

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 30  
INTRODUCED BY R. ZINKE

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO EXAMINE THE PREMIUM COST DRIVERS IN MONTANA'S WORKERS' COMPENSATION SYSTEM AND TO PROPOSE LEGISLATION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 62ND LEGISLATURE TO ADDRESS THE PREMIUM COST DRIVERS.

WHEREAS, Montana has the second highest workers' compensation premium rates in the nation, according to the 2008 Oregon Workers' Compensation Premium Rate Ranking Summary; and

WHEREAS, Montana recorded 6.3 injuries for every 100 full-time equivalent workers in 2007 or 1.5 times the comparable national data of 4.2 injuries for every 100 full-time equivalent workers; and

WHEREAS, Montana's medical costs account for 69% of benefit dollars, according to the National Council for Compensation Insurance State Advisory Forum Report, 2008, and in 2004 Montana's medical benefits were more than 77% greater than the national average, ranking Montana second of 46 jurisdictions surveyed nationwide for the share of medical benefits in workers' compensation costs; and

WHEREAS, the time spent off work after an injury is 26% higher in Montana than the national average, according to the National Council for Compensation Insurance State Advisory Forum Report, 2008.

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, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to conduct a review of Montana's workers' compensation premium cost drivers as compared to premium cost drivers in other Western states with similar industries. The review is to include comparisons on:

- (1) the frequency of claims by types of claims;
- (2) medical costs;
- (3) location of injuries and proximity to medical care;
- (4) duration of medical treatments;
- (5) the incidence of age-related medical conditions;
- (6) the length of time off work from an injury; and

(7) the percentage of open claims.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study identify any additional areas that impact premium cost drivers and the interaction between workers and employers that may affect the premium cost drivers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study incorporate reports from the Labor-Management Advisory Council and stakeholders involved in workers' compensation insurance, including injured workers, attorneys or other representatives for injured workers, insurers, and employers, and that the material from the study be compiled into a report and draft legislation for consideration by the 62nd Legislature.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 62nd Legislature.

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