

SUPPORT HB 19-1297

STATEWIDE JAIL DATA COLLECTION

What is the problem?

- **Colorado’s jail population and costs are skyrocketing, yet we lack the data to understand why.** Many jails are already severely overcrowded. Pretrial defendants alone cost jails at least \$640,000 per day. Without reform, our jail population will be beyond capacity (*see below*).
- **Missing statewide jail data is a major barrier to understanding incarceration in Colorado.** Because jail data is kept locally and varies widely from county to county, many basic questions remain unanswered—such as: “How many people are in jail statewide? For what crimes? For how long?”
- **Without data, policymakers cannot make data-driven decisions or track the impact of reforms.** How can Colorado legislators improve public safety, reduce costs or identify targets for change without statewide jail data?

What is HB 19-1297?

- **Updates an antiquated law and improves access to criminal justice data.** HB 19-1297 modernizes a statute that has not been updated in over 40 years.
- **Implements statewide standards and common definitions.** HB 19-1297 will improve consistency in data collection and reporting among county jails and ensure that data across each county is comparable. Available data points will be published on a quarterly basis.

Why support HB 19-1297?

- **Greater transparency and better policymaking to address our expensive jail overcrowding crisis.** With statewide data, legislators can make informed budgetary decisions, better understand how state policies impact local jail populations, and identify prime targets for reform.
- **Understand issues like pretrial detention and disparities in incarceration.** Legislators can meaningfully address issues that harm defendants and their families, exacerbate disparities, undermine public safety and overwhelm rural county jails.
- **Join other states in valuing transparency.** UT, FL, ME, MI, NC, PA, TX, OR, WA and WI have all taken steps to improve jail data collection and reporting.

