HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

INTRODUCED BY B. LAWSON

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO INTEGRATE THE PRINCIPLES OF BASIC PERSONAL FINANCE INTO THE CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND URGING THE BOARDS OF TRUSTEES OF MONTANA'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO IMPLEMENT THE STANDARDS INTO THE CURRICULA.

WHEREAS, basic personal financial management, including the principles of saving, spending, credit, investment, taxes, and insurance, is an essential life skill necessary to the well-being of all Montanans; and

WHEREAS, an October 2002 white paper by the United States Department of the Treasury's Office of Financial Education states that the average American was able to answer only 42% of the questions on a personal financial quiz correctly, that 4 out of 10 Americans admitted that they are living beyond their means because of their misuse and misunderstanding of credit, and that personal bankruptcy filings more than doubled between 1990 and 2000; and

WHEREAS, the 2002 third biennial survey of financial literacy by the Jump$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy found 68.1% of high school seniors with failing scores, representing an increase from the 59.1% failing in 2000 and the 44.2% failing in 1998; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Treasury's white paper, it is estimated that America's youth spend approximately $150 billion annually, while the survey of financial literacy found that almost one-third of high school seniors already use a credit card and an even higher percentage carry automatic teller machine (ATM) cards; and

WHEREAS, like other complex and dangerous social phenomenon confronting today's youth, personal finance presents more difficult choices and pitfalls than experienced by previous generations, yet public education in this critical life skill has not increased to meet the challenge; and

WHEREAS, a high school financial education course, including an instructor's manual, student workbook, and supplemental materials, has been developed by the National Endowment for Financial Education, the Cooperative Extension System, and the Credit Union National Association and is available at no cost to schools; and

WHEREAS, experience has shown that students will respond to well-executed life skills programs that

have direct practical application to their daily lives; and

WHEREAS, the personal financial responsibility and well-being of the emerging generation will be essential to the overall health and well-being of Montana's future economic and social condition; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that Article X, section 9, subsection (3), of the Montana Constitution provides the Board of Public Education with general supervision over the public school system, which includes the authority to adopt the accreditation standards for public schools; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that under Article X, section 8, of the Montana Constitution the local boards of trustees play a critical role in implementing the accreditation standards adopted by the Board of Public Education.

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

That the Board of Public Education be strongly urged to integrate the principles of basic personal finance into the content and performance standards established for Montana's public schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the boards of trustees of Montana's school districts, in recognition of the importance of preparing the state's youth with critical life skills education, be strongly urged to fully implement the content and performance standards adopted by the Board of Public Education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the Board of Public Education, the Office of Public Instruction, the Montana School Boards Association, the Montana Rural Education Association, the School Administrators of Montana, and the MEA-MFT.

- END -