

## 1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 33

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

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

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

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

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

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20 now old and out of date, are less reliable, and have already resulted in our counties being sued for over \$100,000  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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
7 STATE OF MONTANA:

8 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to  
9 section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine ways to modernize Montana's election infrastructure, technology, and  
10 procedures.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study examine:

12 (1) ways to make voting more open and accessible to all Montanans;

13 (2) opportunities for the state and counties to obtain modern and reliable vote tabulating machines and  
14 voting machines that are accessible to citizens with disabilities;

15 (3) opportunities to connect state databases to the Montana Votes system to allow for efficient voter  
16 registration of eligible Montanans;

17 (4) the unique voting needs of rural areas and tribal reservations and ways to address those needs more  
18 effectively;

19 (5) additional federal funding opportunities to support election administration in Montana;

20 (6) opportunities to use technology to allow Montana citizens to register online to vote; and

21 (7) opportunities to share and receive voter registration data with other states to strengthen Montana's  
22 voter registration lists.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee request participation of stakeholders in the election  
24 process, including county election administrators and election judges, the Office of the Secretary of State, the  
25 Office of the Attorney General, school administrators and officials, people with expertise in election technology,  
26 groups that work with people with disabilities, representatives from Montana's tribal communities, groups across  
27 the political spectrum that register and engage voters, and other interested parties as determined by the  
28 committee.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study be concluded prior to September 15, 2018.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

1 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 66th Legislature.

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