

1 SENATE BILL NO. 229
2 INTRODUCED BY B. USHER
3

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO REIMBURSE
5 COUNTIES FOR ACTUAL WITNESS COSTS IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING
6 AUTHORITY; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTION 26-2-506, MCA; AND PROVIDING
7 AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

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9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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11 **Section 1.** Section 26-2-506, MCA, is amended to read:

12 **"26-2-506. Fees paid by party subpoenaing -- exceptions.** (1) Except as provided in subsection
13 (2), fees and compensation of a witness in all criminal and civil actions must be paid by the party who caused
14 the witness to be subpoenaed.

15 (2) (a) When a witness is subpoenaed by a public defender, as defined in 47-1-103, the fees and
16 expenses must be paid by the office of state public defender as provided in 47-1-119.

17 (b) In a criminal proceeding, when a witness is subpoenaed on behalf of the attorney general or a
18 county attorney, the witness fees and expenses must be paid by the county except as provided in subsection
19 (2)(c).

20 (c) The attorney general ~~may~~ shall reimburse a county for fees and compensation of a AN EXPERT
21 witness up to the amount appropriated for EXPERT witness expenses. ~~If money appropriated for the expenses~~
22 ~~listed in subsection (2)(b) is insufficient to fully fund those expenses, the county is responsible for payment of~~
23 ~~the balance.~~ THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SHALL ADOPT RULES TO PROVIDE FOR REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES,
24 INCLUDING SETTING PRIORITIES FOR EXPENSES AND BALANCING BETWEEN THE NEEDS OF RURAL AND URBAN COUNTIES.

25 (d) In any proceeding in which a defendant or respondent is entitled to a public defender, as
26 defined in 47-1-103, but is acting pro se, the witness fees and expenses must be paid by the office of court
27 administrator, as provided in 3-5-901."
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1 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation.** (1) There is appropriated \$250,000 from the general fund
2 to the department of justice for each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, for the purposes of
3 reimbursing counties for fees and compensation of expert witnesses as provided in 26-2-506(2)(c).

4 (2) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered part of the ongoing
5 base for the next legislative session.

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7 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

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- END -

AMENDED