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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 43  
INTRODUCED BY B. MERCER

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF SECURITY IN MONTANA'S DISTRICT COURTS.

WHEREAS, courthouses and courtrooms throughout Montana are used by tens of thousands of litigants, jurors, witnesses, attorneys, judges, and staff each year; and

WHEREAS, courthouses and courtrooms must be accessible and open to the public, and while court security is the responsibility of the county sheriff, safety is a shared responsibility between the state and counties; and

WHEREAS, a recent survey of district court judges recorded a high-level of concern about personal safety and security and safety within courthouses and courtrooms; and

WHEREAS, while there is no one solution to issues concerning judicial and court security, the Legislature has the unique power to convene a group to consider courthouse and courtroom safety.

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

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to examine the status of security in Montana's district courts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study:

- (1) review existing security measures used in district courtrooms, court buildings, and for district court judges and staff;
- (2) identify any critical needs or gaps in district court security measures or funding; and
- (3) examine national trends, best practices, and resources related to providing courtroom security and security for judges and judicial staff.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include participation from district court judges, sheriffs,

1 the Montana Department of Justice, county commissioners, attorneys, the District Court Council, and other  
2 stakeholders identified by the interim committee.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be  
4 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review  
6 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2022.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,  
8 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 68th Legislature.

9 - END -