

1 **JOINT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING JUSTICE COURT**

2 **REFORM**

3 2024 GENERAL SESSION

4 STATE OF UTAH

5

6 **LONG TITLE**

7 **General Description:**

8 This resolution expresses support for justice court reform and the phased
9 implementation of justice court reform.

10 **Highlighted Provisions:**

11 This resolution:

- 12 ▶ expresses support for justice court reform;
- 13 ▶ expresses support for the proposal by the Justice Court Reform Task Force to bring
- 14 cases from the justice court into the state court system; and
- 15 ▶ expresses the Legislature's intent to implement justice court reform in phases by
- 16 piloting justice court reform in two counties beginning January 1, 2026.

17 **Special Clauses:**

18 None

19

20 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

21 WHEREAS, the state recognizes the need for a court system that is fair, open, efficient,
22 and responsive to the needs of the residents of Utah;

23 WHEREAS, the Legislature has studied the issue of justice court reform in recent years;

24 WHEREAS, the Legislature created the Justice Court Reform Task Force in H.B. 210,
25 Justice Court Changes, in the 2023 General Session to review the court system of this state and
26 make recommendations regarding justice courts;

27 WHEREAS, the Justice Court Reform Task Force has identified several issues with the
28 structure and operations of justice courts, including:

- 29 • the lack of meaningful appellate review of justice court decisions
- 30 because justice courts are not courts of record and appeals from justice
- 31 courts allow cases to be tried again;

- 32 • the inconsistent provision of indigent defense services and limited access
- 33 to substance abuse and mental health treatment at the justice court level;
- 34 and
- 35 • negative perceptions of justice courts related to the generation of local
- 36 government revenue through fines and fees; and

37 WHEREAS, to address the aforementioned issues, the Justice Court Reform Task Force
38 has proposed bringing certain cases from the justice court into the state court system, including
39 class B and C misdemeanors and small claims cases where the plaintiff is a business:

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah
41 supports justice court reform and the Justice Court Reform Task Force's proposal to bring
42 certain cases from the justice court into the state court system, including class B and C
43 misdemeanors and small claims cases where the plaintiff is a business.

44 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature intends to implement justice court
45 reform in phases with a completion date of January 1, 2031.

46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature intends for the first phase to begin
47 in the 2025 General Session by implementing legislation to pilot justice court reform in two
48 counties starting January 1, 2026.