_____ JOINT RESOLUTION NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY _____
(Primary Sponsor)

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING AND THE QUALIFICATIONS OF INVESTIGATORS WITHIN MONTANA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, victims of serious crimes in Montana deserve to have those crimes investigated by members of law enforcement with training and expertise specific to those offenses; and

WHEREAS, according to the most recent Montana Law Enforcement Employment Survey administered by the Montana Board of Crime Control, there are approximately 117 law enforcement agencies across Montana, which are made up of officers with varying levels of training and experience in advanced investigation techniques; and

WHEREAS, of the 55 county sheriff's departments in Montana, 16 of those departments employ five or fewer law enforcement officers, and of the 46 municipal police departments, 22 employ five or fewer officers; and

WHEREAS, investigations of sexual assaults and homicides demand a higher level of training and skill than is acquired by obtaining a basic POST certification from the Public Safety Officer Standards and Training Council; and

WHEREAS, requiring law enforcement officers to receive advanced training increases the probability of successful resolutions to sexual assault and homicide cases and helps to avoid false charges and inadequate case preparation and decreases the likelihood of a successful appeal following a conviction.

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:

(1) review training opportunities related to investigating serious crimes, including homicide and related offenses as described in Title 45, chapter 5, part 1, and sexual crimes as described in Title 45, chapter 5, part 5, that are currently available to Montana peace officers;

(2) survey Montana law enforcement agencies and review the availability and quantity of peace officers who are qualified to investigate the crimes enumerated in subsection (1); and

(3) examine opportunities to increase the number of qualified investigators in Montana and, if necessary, consider legislation to help mitigate current deficiencies.

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

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

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