

SUPPORT HB23-1182

Ensuring Remote Public Access to Observe Criminal Court Proceedings

Prime Sponsors: Reps. Epps, Mabrey; Sens. Fields, Gardner.



Coloradans value transparency and accessibility.

HB23-1182 ensures remote access for the public to observe criminal proceedings held in open court.

ISSUE.

Unequal Access to Observing Court Virtually.

- In 2020, the Judicial Branch expanded access to remote observation of criminal court in every Colorado Judicial District.
- Most courts still allow remote observation of public criminal court proceedings, but some judges disconnect virtual access without explanation.
- Courts in the *same jurisdiction* hearing the *same types of cases in open court*, no longer provide consistent access to observe virtually.

SOLUTION.

HB23-1182:

- ✓ Ensures parity, consistency, and predictability in remote access to public courtrooms in Colorado.
- ✓ Requires Colorado courts to make public criminal proceedings available for viewing online, *if they already have the technology to do so*.
- ✓ Balances the public's interest in remote court observation with protecting fair trials, safety, and victims' rights.

Ensuring public access to remote court observation statewide:

- = Free remote access for the public, survivors, families, and the media to observe open court.
- = Reduced barriers compared to in-person attendance (transportation, disability, and associated costs).
- = Colorado state courts in all 22 Judicial Districts are already equipped with technology to provide this access to the public (WebEx).
- = Many municipal courts also have the ability to provide public access online or are planning this investment soon.
- = No new expenditures required for the State or for municipalities.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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