65th Legislature HJ0033.01

1	HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 33
2	INTRODUCED BY B. BENNETT
3	
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.
8	
9	WHEREAS, Article II, section 13, of the Montana constitution states "[a]II 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18	now old and out of date, are less reliable, and have already resulted in our counties being sued for over \$100,000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

65th Legislature HJ0033.01

1 WHEREAS, Montana has not been able to enter into an interstate compact to share and obtain 2 registration information to ensure people are not registered in other states.

3

6

7

8

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

- 4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 5 STATE OF MONTANA:
  - That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine ways to modernize Montana's election infrastructure, technology, and procedures.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study examine:

- 10 (1) ways to make voting more open and accessible to all Montanans;
  - (2) opportunities for the state and counties to obtain modern and reliable vote tabulating machines and voting machines that are accessible to citizens with disabilities;
    - (3) opportunities to connect state databases to the Montana Votes system to allow for efficient voter registration of eligible Montanans;
    - (4) the unique voting needs of rural areas and tribal reservations and ways to address those needs more effectively:
      - (5) additional federal funding opportunities to support election administration in Montana;
    - (6) opportunities to use technology to allow Montana citizens to register online to vote; and
- 19 (7) opportunities to share and receive voter registration data with other states to strengthen Montana's voter registration lists.
  - BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee request participation of stakeholders in the election process, including county election administrators and election judges, the Office of the Secretary of State, the Office of the Attorney General, school administrators and officials, people with expertise in election technology, groups that work with people with disabilities, representatives from Montana's tribal communities, groups across the political spectrum that register and engage voters, and other interested parties as determined by the committee.
- 27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study be concluded prior to September 15, 2018.
- 28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, 29 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 66th Legislature.

30 - END -

