

RESOLUTION OF THE MISSOULA DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE CALLING FOR COOPERATION OF THE MISSOULA COUNTY ATTORNEY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO IMPROVE ITS RESPONSE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

WHEREAS, County Committees are the backbone of the Montana Democratic Party and serve as the public face for the values that Democrats fight for; and

WHEREAS, freedom from sexual assault is a basic human and civil right, and essential for true equality for women, which is a basic value of the Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Democratic Platform states that “of particular concern is the pervasive problem of sexual assault; As sexual assault is the most underreported crime in our communities, it is necessary to address the need for increased expectations and resources for training, investigation, prosecution, and coordinated community responses;” and

WHEREAS, in its recently released report, the Department of Justice “uncovered evidence of a disturbing pattern of deficiencies in the handling of [sexual assault] cases by the Missoula County Attorney’s Office, a pattern that not only denies victims meaningful access to justice, but places the safety of all women in Missoula at risk;”¹ and

WHEREAS, the Missoula County Commissioners recently approved public funding of the Missoula County Attorney’s lawsuit against the Department of Justice regarding jurisdiction and other procedural matters ancillary to this investigation; and

WHEREAS, such a lawsuit distracts from the substantive issue of sexual assault response in our community and delays meaningful and necessary reforms, as well as jeopardizes public trust in our public officials and institutions; and

WHEREAS, in addition, such lawsuit continues to hurt Missoula’s reputation and as such, the University of Montana efforts to attract and retain student enrollment; and

WHEREAS, the Missoula County Attorney and Missoula County Commissioners hold office as elected Democrats.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Missoula County Democratic Central Committee calls on the Missoula County Attorney to cooperate with the U.S. Department of Justice in improving its response to sexual assault cases, and to openly communicate these improvements to the public so that confidence in this office may be restored.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Missoula County Democratic Central Committee calls on the Missoula County Commissioners to withdraw funding for a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Justice and to publicly call on the Missoula County Attorney to cooperate with the Department to improve its response to sexual assault cases; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Missoula County Democratic Central Committee commends and supports the efforts of the City of Missoula and the University of Montana to improve their response to sexual assaults in our community and to prevent the same; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Missoula County Democratic Central Committee directs the Secretary to send copies of this Resolution to the Missoula County Attorney and Missoula County Commissioners.

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Jocelyn Samuels, acting assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division

Attest:

Dave Kendall, Chair, Missoula County Democratic Central Committee

Mary Gray, Secretary, Missoula County Democratic Central Committee