



## **COURT SYSTEM DEPENDENCY NEGLECT TASK FORCE**

### **68th Montana Legislature**

#### **SENATE MEMBERS**

Ellie Boldman  
Dennis Lenz

#### **HOUSE MEMBERS**

Jennifer Carlson  
SJ Howell

#### **PUBLIC MEMBERS**

Judge Rienne McElyea  
Jessica Finley  
Jon Kadner,  
Rachel Green  
Wamnee Ereaux  
Jennifer Owen  
Kelly Driscoll  
Nikki Grossberg

#### **COMMITTEE STAFF**

Griffin Burns - Research Analyst  
Maddelyn Black - Secretary

# **MINUTES LOG**

July 19, 2024  
Room 137  
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

Access to an electronic copy of these minutes and the audio or video recording is provided from the Legislative Branch home page at <https://leg.mt.gov>. From the home page, select the "Committees" drop down menu at the top, then select Administrative or Interim, and the appropriate committee. The written minutes log can be located by expanding the accordion menu for the date of the meeting. Links to the audio/video files can be located by selecting the Video/Audio button on the same page, then the "past/current recordings" button. From there, use the calendar to select the date of the meeting you wish to view/listen to. The written Minutes Log, along with links to the audio and video recordings, is listed by meeting date on the interim committee's web page. Each of the Exhibits is linked and can be viewed by clicking on the Exhibit of interest. All Exhibits are public information and may be printed. Please contact the Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for more information.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sen. Dennis Lenz, Presiding Officer  
Sen. Ellie Boldman, Vice Presiding Officer  
Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
Rep. SJ Howell  
Judge Rienne McElyea, District Court Judge  
Jessica Finley, Missoula County Attorney's Office  
Jon Kadner, Cascade County Sheriff's Office  
Rachel Green, Governor's Office  
Wamnee Ereaux  
Jennifer Owen  
Kelly Driscoll- Office of the State Public Defender  
Nikki Grossberg, Department of Public Health and Human Services

#### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Griffin Burns, Research Analyst  
Maddelyn Black, Secretary

**AGENDA** ([Attachment 1](#))

**VISITORS' LIST**

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

09:31:23 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

**DISTRICT COURT EXPENDITURES AND Q & A**

09:34:46 Beth McLaughlin, Supreme Court Administrator

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

09:37:27 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

09:38:17 Beth McLaughlin

**Task force Questions and Discussion**

09:41:09 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz

09:41:18 Nikki Grossberg

09:41:40 Beth McLaughlin

09:44:37 Griffin Burns

09:44:45 Beth McLaughlin

09:56:30 Rep. SJ Howell

09:57:40 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz

**Public Comment on District Court Expenditures and Q & A**

09:57:48 None

**Task force Questions and Discussion Continued**

09:58:09 Rep. Jennifer Carlson

09:58:33 Beth McLaughlin

10:02:59 Judge Rienne McElyea

10:03:28 Beth McLaughlin

10:06:21 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz

10:09:54 Kelly Driscoll

10:10:21 Beth McLaughlin

10:11:55 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz

10:12:10 Beth McLaughlin

10:13:20 Rep. Jennifer Carlson

10:14:08 Beth McLaughlin

10:18:11 Kelly Driscoll

10:18:53 Beth McLaughlin  
10:20:30 Sen. Ellie Boldman  
10:21:09 Beth McLaughlin

10:25:35 **Recessed**  
10:32:28 **Reconvened**

#### **PANEL DISCUSSION, DISTRICT COURT JUDGES**

10:33:07 Judge Rienne McElyea  
10:35:51 Judge John Kutzman  
10:36:38 Judge Kaydee Snipes Ruiz  
10:38:56 Judge Rodney Souza  
10:43:49 Judge Leslie Halligan  
[EXHIBIT 3](#)  
10:48:48 Judge Luke Berger

#### **Task Force Questions and Discussion**

10:49:32 Judge Rienne McElyea  
10:54:35 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
10:57:43 Judge Leslie Halligan  
11:02:00 Judge Luke Berger  
11:03:52 Judge John Kutzman  
11:07:15 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
11:08:11 Judge Kaydee Snipes Ruiz  
11:10:57 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
11:11:30 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
11:13:56 Judge Rienne McElyea  
11:16:51 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
11:17:04 Judge Rodney Souza  
11:22:36 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
11:24:21 Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
11:25:42 Judge Leslie Halligan  
11:30:35 Judge Rodney Souza  
11:33:20 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
11:33:59 Judge Luke Berger  
11:35:28 Judge Kaydee Snipes Ruiz  
11:37:50 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
11:40:10 Judge Rodney Souza  
11:44:09 Judge John Kutzman  
11:46:02 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
11:48:17 Rep. Jennifer Carlson

11:51:28 Kelly Driscoll  
11:53:20 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
11:53:28 Judge Rienne McElyea  
11:54:56 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
11:56:02 Judge Kaydee Snipes Ruiz  
11:57:01 Judge Leslie Halligan

**Public Comment on Panel Discussion, District Court Judges**

12:00:37 None

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MATTER WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE TASK FORCE NOT ON THIS AGENDA**

12:00:42 None

**Directions to Staff**

12:01:20 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:01:32 Griffin Burns  
[EXHIBIT 4](#)

12:02:01 **Recessed**

12:11:11 **Reconvened**

**WORK SESSION**

12:11:07 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:14:21 Judge Rienne McElyea  
12:16:32 Kelly Driscoll  
12:17:25 Rep. SJ Howell  
12:18:14 Kelly Driscoll  
12:19:43 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:20:15 Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
12:20:45 Kelly Driscoll  
12:21:40 Jessica Finley  
12:25:27 Griffin Burns  
12:25:42 Kelly Driscoll  
[EXHIBIT 5](#)  
12:27:06 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:27:53 Nikki Grossberg  
12:29:12 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:30:22 Kelly Driscoll  
12:30:31 Nikki Grossberg  
12:31:02 Rep. SJ Howell  
12:31:33 Kelly Driscoll

12:33:56 Jessica Finley  
12:36:37 Jennifer Owen  
12:37:20 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:37:51 Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
12:39:17 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:39:37 Nikki Grossberg  
12:40:37 Kelly Driscoll  
12:42:13 Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
12:45:48 Wamnee Ereaux  
12:46:35 Jessica Finley  
12:47:45 Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
12:50:08 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
12:52:42 Kelly Driscoll  
12:56:15 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
12:58:12 Rep. SJ Howell  
12:58:54 Jennifer Owen  
13:02:45 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
13:04:20 Kelly Driscoll  
13:05:20 Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
13:06:00 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
13:08:00 Griffin Burns  
13:08:51 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
13:09:46 Judge Rienne McElyea  
13:14:20 Kelly Driscoll  
13:15:35 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
13:15:54 Judge Rienne McElyea  
13:17:41 Jessica Finley  
13:19:00 Jessica Owen  
13:19:20 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
13:21:09 Judge Rienne McElyea  
13:21:33 Kelly Driscoll  
13:22:28 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
13:23:26 Kelly Driscoll  
13:25:08 Judge Rienne McElyea  
13:25:45 Rep. Jennifer Carlson  
13:27:40 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz  
13:29:23 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
13:30:20 Griffin Burns

**Motion**

13:31:24 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz moved forward a bill draft on 5 business days for prehearing conferences to align with emergency protective services.

13:31:30 **Vote:** Carried unanimously by voice vote.

**Motion**

13:31:40 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz moved forward a bill draft on show cause hearings on changing 20 days to 21, that is the only change.

13:31:58 **Vote:** Carried unanimously by voice vote.

**Directions to Staff**

13:32:28 Griffin Burns

13:33:05 Presiding Officer Dennis Lenz

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 13:33:42