all persons using the courts. The fee can be waived in cases of financial inability to pay.

The user fee will benefit the court assessing the fee. It can be used for personnel, equipment or capital expenditures based on each court's unique requirement. This bill will enable local governments to provide much needed security to the courts and result in safer public buildings.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 191 and we ask that you vote in favor of its passage.

Sincerely,

  
Holly Brown  
District Court 1

  
Mike Salvagni  
District Court 2

  
John C. Brown  
District Court 3