



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 68TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, in 2009, the Montana Legislature enacted a requirement that the Department of Public Health and Human Services report to the Legislature about the number of Montana children who are placed out of state for mental health treatment and the reasons for those out-of-state placements; and

WHEREAS, since reporting began, significant numbers of children have been sent to service providers in other states, including children who are involved in the child protective services system and the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, Montana's publicly funded children's mental health system experienced system-altering cutbacks in Fiscal Year 2018 after Fiscal Year 2017 state revenue came in below anticipated levels, triggering a range of cuts to mental health services and other programs; and

WHEREAS, all stakeholders have a strong interest in diverting children in need of intensive mental health services from out-of-state placements if the services are available or can be reasonably made available in Montana; and

WHEREAS, there may be gaps in Montana's service system for children, leading to at least some of the out-of-state placements that occur each year.

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 or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to undertake a comprehensive review of the elements of

Montana's mental health system for children to determine:

(1) how children become involved in the mental health system, including children who are involved with the child protective or juvenile justice systems, and the reasons some of the children are placed in psychiatric or other facilities that are located outside of Montana;

(2) whether gaps exist in Montana's service system that cause children to be sent to out-of-state services;

(3) the prevention systems that exist in Montana for children to avoid placement in psychiatric facilities either in Montana or outside of Montana; and

(4) the steps that the Legislature or executive branch could take to improve the system of children's mental health services in this state to avoid psychiatric institutional placements for children and meet their needs in less-restrictive settings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include input from appropriate stakeholders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 68th Legislature.

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