

Helena Area Democrat Legislators

Senator Mary Ann Dunwell
Senator Janet Ellis
Senator Laura Smith

Representative Mary Caferro
Representative Jill Cohenour
Representative Pete Elverum
Representative Luke Muskiewicz
Representative Melissa Romano

May 19, 2026

Mayor Dean and Helena City Commissioners:

We are writing to respectfully request passage of Helena Resolution 21062 with the proposed amendments recently sent to Attorney General Knudsen, which were thoughtfully developed by the City Attorney and outside counsel to ensure that the resolution is legally sound.

As Helena-area legislators, we appreciate how difficult it can be to balance local needs with state and national concerns. As lawmakers beholden to Helena-area constituencies like yourselves, we often find ourselves in situations where federal decisions complicate local decision-making processes and increase political tensions among neighbors. Such complications have been noticeable in Helena lately, and we hope these challenges will not erode your resolve to pass a resolution that reflects the priorities and protects the interests of your constituents.

We think the revised resolution retains the practical value of the original version, which was approved on a 4-1 vote. If passed, it would provide the clear and legal guidance for local coordination with Immigration and Customs Enforcement that many Americans from across the political spectrum are requesting in communities nationwide.

We also think Attorney General Knudsen's decisions to intervene in local decision-making processes in both Helena and Gallatin County have raised important questions about self-determination and local governance that should not be ignored. If passage of the resolution was important before, it is particularly important now. The City of Helena chose to take the high road in response to the Attorney General's concern, and we admire this approach. Now, it's important to follow that road to the end by asserting the right of Montana cities and counties to enact and enforce local policies that comport with state and federal law.

In addition to being state lawmakers, most of us are also your constituents, and we are grateful for your service to the Helena community.

With gratitude,

Representative Mary Caferro
Representative Jill Cohenour
Senator Mary Ann Dunwell
Senator Janet Ellis
Representative Pete Elverum
Representative Luke Muskiewicz
Representative Melissa Romano
Senator Laura Smith