

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21

2 INTRODUCED BY R. HAMILTON

3

4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE AND
6 SUPPORTING THE RIGHT OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEES TO ADOPT A SCIENCE CURRICULUM
7 BASED ON SOUND SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES AND SUPPORTED BY SCIENCE TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND
8 THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

9

10 WHEREAS, a high quality science education is critically important for Montana students to be able to
11 participate in today's technologically driven society; and

12 WHEREAS, the statewide science standards adopted by the Board of Public Education and implemented
13 through a science curriculum designed by local boards of trustees across the state have resulted in a very high
14 quality education system in our state; and

15 WHEREAS, Montana is fortunate to have many knowledgeable science teachers who are well qualified
16 to determine appropriate strategies and tools for teaching science to Montana's students; and

17 WHEREAS, there are a number of national fundamentalist organizations seeking to force local schools
18 to adopt a science curriculum that conforms to their particular religious beliefs and that includes theories
19 commonly referred to as creationism, creation science, and intelligent design theory; and

20 WHEREAS, in 1999, these organizations were successful in pressuring the Kansas State Board of
21 Education into removing evolution theory from the science curriculum, resulting in the State of Kansas being held
22 up to national ridicule and portraying that state in a very negative light; and

23 WHEREAS, these national efforts undermine a community's local control, a teacher's academic freedom,
24 and a student's opportunity to receive quality science education; and

25 WHEREAS, the doctrine of separation of church and state protects citizens, churches, and religious
26 organizations from the government adopting or endorsing a particular religion's teachings.

27

28 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
29 STATE OF MONTANA:

30 (1) That the Montana Legislature support local adoption of a science curriculum that is based on sound

1 scientific principles and supported by science teachers, parents, and the local community.

2 (2) That the Montana Legislature oppose the efforts of national organizations seeking to impose their
3 religious interpretations of events and phenomena on local schools under the guise of science curricula.

4 (3) That the Montana Legislature recognize the importance of teaching Montana students about religious
5 traditions, beliefs, and history and encourage inclusion of these topics in religious studies, sociology, and history.

6 (4) That the Montana Legislature recognize the importance of and support the separation of church and
7 state to protect religious freedom of all citizens to worship as their conscience guides them.

8 - END -