

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF POSTINCARCERATION EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMER INMATES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 67TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, without relevant job training and skills, an individual released from incarceration might struggle to find employment; and

WHEREAS, a criminal record can also hamper an individual's ability to find employment after release, particularly in careers that require a professional license; and

WHEREAS, the success of an inmate's reentry to the community after incarceration can depend on an individual's ability to secure adequate and stable employment; and

WHEREAS, finding employment after incarceration can improve a released individual's ability to secure housing and ensure the individual can meet any other important financial obligations including any required restitution or child support payments; and

WHEREAS, prison training and employment programs can provide skills that inmates can transfer to employment after release; and

WHEREAS, ARTICLE II, SECTION 28(2), OF THE MONTANA CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THAT "FULL RIGHTS ARE RESTORED BY TERMINATION OF STATE SUPERVISION FOR ANY OFFENSE AGAINST THE STATE"; AND

WHEREAS, ensuring that individuals released from incarceration have the opportunity to access job training and develop usable job skills can be an important part of ensuring public safety and increasing a released individual's chances to successfully integrate back in to a family and community.

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 examine job training for inmates in Montana's prisons.



1 The study should:

2 (1) identify current barriers to employment after release, including employment or professional license  
3 restrictions based on a felony conviction;

4 (2) ANALYZE EXISTING LICENSING PRACTICES AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FACED BY FORMER  
5 OFFENDERS TO DETERMINE HOW THOSE PRACTICES ALIGN WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE II, SECTION 28, OF THE  
6 MONTANA CONSTITUTION;

7 ~~(2)~~(3) compare Montana license restrictions for a person with a felony conviction to those in other states;  
8 ~~(3)~~(4) review existing job training programs offered at Montana prisons, including the Montana State  
9 Prison, the Montana Women's Prison, and contracted private or regional prisons;

10 ~~(4)~~(5) examine successful prison job training programs and funding models in other states to determine  
11 if those models might be appropriate for Montana; ~~and~~

12 (6) IDENTIFY THE RATE OF RECIDIVISM FOR FELONY OFFENDERS WHO ARE RETURNED TO PRISON FOR ACTS  
13 COMMITTED WHILE ON THE JOB AND DETERMINE ANY RISKS TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS NOT ALREADY COVERED BY LAW;  
14 AND

15 ~~(5)~~(7) identify opportunities for future Legislatures to remove barriers to employment on release or to  
16 increase in-prison training opportunities for inmates.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study compare job training provided in men's prisons to that  
18 offered at the women's prison to determine if there is inequality in the resources or types of training provided and  
19 what improvements might be made to increase the comparability of the programs and also to ensure that women  
20 have the opportunity to develop skills that provide a clear career path upon release.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be  
22 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

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

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

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