

HOUSE BILL NO. 135

INTRODUCED BY J. WINDY BOY

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT CREATING A TEMPORARY TRIBAL COLLEGE CREDIT TRANSFER AND STUDENT OPPORTUNITY TASK FORCE TO ENSURE THAT CREDITS EARNED BY STUDENTS AT MONTANA'S SEVEN TRIBAL COLLEGES ARE TRANSFERABLE TO UNITS OF THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND THEREBY IMPROVE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIAN COUNTRY AND ACROSS MONTANA; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE."

WHEREAS, a thriving economy in the 21st century will require more Montanans earning postsecondary credentials and being lifelong learners; and

WHEREAS, despite a decade or more of effort to ensure transferability of credits among Montana's postsecondary institutions, the job is not yet completed; and

WHEREAS, strategies like common course numbering require a coordinated effort among campuses; and

WHEREAS, the governance structures of Montana's various postsecondary institutions present both unique challenges and potentially synergistic opportunities for Montana students.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Tribal college credit transfer and student opportunity task force. (1)

There is a tribal college credit transfer and student opportunity task force. The task force is allocated to the office of the commissioner of higher education for staffing services and administrative purposes only.

- (2) The task force consists of:
 - (a) the presidents of Montana's seven tribal colleges, or the presidents' designees;
 - (b) the commissioner of higher education or the commissioner's designee;
 - (c) a member of the board of regents selected by the chair of the board;
 - (d) four representatives of the Montana university system appointed by the commissioner of higher education:

- 1 (i) two representing the 4-year campuses; and
2 (ii) two representing the 2-year campuses;
3 (e) a member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house in consultation with
4 the house minority leader;
5 (f) a member of the senate appointed by the committee on committees in consultation with the senate
6 minority leader; and
7 (g) the state director of Indian affairs.
8 (3) The task force shall select a presiding officer from its members.
9 (4) The task force shall meet at least quarterly, with its first meeting occurring no later than August 15,
10 2019.
11 (5) Decisions of the task force must be made by majority vote of the task force members.
12 (6) Members of the task force must be reimbursed for travel expenses as provided in 2-18-501 through
13 2-18-503. Members of the task force who are full-time salaried officers or employees of this state or of any
14 political subdivision of this state or of a tribal college are entitled to their regular compensation. Legislator
15 members must be compensated as provided in 5-2-302.
16 (7) Appointments under subsection (2) must be made by July 15, 2019.
17 (8) A vacancy on the task force must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.
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19 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Duties.** (1) The task force shall:
20 (a) review existing transferability of credits between tribal colleges and units of the Montana university
21 system;
22 (b) create a step-by-step plan to ensure transferability of credits between tribal colleges and units of the
23 Montana university system;
24 (c) determine the most efficient and timely manner in which to execute the plan under subsection (1)(b);
25 (d) identify other opportunities to better coordinate programs at the tribal colleges and units of the
26 Montana university system to benefit all Montana students and increase the efficiency of all institutions, including
27 but not limited to:
28 (i) degree and program mapping; and
29 (ii) data collection; and
30 (e) no later than September 15, 2020, report on the work of the task force and progress made to the

- 1 education interim committee and the state-tribal relations committee, as provided for in 5-11-210, including:
- 2 (i) a timeline for completion of the task force's duties;
- 3 (ii) any statutory changes or other legislative action that the task force determines would benefit credit
- 4 transferability or improve coordination between tribal colleges and units of the Montana university system.
- 5 (2) The commissioner of higher education may utilize funds appropriated under [section 3] for:
- 6 (a) convening the task force;
- 7 (b) technical assistance provided to the tribal colleges; and
- 8 (c) grants to the tribal colleges to support common course numbering and other efforts to improve
- 9 coordination with the Montana university system.

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11 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$100,000 from the general fund to

12 the office of the commissioner of higher education for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, for the purposes of

13 funding the task force under [section 1].

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15 **NEW SECTION. Section 4. Notification to tribal governments.** The secretary of state shall send a

16 copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell

17 Chippewa tribe.

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19 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2019.

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21 **NEW SECTION. Section 6. Termination.** [This act] terminates June 30, 2021.

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