

# Expand Court Reminder Program



## SB22-18 WILL:

- Improve court appearance rates.
- Save time and money for sheriffs, courts, and police.
- Avoid filling our jails with people who simply missed a court date.

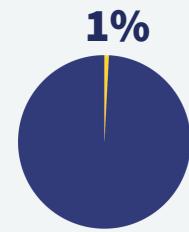


COUNTY SHERIFFS OF COLORADO



## THE ISSUE: Costly Missed Court Appearances

Missed court appearances are costly for courts, sheriffs, police, crime survivors and people accused of crimes. **Court reminders are the only evidence-based method of improving court appearance rates.** The Colorado legislature unanimously passed SB19-036 to create a statewide court text reminder program but, because the program is **opt-in**, it has a **usage rate of only 1%**.

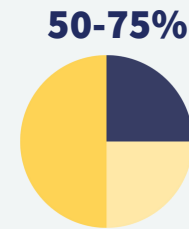


**Current Program Usage**  
OPT-IN SYSTEM UNDER SB19-36

## THE SOLUTION: SB22-18

SB22-18 will transform Colorado’s court text reminder program **from an opt-in system to an opt-out system**, providing:

- Text message court reminders for all people accused of a crime, unless and until they opt-out of the program.
- A link to virtual court appearances when designated by the court.
- A 3 year working group to assess the program and recommend changes to improve effectiveness (with proposed amendment).



**Expected Program Usage**  
OPT-OUT SYSTEM PROPOSED IN SB22-18

**EXPECTED USAGE RATES OF THE PROGRAM: 50-75%.**

## BACKGROUND

### Missed court appearances are costly.

- Arresting and jailing people for missing court (also known as an FTA) costs taxpayers as much as **\$2,000 per FTA.**
- Law enforcement resources should be reserved for people who pose a safety risk, **not for people who simply missed court.**

### Missed court appearances are harmful.

- Short jail stays for a non-criminal FTA can have devastating consequences such as **lost jobs, housing, and custody of children.**
- Missed court appearances **stress crime survivors**, for whom justice is delayed.

### Court reminders work.

- Studies show people most **often miss court for innocuous reasons**, such as job obligations, childcare, transportation or forgetfulness.
- Studies have found court reminders **decrease FTAs by up to 50%.**

### Opt-out programs work best.

- One large study of the opt-out court reminder program in the 4th Judicial District in Minnesota showed **98% of defendants stayed opted-in** to the program.