

Mr. Smith, Don't forget! You have a court date on Mon. February 19 in Liberty Court on 123 Main St. at 2 p.m. Failure to appear could result in your arrest.



ACLU
AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
Colorado

SUPPORT SENATE BILL 19-036

*DECREASE JAIL OVERCROWDING, INCREASE GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY, AND SAVE TAXPAYER MONEY
WITH A STATE-WIDE AUTOMATIC COURT REMINDER PROGRAM*

Why does Colorado need a state-wide court date reminder program?

- **Colorado is facing a jail overcrowding crisis that counties need help solving.**
Across the state, counties report dangerously overcrowded jails. For example, Pueblo County Jail is operating at 151% capacity and Alamosa County Jail is at 147% capacity.
- **People who miss a court date are often jailed for their failure to appear, even on minor offenses.**
In 2004, Jefferson County reported that 25% of its jail population was incarcerated solely for failure to appear on minor offenses.
- **Expensive jail beds should be reserved for dangerous people.**
Jail beds cost upwards of \$100 per day and should be reserved for people who pose a true public safety threat. Yet, in a 6 month period ending Dec. 2017, Arapahoe County spent \$311,512 housing defendants held solely for failure to appear (434 inmates held for a total of 3,386 days).

How would Colorado benefit from a state-wide court date reminder program?

- **A simple court date reminder is enough to get most people to court.**
Very few people miss court intentionally. Court date reminders are the only evidence-based practice proven to reduce failures to appear (FTA). Jefferson County saw a 52% reduction in FTAs six months after starting a reminder program. Douglas County's reminder program decreased FTA rates by 50% between 2009 and 2015.
- **Government efficiency would increase across the criminal justice system.**
By reducing the number of bench warrants and avoiding unnecessary jailing, court reminders save time and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of police, sheriffs, court staff, pretrial services staff, prosecutors and public defenders, all while saving taxpayer dollars.
- **Jail overcrowding would decrease and Counties would save thousands with each avoided FTA.**
Garfield County has estimated that the overall cost of a FTA is more than \$2,000—money the county can often save with a simple court reminder. Jefferson County has saved \$400,000 annually as a direct result of their FTA reductions due to court reminders.
- **When defendants avoid jail, families and communities benefit.**
Court reminders will help many defendants resolve their cases without jail time, allowing these defendants to continue working, going to school, and caring for their families without disruption.

Who supports this bill? *County Sheriffs of Colorado, *Colorado Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice, *State Court Administrator's Office, *Colorado District Attorneys' Counsel, *Colorado Counties, Inc., *Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, *Colorado Center on Law and Policy, **Colorado Juvenile Defender Center, **Office of the Colorado State Public Defender

** Supports as amended