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## Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission

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Leadership of the 68<sup>th</sup> Montana Legislature  
State Capitol  
PO Box 201706  
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Dear President of the Senate Ellsworth, Speaker of the House Regier, Senate Majority Leader Fitzpatrick, Senate Minority Leader Flowers, House Majority Leader Vinton, and House Minority Leader Abbott,

During the course of our constitutionally assigned task of creating congressional and state legislative districts, we encountered two challenges that need and have requested legislation for the 68<sup>th</sup> Legislature. These changes would provide more accurate and usable data to future redistricting commissions and legislatures

Senate Bill No. 77 creates a process for the Department of Corrections (DOC) to collect the last known address for each prison inmate prior to incarceration. Using this address information, the Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC) at the Montana Department of Commerce would adjust the decennial census population data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau to place each inmate at that last known address rather than at the prison in which the inmate was incarcerated on Census Day. The commission received public comment that this reallocation of prisoners is an important policy priority to ensure state legislative lines are drawn with the best possible information. While this commission was able to adjust the Census data to reallocate about half of the state's prisoners, the task was hampered by the lack of complete, accurate data on prisoner addresses. The DOC adjusted its intake process to collect inmate address data, and we want to codify this change. The CEIC staff possess the technical skills needed to adjust the Census data to create a usable dataset, and future commissions would benefit from using the existing state resources on this task rather than hiring a contractor.

Senate Bill No. 86 limits the populations of election precincts to ensure some additional uniformity. When creating legislative districts, we encountered a wide range of precinct populations, which made creating districts of approximately equal populations challenging. [IS THERE AN EXAMPLE WE CAN USE HERE?]

We welcome comments and suggestions generated by the legislative process and are willing to work with legislators on necessary amendments to ensure our legislation meets the needs of the state. Please contact any of us with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Maylinn Smith  
Presiding Officer

Commissioner Jeff Essmann

Commissioner Denise Juneau

Commissioner Kendra Miller

Commissioner Dan Stusek