

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 35
INTRODUCED BY SCHMIDT, MACLAREN

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING THAT AN INTERIM COMMITTEE STUDY MATTERS RELATED TO HEALTH CARE.

WHEREAS, an estimated 19% of the Montana population lacks health insurance coverage; and

WHEREAS, health insurance and access to health care services continue to be of concern at both the federal and state levels; and

WHEREAS, both the Montana Legislature and the U.S. Congress are considering changes involving publicly funded health care programs and reforms to the health care system in general; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has an interest in following federal health care reforms to determine whether opportunities exist to tailor those reforms to best meet the needs and circumstances of Montana; and

WHEREAS, THE COSTS OF MEDICAL CARE MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR AMERICAN COMPANIES TO COMPETE IN THE WORLD AND THE COST OF HEALTH CARE MAKES IT HARDER FOR SMALL BUSINESSES TO SURVIVE; AND

WHEREAS, FAMILIES ARE STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP WITH OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS FOR HEALTH CARE; AND

WHEREAS, Montanans and the Montana Legislature may benefit from ongoing analysis of proposed health care reforms and how they may affect the state.

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 study ongoing federal and state efforts related to health care reform and to make recommendations on state-level initiatives for consideration by the 62nd Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislative Council assign the study to the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee and that this be the primary study assigned to the committee so that committee members can focus on health care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study efforts include the following items and activities:

(1) compiling information from existing sources on the extent to which Montanans lack health insurance coverage or are unable to afford health insurance, as well as the extent to which publicly funded programs

provide health insurance coverage to Montanans;

(2) reviewing existing information and studies on the number and location of health care providers to determine ways to strengthen the primary care system, including an evaluation of medical education opportunities, and to improve education and training opportunities for allied health professionals;

(3) monitoring and evaluating health care changes at the federal level to determine:

(a) whether and how the changes will affect existing health care programs and services available to Montanans;

(b) how the changes may fit with any state-level programs initiated by the 61st Legislature or carried out by the Department of Public Health and Human Services; and

(c) recommend action to be taken through state agencies or through legislation to take advantage of or build on the federal changes;

(4) monitoring the use of federal funds and other sources of funding to develop a health information technology system;

(5) monitoring state and federal efforts related to preventing disease, managing chronic diseases, and promoting health-improvement efforts; and

(6) considering health care reforms proposed by Montana groups involved in health care issues to determine how they would, if enacted or adopted, affect Montanans and whether legislative action would be needed to enact the proposals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study engage the public and relevant stakeholders in discussions related to health care policies and to any resulting strategies designed to provide residents with access to quality health care services at affordable costs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE STUDY WORK WITH THE PUBLIC AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO MAKE SERIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAYS TO REDUCE THE COSTS OF HEALTH CARE.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be completed 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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