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Senate Finance Committee
200 East Colfax
Denver, CO 802003

Re: Letter of Support for SB16-60

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members:

Mesa County is highly supportive of Senate Bill 16-60, which pertains to the transfer of the fiscal responsibility of providing court facilities in each county away from the counties to the State over time.

Current statutory law requires county governments in Colorado to provide courtrooms and other court facilities for the state Judicial Department, despite the fact that the state court system is clearly and strictly a state function. All court employees, including the probation department, are State Judicial employees, and are conducting State business. Even the 21st Judicial District Attorney is a state political subdivision, and its function is to prosecute and enforce state laws.

The proposed bill would benefit Mesa County's distressed economy. To have Mesa County pay for facilities to house a judge to rule on state law is not in the best interest of our county. Further, housing all judges, state jury commissioners, state probation officers, and other state judicial employees is an unfunded mandate further burdens our already struggling county.

For the same reasons that the State pays for the office building of the State Public Defenders Office in each area so that they may carry on their duties as State employees defending State law, the State should pay rent or otherwise purchase the building where the State Judicial employees work. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support this legislative measure in the interest of not unfairly burdening Mesa County's struggling economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Daniel P. Rubinstein
District Attorney