

HOUSE BILL NO. 410
INTRODUCED BY S. AUGARE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY; ESTABLISHING TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature believes that individuals and their families should have access to the basic necessities of life, which include but are not limited to health care, education, shelter, adequate nutrition, and lives free of violence; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature envisions a Montana that embraces all families and their children with opportunities that will allow them access to the tools they need to achieve economic freedom and that supports policies that empower families in poverty in moving toward the goal of self-sufficiency and full participation in the Montana economy; and

WHEREAS, poverty does not exist in isolation of the economy as a whole and is in fact an existing component of the Montana economy that must be addressed; and

WHEREAS, data reflecting the issues surrounding poverty in Montana includes the facts that in 2004, 19% of Montanan's children lived in poverty, with 7% living in extreme poverty in a family with income at less than 50% of the poverty level and 34% of Montana's children lived in households below 150% of the poverty level in 2004, compared with 29% at the national level, that 33% of children live with parents who do not have full-time, year-round employment, that Montana's child and teen death rates rank fourth in the nation, and that counties surrounding reservations are designated persistent poverty counties with more than 20 years of continuous poverty indicators.

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

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Task force on family economic security. (1) There is a task force on family economic security to research and develop policy recommendations for the state of Montana that will lead to the elimination or reduction of barriers faced by families in achieving economic stability and economic health.

(2) The task force shall review factors affecting economic security, including but not limited to demographic data, education and training, health care needs and medical costs, disabilities, the job market, child

care needs, and energy costs.

(3) The task force shall identify the resources available to address the barriers to economic security and the extent to which those resources are available.

(4) The task force shall seek funding from private sources to supplement its appropriation from the state general fund.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Task force membership -- participation. (1) The task force consists of 15 voting members appointed by the governor as follows:

(a) three representatives from community-based organizations that deal with issues of family support involving children, youth, and families, with members appointed in a manner that achieves geographic representation of all regions of the state, including urban and rural communities;

(b) one representative from the department of public health and human services who works with the temporary assistance for needy families program;

(c) the governor's policy advisor on families;

(d) one representative from each of the eight tribal nations in Montana, chosen from names submitted by each of the tribal governments;

(e) one representative of a program serving senior citizens; and

(f) one representative from the financial community.

(2) (a) Members must be appointed by August 2007, following a period of advertising for applicants willing to serve on the task force.

(b) The task force members shall elect presiding officers at their first meeting.

(3) (a) To provide a strong collaborative effort in alleviating the impacts of poverty and developing strategies for solutions, the task force shall encourage representatives of other state agencies, including but not limited to the office of public instruction and the department of commerce, and other organizations involved in family and economic issues to participate in the task force meetings.

(b) Participants may not vote on issues decided by the task force.

(4) Task force members are entitled to reimbursement for expenses as provided in 2-18-501 through 2-18-503.

(5) The task force is attached to the governor's office of economic development for administrative purposes.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Task force -- meetings -- report. The task force shall:

- (1) meet up to five times during the 2007 biennium;
- (2) make a draft report available for public review by July 2008;
- (3) hold a public hearing on the report in August 2008; and
- (4) complete its report and submit it to state, community, and tribal leaders by October 2008.

NEW SECTION. Section 4. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$60,000 from the state general fund to the governor's office of economic development, as provided for in 2-15-218, for task force operations, including but not limited to research and administrative support and reimbursement for members' meeting expenses.

NEW SECTION. Section 5. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2007.

NEW SECTION. Section 6. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell Chippewa tribe.

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