HOUSE BILL NO. 284

INTRODUCED BY C. HINKLE, L. SCHUBERT, K. ZOLNIKOV, B. MITCHELL, K. SEEKINS-CROWE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT CREATING A MONTANA UNIVERSITY INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE; PROVIDING DUTIES AND MEMBERS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING FOR CONTINGENT VOIDNESS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Montana university system investigation committee -- membership -- meetings.** (1) (a) There is a committee to investigate civil rights violations and acts of censorship committed by the Montana university system. The committee shall gather testimony on the record from Montana students on any civil rights violations or acts of censorship that the students have experienced or witnessed at Montana public universities and colleges and make findings and recommendations for state and federal officials.

(b) The committee shall report in physical and electronic copy all findings and recommendations to the president of the United States, the United States department of justice, the United States department of education, the leadership of both houses of the United States congress, all members of the Montana congressional delegation, the governor of Montana, the Montana department of justice, the office of public instruction, the speaker of the Montana house of representatives, and the president of the Montana senate.

(2) The committee consists of ~~six~~ EIGHT legislators appointed as follows:

(a) ~~three~~ FOUR members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house~~.~~, ~~One of the members~~ TWO OF WHOM must be ~~a member~~ MEMBERS of the minority party and be appointed after consultation with the minority leader~~.~~ ; AND

(b) ~~three~~ FOUR members of the senate appointed by the committee on committees~~.~~, ~~One of the members~~ TWO OF WHOM must be ~~a member~~ MEMBERS of the minority party.

(3) The appointments must be made within 30 days of [the effective date of this act]. A vacancy on the committee must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(4) The committee shall elect a presiding officer and a vice presiding officer.

(5) A committee member is entitled to salary and expenses as provided in 5-2-302.

(6) The committee may not meet more than three times and shall complete its work by September 15, 2026.

(7) The legislative services division shall provide staff assistance to the committee.

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Appropriation.** There is appropriated ~~$13,500~~ $23,000 from the general fund to the legislative services division for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, for the purpose of reimbursing committee members as provided in [section 1].

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Contingent voidness.** (1) Pursuant to Joint Rule 40-65, if [this act] does not include an appropriation prior to being transmitted to the governor, then [this act] is void.

(2) If the appropriation in [section 2] is vetoed, then [this act] is void.

NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

NEW SECTION. **Section 5. Termination.** [This act] terminates December 31, 2026.

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