

2021 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS

OVERVIEW

The 2021 Legislature enacted a number of bills related to state-tribal relations and Indian Country. This summary provides an overview of major legislation and budget provisions of House Bill 2, but is not an exhaustive list. To search for additional legislation of interest to you, please visit: <http://leg.mt.gov> and click on "Bill Search".

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

SB 14 – Allows tribal governments to participate in the 9-1-1 grant program.

SB 297 – Creates ConnectMT Act to establish broadband infrastructure deployment.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

SJ 26 – Requests an interim study of the Women's Prison in Billings.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HB 2 – Appropriates \$1.75 million in general fund for the biennium to the Indian Country Economic Development grant program at the Department of Commerce.

HB 644 – Establishes the tribal computer programming boost scholarship program to support computer programming high school courses on Indian reservations, increase interest among Indian students in pursuing computer programming and other technology-related careers, and enhance technology-related economic development in Indian country.

EDUCATION

HB 2 – Appropriates the following:

- \$1.5 million in general fund to the Office of Public Instruction for Montana Indian Language Preservation Program;
- \$1.675 million in general fund to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to reimburse tribal colleges for costs associated with resident nonbeneficiary (nontribal member) students.
- \$350,000 in general fund for HiSET (formerly GED) programs at tribal colleges.

HB 403 – Creates a "grown your own" teacher grant program and appropriates \$1 million in general fund to the Commissioner of Higher Education.

HB 644 – Establishes the tribal computer programming boost scholarship program to support computer programming high school courses on Indian reservations, increase interest among Indian students in pursuing computer programming and other technology-related careers, and enhance technology-related economic development in Indian country.

SB 18* – Allows students who experienced an educational disruption to graduate if they meet the minimum credit requirement established by the Board of Public Education even if their school district has a higher credit requirement.

FINANCE

HB 632 – Implements the American Rescue Plan Act, providing appropriations and allocations of federal stimulus and COVID recovery funds.

SB 14 – Allows tribal governments to participate in the 9-1-1 grant program.

GOVERNMENT

HB 34* - Revises statutes to reflect federal recognition of the Little Shell.

LANGUAGE

HB 2 – Appropriates \$1.5 million for the biennium to Office of Public Instruction for the Montana Indian Language Preservation Program.

HB 671 – Transfers administration of the Montana Indian Language Preservation Program from the Department of Commerce to the Office of Public Instruction and makes the program, originally enacted in 2013, permanent.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

HB 309 – Authorizes tribal law enforcement agencies to take abandoned vehicles into custody if the tribal government has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Highway Patrol, the county sheriff, or city police.

HB 656 – Requires county reimbursement for assumption of criminal jurisdiction within the Flathead Reservation.

SB 14 – Allows tribal governments to participate in the 9-1-1 grant program.

LIVESTOCK

HB 318 – Clarifies the per capita fee for livestock does not apply to bison owned by a tribal member or tribe and located on fee land or tribal land within the boundaries of a reservation.

SB 26 – Clarifies livestock producers on tribal lands are eligible for reimbursements from the livestock loss mitigation program.

MISSING PERSONS AND RUNAWAY YOUTH

HB 35* – Establishes a missing persons review commission.

HB 98* – Extends the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force and the Looping in Native Communities grant program to June 30, 2023.

SB 4* – Extends the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force.

SB 17* – Clarifies minors' ability to disaffirm contracts for housing is restricted.

SB 18* – Allows students who experienced an educational disruption to graduate if they meet the minimum credit requirement established by the Board of Public Education even if their school district has a higher credit requirement.

RECREATION

SJ 5 – Urges the National Park Service to include Sacagawea on Lewis and Clark trail designation signs.

TAXATION

HB 701 – Revises laws related to the taxation of marijuana.

SB 214 – Revises the temporary property tax exemption for tribal property for which a tribe is seeking trust status from the federal government. Allows recapture of property taxes if a trust application is denied or the 5-year exemption period expires while the application remains pending.

TRANSPORTATION

SB 3* – Allows designated motor carrier services employees to cite drivers for failure to chain up within reservation boundaries if the tribal government has entered into an agreement with the Department of Transportation.

SB 96 – Establish the Helen Clarke memorial highway in Glacier County.

WILDLIFE

HB 302 – Requires county commissioners to authorize the transplantation or relocation by the Departments of Livestock or Fish, Wildlife, and Parks of any wild buffalo or wild bison into that county except for proposals to transplant or relocate the animals to a qualified tribal entity.

Outcome of Legislation Proposed by 2019-2020 State-Tribal Relations Committee

HB 35	Establish a missing persons review commission	Passed
HB 36	Establish a missing persons response team training grant program	Failed
HB 98	Extend the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force and the Looping in Native Communities grant program	Passed
SB 3	Revise motor carrier authority within reservation boundaries	Passed
SB 4	Extend the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force	Passed
SB 16	Allow minors to consent to emergency shelter and services	Failed
SB 17	Clarify minors' ability to disaffirm contracts for housing is restricted	Passed
SB 18	Establish graduation requirements for educationally disrupted youth	Passed
SB 48	Allow transfer of certain highway funding to tribes	Failed