

IN THE CITY COURT, TOWN OF DARBY, STATE OF MONTANA
BEFORE BARBARA (SKIP) KOHN, CITY JUDGE
101 E. Tanner, P.O. Box 37
Darby, MT 59829
(406)821-3753 or 821-3748

October 26, 2009

DRAFT

Chief Justice Paul Reiber
Supreme Court Building
130 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Chief Justice Paul Reiber,

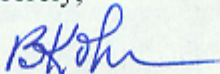
I understand the Vermont Assistant Judges are under attack by the Vermont Supreme Court in order to eliminate non-attorney judges. Montana is one of the many states that appoints and elects non-attorney judges with great success.

I have been a non-attorney judge and my own clerk for over thirteen (13) years in the City Courts of Darby, Stevensville and Pinesdale. City Judges attend two mandatory annual training sessions supervised by the Supreme Court for all elected and appointed Judges of Limited Jurisdiction.

The city judge must reside in the county in which the town or city is located and jurisdiction is only within the city limits. The city judge has civil jurisdiction if the sum claimed does not exceed \$7,000, exclusive of court costs. The city judge has criminal jurisdiction of all misdemeanors punishable by a fine not exceeding \$500 or imprisonment not exceeding 6 (six) months, or both. Applications for search warrants and complaints charging the commission of a felony or a misdemeanor may be filed in the city court. Also, city judges preside over bench and jury trials. We have many more responsibilities, too many to mention.

Non-attorney judges are paid much less than an attorney judge would expect. But have tested as well as, or better than, attorneys. So if your decision rests on a financial issue, non-attorney judges will give you, as the saying goes, more bang for your buck.

Sincerely,



Barbara (Skip) Kohn
Darby, Stevensville & Pinesdale City Judge

xc: Shep Smith, Office of the Speaker of the House
Senator Peter Shumlin