

First Judicial District Civil Cases Involving State of Montana
Judicial Redistricting Commission
February 2016

Background

The following is the Dec. 16, 2016, response from Beth McLaughlin, Supreme Court Administrator, to a question from Senator Kristin Hansen at the September 2015 Judicial Redistricting Commission meeting. While the topic will not be part of a presentation, the commissioners might find the data useful during the work session or have follow-up questions for Ms. McLaughlin during the meeting.

Question and Response

"At the Judicial Redistricting Commission you asked if I would research how many State of Montana cases are filed in the 1st Judicial District. I waited until this month so we're pulling an almost full year of data. I'm not sure how much detail you want; here's a description of the methodology and what we've found so far.

1. Programming staff pulled all civil cases (DV) with "Montana" in the plaintiff or respondent field. It appears as though the query picked up not only state agencies but University System cases, which I left in the count.
2. We deleted all cases in which "Montana" was clearly a private entity (i.e. Montana City Meats).
3. In the plaintiff category there are 72 cases - most of those are amount due cases filed by the Montana Department of Transportation. A few of these appear to be county forfeiture cases but I left them in the count.
4. In the respondent category there are 131 cases. When you remove those cases arising from a criminal action (post-conviction relief and drivers' license reinstatements) you end up with 76 cases, which are civil in nature.
5. We pulled only newly filed DV cases; not any reopened cases.
6. The 1st Judicial District has about 2,000 plus civil cases that are opened or reopened each year. It looks like the State of Montana case are a fairly small percentage (around 7%) of the total."