

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 60

INTRODUCED BY K. KELKER

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS BE REPORTED TO THE 67TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, brain science reveals that the human brain achieves 90% of its growth during the first 5 years of life; and

WHEREAS, healthy pregnancies and resilient parenting contribute greatly to the healthy development of children through the age of 5; and

WHEREAS, two-thirds of Montana's young children live with working parents and are therefore in some type of nonparental care for a significant portion of their early years; and

WHEREAS, the number of Montana child care facilities has declined significantly over the past decade, thereby reducing access to child care for Montana's working parents; and

WHEREAS, there are waiting lists for infant child care throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, the cost of child care is between \$700 and \$1,000 per month, which is prohibitive for many working parents in Montana; and

WHEREAS, the wages of child care providers are low; and

WHEREAS, public and private sectors have made increasing investments in the healthy development of children ages 0 to 5 in recent years, and a review of Montana's systems of early childhood care will help ensure a maximum return on these investments; and

WHEREAS, ensuring the availability of affordable, quality child care will create multiple and long-term "wins" for children, families, the business sector, and the Montana economy.

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, to study the child care services available to Montana families of young children and determine whether improvements could be made to the way in which services are provided that would enhance

1 the availability and quality of child care services throughout the state, with particular focus on:

2 (1) examining infant care payments and strategies used in other states to increase the number of infant  
3 and child care slots;

4 (2) investigating ways to increase the number of home child care facilities and to support their  
5 businesses;

6 (3) exploring public/private partnerships to promote healthy pregnancies and resilient parenting, support  
7 affordable child care, and minimize transitions for children and parents;

8 (4) facilitating coordination and alignment between systems impacting early childhood care, including  
9 education to ensure school readiness; and

10 (5) considering how to best measure the benefits of a high quality early childhood care system to  
11 Montana's workforce, economy, and children.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study should seek out the assistance and involvement of business  
13 leaders, workforce and economic development entities, philanthropic organizations and other potential funding  
14 partners, university researchers, the Department of Public Health and Human Services, early childhood care  
15 providers and advocacy groups, and appropriate education agencies and stakeholders.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review  
17 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2020.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,  
19 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 67th Legislature.

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