

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20

INTRODUCED BY E. MATTHEWS, R. FITZGERALD, J. BERGSTROM, J. LYNCH

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF INCORPORATING REGIONAL COST ADJUSTMENTS IN MONTANA'S SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 69TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the median market value of residential property in Montana school districts varies by more than a factor of 10; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of states include regional cost adjustments in their school funding formulas as a way of ensuring funding equity; and

WHEREAS, Montana's current school funding formula contains no adjustments for the cost of providing educational services to students; and

WHEREAS, the lack of cost adjustments in the school funding formula may negatively impact a school district's ability to provide students with the equality of educational opportunities guaranteed in the Montana Constitution.

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, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

(1) investigate various metrics to determine the extent and degree of regional cost differences that impact a school district's necessary expenditures, both indirectly and directly;

(2) examine how other states have incorporated regional cost adjustments in their school funding formulas; and

(3) determine whether the incorporation of cost adjustments to Montana's school funding formula would help to ensure funding equity and, in doing so, support the guarantee of equality of educational

1 opportunity contained in Montana's Constitution.

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
3 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
5 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2024.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
7 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 69th Legislature.

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