

HOUSE BILL NO. 552

INTRODUCED BY R. NEILL

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING THE LAWS REGARDING LEGISLATIVE BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION MONTANA; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 5-11-1101, 5-11-1102, AND 5-11-1111, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 5-11-1101, MCA, is amended to read:

"5-11-1101. Legislative findings and purpose. The legislature finds and declares that:

- (1) the purpose of a state-funded public affairs broadcasting program is to provide Montana citizens with increased access to unbiased information about state government deliberations and public policy events through unedited television coverage and other communications technologies; and
- (2) the most efficient and effective means of establishing and maintaining a state-funded public affairs broadcasting program is to assign the enabling responsibilities to the legislative council and require the division to contract with a qualified operator through a competitive bidding process."

Section 2. Section 5-11-1102, MCA, is amended to read:

"5-11-1102. Definitions. As used in this part, unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Broadcasting" means any application of communication technologies to deliver live or delayed programming to a viewing audience, including but not limited to over-the-air television broadcasts, cable television, and the streaming of ~~compressed~~ audio or video signals over the internet.
- (2) "Division" means the legislative services division provided for in 5-11-111.
- (3) "Gavel-to-gavel coverage" means that any ~~camera that is used to capture and transmit broadcast~~ of legislative or administrative proceedings is activated when the presiding officer of a floor session or a committee meeting calls the meeting body to order and is deactivated on adjournment.
- (4) "Operator" means a private, nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code."



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2 **Section 3.** Section 5-11-1111, MCA, is amended to read:

3 **"5-11-1111. State government broadcasting -- structure and governance.** (1) There is a state
4 government broadcasting service administered by the division. The division shall:

5 (a) develop and issue a request for proposals for the ~~provision~~ production of gavel-to-gavel coverage
6 of legislative and administrative proceedings as well as other public affairs programming that is approved by the
7 legislative council;

8 (b) evaluate proposals and, on the basis of selection criteria established by the division, execute a
9 contract for services with the most qualified operator; and

10 (c) cooperate with executive branch and judicial branch officials to facilitate broadcast coverage of state
11 government activities and events that are pertinent to the purpose set forth in 5-11-1101.

12 (2) The legislative council shall assist the division in exercising oversight of the contract with the operator
13 to ensure that broadcasts conform with the following principles of good conduct:

14 (a) Programming must be fair, accurate, and balanced without regard to partisanship or ideology.

15 (b) Programming must be scheduled in a manner that acknowledges the importance of timeliness in the
16 delivery of information.

17 (c) Issue coverage and the scheduling of broadcasts must reflect a thoughtful balance of subject areas,
18 geographic sensitivities, and attention to the various committees and other deliberative bodies engaged in the
19 legislative process.

20 (d) Programming must always be intended to increase public understanding of both the substantive
21 issues and the processes by which the legislature and other bodies seek to resolve problems, address
22 challenges, and seize opportunities for the public good.

23 (e) Programming must ~~reflect the importance of~~ include each branch of government to the extent
24 possible.

25 (f) Production values must be of the highest attainable quality to accurately convey the genuine pace
26 and tenor of governmental activity.

27 (g) Camera angles, shot selection, graphic subtitling, and other aspects of broadcast style and
28 audiovisual content ~~must be~~ are subject to guidance and monitoring by the division to ensure impartiality and
29 respect for the decorum of the legislature and other governmental institutions.

30 (3) The division is responsible for ensuring that the audio and video components of the broadcasting

1 service are maintained in good working order.

2 (4) Operations and maintenance of the cameras, cabling, wiring, electronics, recording equipment, and
3 associated ~~computer~~ information technology in the capitol and the ~~adjacent~~ broadcast production facility are the
4 responsibility of the operator or contractor that the division selects, as provided in subsection (1)(b) under the
5 direction of the division. ~~However, the~~ The operator, the contractor, if any, the division, and the department of
6 administration shall cooperate with ~~the operator~~ each other to ensure broadcast system reliability.

7 (5) ~~The operator and the~~ division shall develop and implement a plan to provide the maximum attainable
8 transmission or distribution of broadcasts, ~~and the contract between the operator and the division may require~~
9 ~~the operator to.~~ The division may enter into agreements with one or more Montana public television
10 organizations, telecommunications firms, nonprofit organizations, or state telecommunications networks for
11 transmission or distribution of broadcasts."

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