

THE SUPREME COURT OF MONTANA

MIKE McGRATH
CHIEF JUSTICE



JUSTICE BUILDING
215 NORTH SANDERS
PO BOX 203001
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-3001
TELEPHONE (406) 444-5490
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December 26, 2024

Greg Gianforte
Governor, State of Montana
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Twentieth Judicial District Court

Dear Governor Gianforte:

Attached is a letter from Britt Cotter providing notification that he will not serve as district judge for the Twentieth Judicial District following his election in November. As such, after January 5, 2025, there will be a vacancy for that position.

Pursuant to Montana law, following notice from the Chief Justice the Governor is required to solicit applications to fill the position. I am asking that you initiate the process as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike McGrath".

Mike McGrath
Chief Justice

Attachment

c: Hon. John Mercer
Lyn Fricker, Clerk of District Court, Lake County
Cynthia R. Neste, Clerk of District Court, Sanders County
Kristen Juras, Lieutenant Governor
Dave McAlpin, Supreme Court Administrator

December 22, 2024

Britt Cotter
1 5th Avenue West
Polson, MT 59860

The Honorable Michael McGrath, Chief Justice
The Montana Supreme Court
Room 323, Justice Building, 215 N. Sanders
P.O. Box 203003
Helena, Montana 59620-3003

Dear Chief Justice McGrath,

It has come to my attention that I am the subject of criminal charges brought against me by the Division of Criminal Investigation and the Attorney General's Office of the State of Montana. Defending myself against these charges will require my full time, effort, and resources as I work to protect my family and myself from the harm these allegations have already caused and will continue to cause.

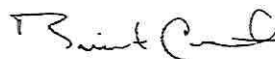
In light of these circumstances, I have made the difficult decision not to proceed with taking the oath of office to serve as District Court Judge for Lake and Sanders Counties, a position I was recently elected to and which falls within your jurisdiction. This decision, while heartbreaking, is one I believe to be in the best interest of my family, our community, and the broader legal community.

My wife, two sons, and extended family are the cornerstone of my life. Coaching youth sports and working alongside parents and community members to make our community a vibrant and welcoming place have been my greatest sources of fulfillment and joy. I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support of my wife, my family, and a community of remarkable friends who have stood by me during this challenging time. Their love, generosity, and encouragement mean more to me than words can express.

The people of Lake and Sanders Counties are resilient and strong, as you well know. While it pains me to step away from the opportunity to serve them, I must focus on fighting for my name, my family's well-being, and our future.

Thank you for your continued service to the people of Montana.

Respectfully,



Britt Cotter