

SENATE BILL NO. 252
INTRODUCED BY L. LARSON

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT CREATING THE ROAD NAME CHANGE COMMITTEE TO BE FILLED BY APPOINTEES OF THE GOVERNOR FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING CRITERIA AND DETERMINING IF A CURRENT ROAD NAME IS RACIST, DEROGATORY, DEFAMATORY, OR OTHERWISE OFFENSIVE TO AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP; REQUIRING THAT THE ROAD NAME MUST BE CHANGED UPON A RULING OF THE COMMITTEE; AND ESTABLISHING A FUND TO COMPENSATE RESIDENTS OF THE ROAD FOR WHICH A NAME IS CHANGED."

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

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Road name change committee -- establishment of criteria for changing road names. (1) There is a road name change committee. The members of the committee must be representative of different geographical regions of the state. The committee is attached to the office of the governor for administrative purposes as provided in 2-15-121. The governor shall appoint three members to fill the committee, who must be compensated and reimbursed as provided in 2-15-122(5). The committee is composed of:

- (a) an elected officeholder of a municipality in Montana;
- (b) an elected officeholder of a county government in Montana; and
- (c) an elected officeholder of a tribal government in Montana.

(2) Road name change committee members shall serve for a period of 6 years. Following the expiration of their term, a committee member may be reappointed for one additional consecutive term. Committee members shall choose the presiding officer to serve for a period of 4 years. There is no limit on the years that a committee member may serve in the role of presiding officer while a member of the committee.

(3) The road name change committee shall at its first series of meetings develop criteria to determine if the name of a road is anachronistic in nature so as to be offensive to any person or group of persons with regards to race, ethnicity, gender, country of birth, or related personal identities. In developing these criteria, the committee shall consult the U.S. and Montana constitutions and any applicable component of Title 49.

(4) The road name change committee shall subsequently meet as needed to review cases in which the name of a public roadway is challenged to be racist, derogatory, defamatory, or otherwise offensive to an

individual or group. The committee shall hold public meetings in the local area in question as needed to take the following actions:

- (a) receive verbal and written testimony from any person who chooses to comment on the matter;
- (b) review the current name of the road within the context of the established criteria to determine if:
 - (i) the name of the road is considered to be one which is generally known to be racist, derogatory, or defamatory; or
 - (ii) the name of the road is found to be offensive to a group of people, the sentiment of which is established through a significant expression of public input; and
- (c) upon determining that a road name needs to be changed because it meets one or both of the conditions established in subsection (4)(b), refer the matter to the local government, as described in 7-1-102, in whose jurisdiction the road is contained. The local government shall change the name to one that would not raise concerns under the criteria of the committee.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Compensation to impacted residents. There is an account in the state special revenue fund to be used to compensate any person who resides on a road with a name that is required to be changed under the criteria of the road name change criteria in [section 1]. An amount of \$250 must be given to a person who has the person's primary residence on an impacted road to ameliorate the cost of changing a mailbox, mail materials, home business supplies, and related materials.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 and 2] are intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 7, chapter 14, part 1, and the provisions of Title 7, chapter 14, part 1, apply to [sections 1 and 2].

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