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\_\_\_\_\_ RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

INTRODUCED BY \_\_\_\_\_  
(Primary Sponsor)

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF CHILD CARE AND THE WORKFORCE.

WHEREAS, the availability and affordability of child care for working parents in Montana is a significant problem that has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, a 2020 survey by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry found that a majority of businesses in the state report a shortage of child care options in their community and feel that increasing access to child care should be a priority; and

WHEREAS, Montana's economy depends on working parents having access to affordable and high-quality child care options; and

WHEREAS, a 2020 report by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana estimated the Montana economy lost over \$200 million due to inadequate child care in 2019; and

WHEREAS, recent studies and assessments of Montana's child care systems as well as current federal investments in supporting child care make the time ripe for strengthening Montana's child care systems.

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

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to study the impacts on Montana's workforce and economy related to the availability of child care with a specific focus on early care and education for children under 5 years of age.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study examine:

- (1) the current child care landscape in Montana, including:
  - (a) the various programs to support working parents with young children; and
  - (b) the impact of short-term federal stimulus dollars on child care systems in Montana;

1 (2) existing research on the availability of child care and the economic impacts of inadequate child  
2 care on families, businesses, and the Montana economy as a whole;

3 (3) approaches to improve the availability and affordability of child care, including:

4 (a) reforms that reduce the administrative burden on child care providers, while ensuring quality;

5 (b) strategies for developing a targeted infrastructure to support both new child care businesses and  
6 expansion of existing providers to serve more children;

7 (c) ways to reduce barriers to child care business stability, growth, and sustainability;

8 (d) the use of existing economic development tools and workforce investment programs to support  
9 child care business growth; and

10 (e) the development of public-private partnerships and employer-supported child care;

11 (4) strategies for strengthening the child care workforce, including:

12 (a) ensuring competitive and livable wages for child care workers; and

13 (b) supporting education and training programs for child care workers, including apprenticeship  
14 programs; and

15 (5) how other states have addressed child care to support workforce needs.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee request the participation of stakeholders in  
17 conducting the study, including the Department of Labor and Industry, the Department of Commerce, the Early  
18 Childhood and Family Support Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, business and  
19 economic development associations, organizations invested in improving child care options and access, child  
20 care providers and associations, and other interested parties as determined by the committee.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee seek to communicate and collaborate with other  
22 interim and administrative committees of the Legislature that have a meaningful link with child care systems.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review  
24 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2022.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,  
26 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 68th Legislature.

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