

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-09 08:00 AM - (H) JAS on Judicial Branch, Law Enforcement, and Justice

Position: Opponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

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Written Statement: I am concerned about the DOJ's willingness to cut funding to Victim Services. It was stated by the DOJ's opening presenter on 2/8/21 to this subcommittee that a [significant] reduction for need may have been due to Medicaid Expansion. I disagree. \*It might be helpful for the subcommittee to get a copy of the form letter that is sent to victims of crime in Montana who are deemed "eligible" for services. Due to the way that letter is written, the victim interprets the services to be out of their reach unless that front the money to the provider for reimbursement only, if approved. Given the financial crisis that many victims find themselves in related to the crime, that financial situation has been further compounded by the pandemic because of the increase in an uncertain financial future. I argue that victims are going without essential supportive services because they are unable to front the money for the needed resources.

I encourage the subcommittee gain an understanding into what services might be available to a victim of crime, the criteria to be deemed eligible, and how the availability of services is communicated to the victim.