



Criminal Justice Oversight Council

69th Montana Legislature

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August 1, 2025

Dear Chair Bogner and Legislative Council members,

Senate Joint Resolution No. 36 (SJ 36) requested that an interim committee explore the standardization of prosecution in matters of dependent neglect in Montana. The Legislative Council assigned this study, ranked 36th in the study resolution survey, to the Criminal Justice Oversight Council (CJOC) along with one other study resolution. During the CJOC's meeting on July 23, members voted to request that the Legislative Council reassign the SJ 36 study to the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee (CFHHS). The CJOC believes that the SJ 36 study would require an extensive legislative response, which is better addressed in a legislative interim committee. Additionally, the composition of the CJOC does not adequately represent the stakeholders involved in this complex issue.

To effectively address SJ 36, CJOC believes that CFHHS and its stakeholders are better positioned to manage the study and workload. Additionally, the CJOC recommends that the study not only focus on the standardization of prosecution processes but also expand to include the standardization of offices involved in these matters.

The CJOC makes this request pursuant to section 5-5-217(3), MCA, which allows a statutory committee to recommend to the Legislative Council that a study be assigned to another interim committee or statutory committee.

Thank you for considering this recommendation. Please contact the CJOC staff or me with any questions.

Sen. Barry Usher, Council Presiding Officer

cc:

Rep. Jodee Etchart, Presiding Officer, Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee
Sen. Dennis Lenz, sponsor of SJ 36
Jerry Howe, Executive Director, Montana Legislative Services Division