

The Supreme Court of Montana
Office of the Court Administrator

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TO Cathy Duncan, Senior Fiscal Analyst
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FROM: Beth McLaughlin
Supreme Court Administrator

RE: HB693 Required Report

Attached is the report of open general civil cases (DV) required by 2021's HB693. The report is directly generated from the Full Court case management system using the parameters of "every civil case in an open status" as of March 31, 2023. The report is broken down by Judicial District and counties within a given District. The committee should be aware of the following limitations to this report:

- Litigants filing a civil case have three years in which to serve the other party following the filing and opening of a case in the system. Cases reflected in this report may not yet be served on the responding party.
- Clerks of the District Courts are responsible for closing cases resolved either by a court decision or via other means (settlement agreements, party did not pursue the case, etc.). However, significant workloads in many county offices create administrative backlogs for clerks. You will note several more rural counties with a significant number of older open cases. It is highly likely these are *not* active cases, but cases that should be administratively closed by the Clerk of the District Court in that county.
- For context, 11,738 civil cases were filed in Montana's District Courts in 2022 and 11,426 were closed for a 95% case clearance rate.

With the Legislature in session and no interim committees, I was unclear who should receive the report thus, I am sending it to staff only. Please let me know if it should go elsewhere.