

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34

INTRODUCED BY D. LENZ

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF DAY-CARE AVAILABILITY, DIVERSITY, AND CHOICE THROUGHOUT THE MANY DIFFERENT REGIONS OF MONTANA AND TO PROPOSE IMPROVEMENTS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO DAY CARE AND PROMOTE THE PROVISION OF DAY CARE IN MONTANA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, barriers exist to providing and accessing day care; and

WHEREAS, it is increasingly expensive and rare to find suitable day-care placements for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children in communities throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Montana's economy depends on the accessibility of affordable, high-quality child-care options so that parents may participate in the workforce; and

WHEREAS, the 51st Montana Legislature intended to increase access to diverse, adequate, affordable day care with the Montana Child Care Act of 1989; and

WHEREAS, we are not achieving the goals of the Montana Child Care Act.

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 investigate barriers to providing and accessing day care in the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee:

(1) consider the experiences and challenges of parents related to finding appropriate, affordable day care in their communities, including:

(a) availability;

- 1 (b) quality and safety; and
- 2 (c) affordability;
- 3 (2) consider the experiences and the challenges of day-care providers in complying with related
- 4 administrative rules and state laws, including:
- 5 (a) licensing, such as ease of licensing procedures;
- 6 (b) regulation and compliance;
- 7 (c) accessibility;
- 8 (d) liability; and
- 9 (e) policies that restrict expansion;
- 10 (3) compare the day-care laws and rules of our neighboring states to see how modern
- 11 improvements could be made to Montana's policies;
- 12 (4) consider data and reports from the Legislative Audit Division and the Department of Labor and
- 13 Industry regarding:
- 14 (a) registration and licensing rules promulgation and enforcement;
- 15 (b) regulations affecting day-care business owners; and
- 16 (c) workforce-related concerns, including the child-care workforce and how access to child care
- 17 impacts the workforce generally;
- 18 (5) examine approaches to improve the availability and affordability of child care, including:
- 19 (a) reforms that reduce the administrative burden on day-care providers while maintaining the
- 20 quality of day care;
- 21 (b) reduction of barriers to day-care business stability, growth, and sustainability; and
- 22 (c) ways in which the state can leverage existing nongovernment economic development tools to
- 23 support business growth in the day-care sector;
- 24 (6) consider other pertinent information pertaining to barriers to providing and accessing day care;
- 25 (7) recommend strategies to strengthen the day-care workforce by supporting education and
- 26 training programs, including apprenticeships;
- 27 (8) recommend changes to day-care laws, through proposed legislation, to increase access and
- 28 provision of legal day-care options for Montana families; and

1           (9)       recommend changes to administrative rules related to day care that will bring the rules into  
2   compliance with state laws and remove barriers to providing and accessing day care.

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

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

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