

Draft Joint Resolution Language Related to the Justice Counts Initiative

For consideration at the Law and Justice Interim Committee's August 29, 2022, meeting

WHEREAS, Justice Counts is an initiative led by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance, The Council of State Governments Justice Center, and more than 21 partners to develop and help implement consensus-driven metrics for criminal justice agencies; and

WHEREAS, the consensus-driven Justice Counts metrics are developed in partnership with a wide range of experts across the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the Law and Justice Interim Committee studied the collection, improvement, and integration of criminal justice system data during the 2021-2022 interim; and

WHEREAS, Montana state and local policymakers are often forced to make critical decisions about the safety of their communities and constituents using limited or stale criminal justice data; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature wants to work in conjunction with state and local partners to improve data collection, including the specific consensus-driven metrics proposed in the Justice Counts Initiative; and

WHEREAS, improvements in criminal justice system data collection and dissemination will help Montana policymakers change the current reactionary nature of our criminal justice system to achieve better results by enabling more analysis; and

WHEREAS, better results include cost savings for the State of Montana and our local governments and better outcomes for offenders, crime victims, and their families;

WHEREAS, Justice Counts would help us improve access for our criminal justice system leaders and the public to consistent, timely, and accurate data across the criminal justice system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Montana Legislature supports the Justice Counts Metrics and urges policymakers throughout the state and local government entities to implement and utilize the metrics and to commit to making the latest criminal justice data available.