



## LAW AND JUSTICE INTERIM COMMITTEE

### 69th Montana Legislature

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#### SENATE MEMBERS

Shane Morigeau  
Vince Ricci  
Barry Usher  
Sue Vinton

#### HOUSE MEMBERS

Steven Kelly  
Braxton Mitchell  
Amy Regier  
Zooey Zephyr

#### COMMITTEE STAFF

Laura Sherley - Lead Staff  
Julianne Burkhardt - Legal Staff  
Ania Alduenda - Secretary

# MINUTES LOG

November 18 and 19, 2025

UM Campus Missoula  
Missoula, 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:

Rep. Amy Regier, Presiding Officer (R)  
Rep. Zooey Zephyr, Vice Presiding Officer (D)  
Rep. Steven Kelly (R)  
Rep. Braxton Mitchell (R)  
Sen. Vince Ricci (R)  
Sen. Sue Vinton (R)

#### MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Shane Morigeau (D)  
Sen. Barry Usher (R)

#### MEMBERS ABSENT:

#### STAFF PRESENT:

Laura Sherley, Lead Staff  
Julianne Burkhardt, Legal Staff  
Ania Alduenda, Secretary

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

#### VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

**MONTANA LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION STAFF:** JERRY HOWE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR • ANGUS MACIVER, DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIVISION • AMY CARLSON, DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE FISCAL DIVISION • TODD EVERTS, DIRECTOR, LEGAL SERVICES OFFICE • DALE GOW, CIO, OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SERVICES • RACHEL WEISS, RESEARCH DIRECTOR • ANGIE CARTER, FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER

**The Law and Justice Interim Committee attended two tours with the Criminal Justice Oversight Council on November 18, 2025. See Attachment 1 for more information.**

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL - NOVEMBER 19, 2025**

08:00:05 Presiding Officer Amy Regier called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

**Meeting Overview**

08:00:37 Presiding Officer Amy Regier

08:01:06 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON NOVEMBER 18, 2025 TOURS**

08:01:52 None

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (COR)**

08:02:11 Presiding Officer Amy Regier

08:02:21 Brian Gootkin, Director, COR

08:07:05 Natalia Bowser, Innovation Chief, COR

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

08:13:31 Sen. Sue Vinton

08:13:44 Dir. Brian Gootkin, COR

08:13:50 Presiding Officer Amy Regier

08:13:56 Dir. Brian Gootkin, COR

**Public Comment**

08:14:28 May Simmons, Lake County Resident

08:16:47 Presiding Officer Amy Regier

08:17:11 **Recessed**

08:26:54 **Reconvened**

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 23 - YOUTH COURT LAWS**

**Overview of and Services Provided by the Montana Violent Crime Investigators Association (MVCIA)**

08:26:59 Presiding Officer Amy Regier

08:27:34 Kelly Norton, Deputy Juvenile Probation Officer, Missoula County Youth Court

08:27:41 Meghan Benson, Managing Public Defender, Missoula Region - Office of the State Public Defender (OPD)

08:27:54 Mark Handelman, Deputy County Attorney, Missoula County Attorney's Office (MCAO)

08:28:09 Hon. Jason Marks, 4th Judicial District Court

08:28:13 Hon. Jennifer Lint, 21st Judicial District Court

08:28:17 Christine Kowalski, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Missoula County Youth Court

**EXHIBIT 1**

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

09:28:24 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
09:29:03 Hon. Jennifer Lint, 21st Judicial District Court  
09:31:00 Christine Kowalski, Missoula County Youth Court  
09:34:12 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr  
09:34:51 Mark Handelman, MCAO  
09:35:28 Hon. Jason Marks, 4th Judicial District Court  
09:36:07 Hon. Jennifer Lint, 21st Judicial District Court  
09:36:28 Sen. Sue Vinton  
09:37:18 Mark Handelman, MCAO  
09:38:47 Meghan Benson, OPD  
09:39:00 Hon. Jason Marks, 4th Judicial District Court  
09:39:25 Hon. Jennifer Lint, 21st Judicial District Court  
09:40:40 Sen. Vince Ricci  
09:41:07 Mark Handelman, MCAO  
09:42:13 Christine Kowalski, Missoula County Youth Court  
09:42:42 Rep. Steven Kelly  
09:43:05 Hon. Jennifer Lint, 21st Judicial District Court  
09:43:39 Christine Kowalski, Missoula County Youth Court  
09:43:48 Meghan Benson, OPD  
09:45:06 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr  
09:45:58 Meghan Benson, OPD  
09:48:16 Rep. Steven Kelly  
09:48:46 Meghan Benson, OPD  
09:49:41 Hon. Jennifer Lint, 21st Judicial District Court

**Public Comment**

09:52:35 Nicole Otto  
09:56:15 May Simmons, Lake County Resident  
09:58:55 Diane Rotering, The Mercy Company

**BLUE ENVELOPE PROGRAM****Program Overview and Implementation in Other States**

10:01:42 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
10:02:14 Laura Sherley, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 2](#)  
[EXHIBIT 3](#)  
[EXHIBIT 4](#)  
[EXHIBIT 5](#)  
[EXHIBIT 6](#)  
[EXHIBIT 7](#)

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:10:46 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
10:10:56 Laura Sherley, LSD  
10:11:27 Rep. Steven Kelly  
10:11:45 Laura Sherley, LSD  
10:12:18 Sen. Sue Vinton  
10:15:34 Rep. Steven Kelly  
10:17:34 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr  
10:18:09 Laura Sherley, LSD  
10:19:31 Sen. Sue Vinton  
10:21:06 Rep. Steven Kelly

**Public Comment**

10:23:05 May Simmons, Lake County Resident  
10:24:01 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
  
10:24:17 **Recessed**  
13:13:19 **Reconvened**  
  
13:13:20 Sen. Sue Vinton did not return after the lunch recess.

**REFERENCE CHECKS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS****Stakeholder Panel**

13:13:20 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
13:13:43 Jordan Venezio, Police Chief, Kalispell Police Department  
13:14:44 Shane Hildenstab, Deputy Public Safety Chief, Department of Corrections (COR)  
13:15:22 Andrea Bethel, Probation and Parole Captain, Missoula Region, COR  
13:15:57 Scott Van Dyken, Undersheriff, Cascade County  
13:16:26 Michael Colyer, Police Chief, Missoula Police Department  
13:17:21 Jeremiah Peterson, Sheriff, Missoula County

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

13:31:34 Rep. Steven Kelly  
13:33:04 Sheriff Jeremiah Peterson, Missoula County  
13:34:00 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr  
13:34:17 Laura Sherley, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
13:34:28 Julianne Burkhardt, Legal Staff, LSD  
13:35:16 Chief Jordan Venezio, Kalispell Police Department  
13:35:48 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
13:35:56 Timothy Allred, Executive Director, Public Safety Officer Standards & Training Council (POST)  
13:40:03 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr

13:40:51 Sheriff Jeremiah Peterson, Missoula County  
13:41:53 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
13:42:08 Chief Jordan Venezio, Kalispell Police Department  
13:42:51 Undersheriff Scott Van Dyken, Cascade County  
13:45:08 Shane Hildenstab, COR  
13:45:55 Sen. Vince Ricci  
13:46:31 Sheriff Jeremiah Peterson, Missoula County  
13:50:12 Rep. Steven Kelly  
13:50:25 Sheriff Jeremiah Peterson, Missoula County  
13:52:30 Sen. Vince Ricci  
13:52:51 Undersheriff Scott Van Dyken, Cascade County

#### **Public Comment**

13:54:13 May Simmons, Lake County Resident

#### **COMMITTEE WORK SESSION**

##### **Instructions to Staff**

13:56:48 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
13:57:31 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr  
13:58:10 Rep. Braxton Mitchell  
13:58:45 Rep. Steven Kelly  
13:59:51 Sen. Vince Ricci  
14:00:30 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
**EXHIBIT 8**  
14:01:00 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr  
14:01:15 Rep. Steven Kelly  
14:01:30 Laura Sherley, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
**EXHIBIT 9**  
14:02:32 Presiding Officer Amy Regier  
14:02:47 Julianne Burkhardt, Legal Staff, LSD  
14:04:19 Vice Presiding Officer Zooey Zephyr  
14:04:35 Rep. Steven Kelly  
14:09:08 Rep. Braxton Mitchell

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION**

14:09:55 May Simmons, Lake County Resident  
14:16:43 Elinor Smith, Montana Public Radio  
14:17:22 Presiding Officer Amy Regier

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 14:17:28