1   HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 31

2   INTRODUCED BY FACEY

3

4   A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF

5   MONTANA ~~AUTHORIZING~~ ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN

6   SERVICES TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS WITHIN THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY

7   FAMILIES PROGRAM THAT DIVERT FAMILIES FROM RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE AND THAT

8   PROVIDE A PATHWAY OUT OF POVERTY.

9

10   WHEREAS, the goal of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is to assist

11   families in achieving economic self-sufficiency, but the evaluation of the Montana program shows that families

12   who leave the program do not attain self-sufficiency and remain in low-income jobs with limited, if any, benefits;

13   and

14   WHEREAS, the TANF caseload has recently increased and the limited funding only allows for cash

15   assistance payments and minimal work experience programs to ensure that the state meets its work participation

16   rate; and

17   WHEREAS, Montana's Human and Community Services Division is committed to assisting families to

18   move out of poverty, not locking them into minimum wage employment that keeps them in poverty; and

19   WHEREAS, Montana has successful initial experience with asset-building programs, assisting over 175

20   low-income families in Missoula, Billings, and Helena to build individual development accounts and to use them

21   to go to school, start businesses, and become homeowners; and

22   WHEREAS, low-income families need a stable income package so that they can achieve personal

23   savings and commercial credit to build assets.

24

25   NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF

26   THE STATE OF MONTANA:

27   That the Department of Public Health and Human Services be ~~authorized~~ ENCOURAGED to develop an

28   innovative program within the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program that diverts families, INCLUDING

29   NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES, from the assistance program and provides a pathway out of poverty. The program

30   should:

1   (1) assist families to build assets, such as personal savings and commercial credit, and use individual

2   development accounts;

3   (2) provide a stable income base on which to build;

4   (3) assist participation in post-secondary education and high-wage training;

5   (4) coordinate access to any other support programs for which a family may qualify including Medicaid

6   and child care; and

7   (5) ~~not count against~~ ~~FOR GOOD CAUSE, ALLOW FOR THE REASONABLE EXTENSION OF~~ NOT COUNT AGAINST

8   the time limits for assistance, BUT IT IS NOT THE INTENT OF THE LEGISLATURE TO EXTEND THE 5-YEAR LIMIT ON TANF

9   ASSISTANCE.

10   ~~BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Public Health and Human Services be~~

11   ~~ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.~~

12   - END -