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Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission

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September 18, 2021

Governor Greg Gianforte
Office of the Governor
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Gianforte,

The Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission is the five-member, citizen commission charged by the Montana Constitution with drawing the state's congressional and state legislative district lines. One of the challenges we face is how to account for incarcerated populations as we draw those lines. While the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau) counts state and federal prisoners as residents of the correctional facility in which they reside on Census Day, many Montanans would prefer that these prisoners be counted as residents of the places in which they resided prior to incarceration. We are currently exploring ways our state could gather that residential information and adjust the P.L. 94-171 data that we receive from the Bureau to reallocate state prisoners to their previous residential addresses. However, we also recognize that our work will be easier if you would direct the Montana Department of Corrections to gather information on prisoners' race, ethnicity, and previous residential address data on intake to a secure facility. This direction would create more complete, useful redistricting data for policymakers and line drawers in the future.

Thank you for your service and for considering our requests.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Maylinn Smith
Presiding Officer

Commissioner Jeff Essmann

Commissioner Joe Lamson

Commissioner Kendra Miller

Commissioner Dan Stusek