

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21

INTRODUCED BY K. HANSEN

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE STUDY OF THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE TO SEEK WAYS IN WHICH IT CAN BE IMPROVED TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

WHEREAS, Montana is the only term-limited, biennial, citizen legislature and its policies, procedures, calendaring, and schedule should be reviewed for effectiveness and possible improvements; and

WHEREAS, the increasing intensity and duration of election cycles and the legislative calendar have complicated recruiting efforts for legislative candidates; and

WHEREAS, newly elected legislators must begin their first session within 2 months of being elected, which does not provide sufficient time for training and preparation for the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, the legislative interim committee structure and functions were last changed over 10 years ago and need to be analyzed for effectiveness and possible improvement; and

WHEREAS, legislators receive a minimal amount of pay compared to the cost of relocating their homes for 4 months, the costs to their employers and businesses, and the unreimbursed costs to represent their constituencies, such as local meeting travel, and communication costs, such as phone charges and postage; and

WHEREAS, legislative rules are complicated and there may be methods to streamline them and make them more useable.

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 the current legislative calendar, processes, and procedures to determine ways in which the Legislature could be made more effective and recruitment to the Legislature more attractive and to determine whether there are pay and benefits concerns that need to be addressed in order for candidates to be recruited and legislators to have sufficient resources to be able to serve their constituencies effectively.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that other states' legislatures, especially states that have term limits, are



1 biennial, or are citizen legislatures, be reviewed for ideas for improvement.

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

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
5 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2014.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
7 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 64th Legislature.

8 - END -