

Recent History of Montana's Judicial Districts

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for the Judicial Redistricting Commission
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Revisions to Judicial District Boundaries

- ▶ **1983 (Ch. 293):*** Increased number of judicial districts from 19 to 20 and made the following boundary changes:
 - Lake and Sanders Counties moved from the 4th district to form the new 20th district. Missoula, Mineral, and Ravalli Counties remained in 4th district.
 - Prairie County moved to the 7th district (Dawson, McCone, Richland, and Wibaux) from the 16th district (Custer, Carter, Fallon, Powder River, Garfield, Rosebud).
 - Treasure County moved to the 16th district (Custer, Carter, Fallon, Powder River, Garfield, Rosebud) from the 13th district (Yellowstone, Stillwater, Carbon, Big Horn).
 - Chouteau County moved to the 12th district (Liberty and Hill) from the 8th district, leaving Cascade County as the sole county in the 8th district.
 - Blaine County moved to the 17th district (Phillips and Valley) from the 12th (Liberty and Hill).
- ▶ **1991 (Ch. 642):** Increased the number of judicial districts from 20 to 21 by removing Ravalli County from the 4th district (Missoula and Mineral) and making it the 21st district with one judge.
- ▶ **1999 (Ch. 454):*** Increased the number of judicial districts from 21 to 22 by removing Stillwater, Carbon, and Big Horn Counties from the 13th district to create the 22nd district. The change left Yellowstone County as the sole county in the five-judge 13th district.

* This legislation revised judicial district boundaries and increased the number of judges in other districts.

Increases to the Numbers of District Court Judges

- ▶ **1979 (Ch. 542):** Added a fourth judge to the 4th district. At the time, the 4th district included five counties: Lake, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli, and Sanders.

- ▶ **1983 (Ch. 293):*** Added judges to the following districts:
 - a third judge to the 1st district. Lewis and Clark and Broadwater Counties formed the 1st district.

 - a second judge to the 7th district. Dawson, McCone, Richland, Prairie, and Wibaux Counties formed the 7th district.

 - a fifth judge to the 13th district. Yellowstone, Stillwater, Carbon, and Big Horn Counties formed the 13th district.

- ▶ **1999 (Ch. 454):*** Added judges to the following districts:
 - a third judge to the 11th district. Flathead County formed the 11th district.

 - a second judge to the 20th district. Lake and Sanders Counties formed the 20th district.

- ▶ **2001 (Ch. 497):** Added judges to the following districts:
 - a fourth judge to the 8th district. Cascade County formed the 8th district.

 - a second judge to the 21st district. Ravalli County formed the 21st district.

- ▶ **2005 (Ch. 373):** Added a third judge to the 18th district. Gallatin County formed the 18th district.

- ▶ **2009 (Ch. 422):** Added judges to the following districts:
 - a fourth judge to the 1st district. Lewis and Clark and Broadwater Counties formed the 1st district.

 - a fourth judge to the 11th district. Flathead County formed the 11th district.

 - a sixth judge to the 13th district. Yellowstone County formed the 13th district.

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Previous Studies on Judicial Redistricting

- ▶ House Bill No. 339 (Ch. 338, L. 1999) required an interim study of the necessity of redistricting the judicial districts. The 1999-2000 Legislative Council appointed a subcommittee to complete the study. Judge John Warner (then serving in the 12th district) was appointed by a judges' association to work with the subcommittee. The subcommittee ultimately recommended that judicial redistricting not be done at that time. The Legislative Council accepted the recommendation. The 2001-2002 Legislative Council heard periodic updates from legislative staff about the possibility of judicial redistricting and ultimately requested that a bill be drafted to change the judicial district boundaries while keeping the same number of judges. Senator Fred Thomas carried Senate Bill No. 147 during the 2003 session, where it died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Sources: Montana Code Annotated 2015 Annotations for sections 3-5-101 and 3-5-102; Legislative Council meeting minutes and materials from 2001-2002 interim available at leg.mt.gov.

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