

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 33

2 INTRODUCED BY B. BENNETT

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4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON STATE AND COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES TO MODERNIZE
6 ELECTION INFRASTRUCTURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND PROCEDURES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL
7 RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 66TH LEGISLATURE.

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9 WHEREAS, Article II, section 13, of the Montana constitution states "[a]ll elections shall be free and open,
10 and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage"; and

11 WHEREAS, it should be the goal of the Montana Legislature to ensure that all eligible Montanans are
12 able to register and vote in a timely and convenient manner; and

13 WHEREAS, Montana is geographically and culturally diverse, which creates special needs for voters in
14 different parts of our state; and

15 WHEREAS, American Indians represent the largest racial minority population, live in remote parts of
16 Montana, and did not achieve suffrage until 1965; and

17 WHEREAS, vote counting machines and voting machines that are accessible to disabled citizens are
18 now old and out of date, are less reliable, and have already resulted in our counties being sued for over \$100,000
19 because they could not provide legally required access after mechanical breakdowns; and

20 WHEREAS, the state of Montana provides no financial support to counties for their administration of
21 open, accessible elections; and

22 WHEREAS, funding from the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002, which allowed counties to purchase
23 new equipment, has been disbursed and used and there are no prospects for future federal funding; and

24 WHEREAS, the state currently lacks the ability to integrate data from state registries for drivers' licenses,
25 hunting licenses, and other types of licenses and IDs with the Secretary of State's Montana Votes voter
26 registration database; and

27 WHEREAS, Montana is one of only 12 states where citizens have no ability to register to vote online,
28 unlike our neighboring states of Idaho and South Dakota; and

29 WHEREAS, other states are moving to a process that would register voters automatically through
30 information obtained through driver's license and other state identification applications; and

