



## Montana Legislative Services Division

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Office of Research and Policy Analysis | Legislative Environmental Policy Office

TO: Legislative Council  
FROM: Joe Kolman, Research Director  
DATE: May 12, 2021  
RE: Welcome to the Interim

If the legislative session is akin to drinking from a firehose, the interim is the opportunity to both sip at leisure and enjoy long slow pulls from the fountain of information that your staff provides.

Interim committees are important in myriad ways, including tackling topics of the day and agency oversight. But the most basic component is the studies and bills passed by the prior Legislature.

The 67th Legislature passed 8 study bills; six of which are awaiting the governor's decision. Study bills are conducted as written. Study resolutions, of which the Legislature passed and recommended 28, are assigned by the Legislative Council.

**Table 1** is the ranking of the study resolutions.

Prior to the May 24 meeting, staff will provide Council with a preliminary study outline for each study and the recommended committee to handle the study. These are estimates and suggestions for Council to consider. After studies are assigned, each committee adopts a studyplan and work schedule, including committee meetings and deliverables. This determines the allocation of time and other resources.

Please contact me if you have comments or questions regarding the poll or interim studies and activities generally.

Respectfully,

Joe Kolman  
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Table 1: Ranking of the Studies

Resolution Number	Rank	Points	Study Short Title
HJ 36	1	2336	Study on residential property taxes
HJ 08	2	2042	Study pension laws
HJ 31	3	1886	Study of criminal justice system data in Montana
SJ 14	4	1846	Study mental health system
HJ 06	5	1792	Study natural resources trust fund
HJ 27	6	1625	Study funding of conservation districts
HJ 04	7	1581	Study criminal proceedings and commitment of people with mental illness
SJ 33	8	1510	Study Montana's electric grid capacity
SJ 03	9	1457	Study advanced nuclear reactors
HJ 45	10	1394	Study factors triggering child removals and family reunification
HJ 44	11	1352	Study the foster care system
HJ 35	12	1326	Study children's mental health system
HJ 40	13	1236	Judicial standards commission study and audit request
HJ 48	14	1225	Study facial recognition technology
HJ 34	15	1193	Study pretrial and presentence diversion programs
HJ 47	16	1133	Study and audit educational programs for incarcerated
HJ 39	17	1123	Study involuntary commitment of people with Alzheimer's/dementia
HJ 30	18	1083	Study of county water and/or sewer districts
HJ 49	19	1060	Study benefits cliff in public assistance programs
SJ 31	20	999	Study implementation of marijuana program
SJ 13	21	939	Study prevailing wage laws
HJ 29	22	937	Study of victim services and funding in Montana
SJ 26	23	831	Study women's prison
SJ 35	24	827	Study DPHHS procurement practices
HJ 10	25	807	Study autonomous vehicle use
HJ 37	26	797	Study Lake Koochanusa selenium standard
SJ 23	27	614	Study allowing public notice via certain electronic publications
SJ 28	28	582	Study Flathead River erosion

IN COMPARISON:  
 27 study resolutions in 2019  
 20 study requests in 2017  
 15 study requests in 2015  
 17 study requests in 2013

IN COMPARISON:  
 Response Rates:  
 2021 – 83%  
 2019 – 59%

Of Note:

- For the first time, the poll was conducted entirely electronically. This saved time for legislators and staff and may have contributed to a very high response rate.
- The poll awarded points based on the rankings in individual ballots. Each top-ranked study -- rated #1 on an individual ballot -- received 27 points. Each second-ranked study -- rated #2 on a ballot -- received 26 points, and so on through the study ranked 28th, which received 1 point.
- The average number of points received by the 28 studies is 1269. Twelve studies earned more than 1269 points; 16 studies received fewer.