

THE SUPREME COURT OF MONTANA

CORY J. SWANSON
CHIEF JUSTICE



JUSTICE BUILDING
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February 5, 2026

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

Dear Governor Gianforte:

I am writing to inform you of an impending vacancy in the judiciary. District Court Judge Brenda Gilbert has been an outstanding jurist and stalwart of the judicial branch during her two-plus terms on the bench. She has informed me via letter, which I have attached for your review, her intention to retire effective June 1, 2026. This would create a vacancy in the Sixth Judicial District Court for Park and Sweetgrass Counties, for the remainder of her current term. Judge Gilbert was last re-elected in 2024, so her current six-year term ends in December 2030.

Judge Gilbert informed me sufficiently in advance, and I similarly inform you, with the hopes that you can soon begin the process of filling this vacancy. The Sixth Judicial District Court is a single-judge district with a full caseload, including a Treatment Court. Ideally, your appointed replacement would be able to take the oath of office and begin presiding in a seamless transition with Judge Gilbert. However, if events prevent that from happening, I assure you I will utilize my authority of appointing retired judges or assigning other active judges to the caseload, to ensure the work of the Sixth Judicial District Court continues without interruption.

Thank you for your leadership in support of the Montana Judicial Branch. Please call upon me or Court Administrator Dave McAlpin if our services are needed to fill this important vacancy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Swanson", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Cory J. Swanson
Chief Justice

c: Hon. Brenda R. Gilbert
Molly Bradberry, Clerk of Court, Park County
Barb Swanson, Clerk of Court, Sweetgrass County
Kenzi Schnittgen, Court Administrator
Dave McAlpin, Supreme Court Administrator

BRENDA R. GILBERT
District Judge
Sixth Judicial District
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February 3, 2026

Cory Swanson
Chief Justice
Montana Supreme Court
P.O. Box 203001
Helena, Montana
cory.swanson@mt.gov

Dear Chief Justice Swanson,

I am writing to give notice to you of my intent to retire from my position as the District Judge for the Sixth Judicial District, effective June 1, 2026. Accordingly, I am resigning from my role as Chairperson for the Drug Court Advisory Council and from my position as a member of the District Court Council.

I will do everything possible to ensure a smooth transition with the individual appointed to serve the remainder of my term.

It has been a distinct honor and privilege to serve as a district court judge. I wish you well in your ongoing, dedicated leadership of the judicial branch.

Sincerely,



Brenda R. Gilbert

CC: Dave McAlpin, dave.mcalpin@mt.gov