

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 65

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4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE IN MONTANA; AND
6 REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.7
8 WHEREAS, Montana law prohibits individuals from driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or
9 drugs; and10 WHEREAS, Montana has the highest DUI rate in the country and was ranked as the worst state for
11 drunk driving, according to a study released by Forbes in January 2025; and12 WHEREAS, Montana saw a statewide average of approximately 7,300 reported DUI arrests a year
13 between 2011 and 2021, not including arrests made by tribal law enforcement; and14 WHEREAS, according to data available from the Montana Department of Transportation, between
15 2011 and 2020, 1,227 people were killed in crashes involving an impaired driver in Montana and another 2,997
16 people were seriously injured; and17 WHEREAS, the 69th Legislature heard numerous bills seeking to deter DUI offenses, including
18 measures seeking to increase penalties, revise sentencing requirements, and expand the types of substances
19 to which DUI laws would apply; and20 WHEREAS, the last time Montana's DUI laws were studied by a legislative interim committee was
21 during the 2009-2010 interim, and changes in technology, policy, and available research and data have likely
22 occurred since that study concluded; and23 WHEREAS, certain factors may impact a person's decision to drive under the influence in Montana,
24 including limited availability of transportation alternatives and the locations of bars relative to population
25 centers; and26 WHEREAS, Montana has historically had a permissive culture regarding drinking and driving that
27 continues today; and

28 WHEREAS, 27 states have taken measures, such as mandating or highly incentivizing ignition

1 interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, even for first-time offenders; and

2 WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified strategies to prevent
3 impaired driving; and

4 WHEREAS, DUI offenses continue to impact the safety of citizens on Montana roadways with 203
5 fatalities in 2024 and 34 so far in 2025.

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7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
8 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

9 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
10 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

11 (1) review Montana's current statutory scheme related to driving under the influence of alcohol or
12 drugs;

13 (2) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Montana's current DUI statutes, particularly the
14 effectiveness of penalties in deterring offenses, and how Montana's laws compare or contrast to those of other
15 states;

16 (3) examine Montana's current rates of incarceration due to DUI convictions, available treatment
17 options for offenders, and possible alternatives to incarceration; and

18 (4) analyze factors that may contribute to the prevalence of DUI problems in Montana, including
19 whether there is a culture of acceptance of driving under the influence and what, if anything, the Legislature
20 might do to address this issue.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
22 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
24 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

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