



# MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack, Governor Gretchen Whitmer Announce Major Task Force to Study Data-Driven Justice Solutions**

*Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration will evaluate Michigan's justice system, make recommendations to protect rights, reduce jail admissions, and improve efficiency*

LANSING, MI, April 17, 2019 – Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack today announced the creation of a bipartisan, interbranch “Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration.” The task force was created by an Executive Order from Governor Whitmer with a directive to examine the factors affecting jail populations and make recommendations that reduce incarceration trends, promote public safety, and safeguard civil rights.

“The number of people in Michigan jails has nearly tripled over the past 40 years—more than half of which are pretrial defendants” said Chief Justice McCormack. “By collecting data and cooperating across the aisle and across all levels of government, I am confident this task force can identify common-sense recommendations that save money, secure our rights, and keep neighborhoods safe. Thank you to Governor Whitmer, Speaker Chatfield, and Senate Majority Leader Shirkey for making justice reform and data-driven solutions a top priority.”

The creation of the task force stemmed from The Pew Charitable Trusts’ acceptance of a [joint request](#) from county and state leaders for significant technical assistance related to the drivers of Michigan’s jail populations. In addition to being supported by data and policy specialists from Pew, the task force will be comprised of Michigan leaders that include judges, legislators, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, county commissioners, and community corrections and victim advocates. The task force will analyze jail data throughout 2019 and craft research-based proposals for legislative and administrative reforms in 2020 that include:

- expanding jail alternatives for those that can be managed in the community;
- safely reducing jail admissions, length of stay, and associated costs;
- supporting consistent, objective, and evidence-based pretrial decision making;
- providing services and support to crime victims;
- improving the efficiency and effectiveness of justice and public safety systems; and,
- aligning practices with current research and constitutional mandates.

Chief Justice McCormack also noted the potential savings are substantial, given that the average cost to detain a pretrial defendant is nearly \$75 per day. More than half of Michigan’s 15,000 jail inmates were pretrial defendants, and based on national data, three-quarters of the pretrial detained population are charged with nonviolent offenses.

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