_____ 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 COORDINATED HOMELESS SERVICES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, 9,352 Montanans needed shelter services in 2023; and

WHEREAS, 3,215 of those Montanans reported having at least one type of disabling condition; and

WHEREAS, stable housing results in better outcomes for individuals with physical disabilities, mental health disorders, or substance abuse disorders; and

WHEREAS, between 2022 and 2024 the number of people in Montana seeking homeless services increased by 10% and the number of chronically homeless people in Montana increased by 13.5%, according to the Homeless Management Information System; and

WHEREAS, an evaluation conducted by the Montana Healthcare Foundation on permanent supportive housing programs in Montana found a 48% reduction in detention center costs, a 3.8 times reduction in emergency visits, and a 6.7 times reduction in total health costs after 6 months of being housed; and

WHEREAS, people who receive permanent supportive housing have a 98.12% retentional rate, which was indicated by the percentage of people in permanent housing programs, excluding rapid rehousing programs, retaining housing during the reporting year.

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 conduct a meaningful and robust study on the benefits to the state when homeless service providers are able to provide coordinated homeless services, including wraparound services, and permanent supportive housing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

(1) review available wraparound services, which refers to stabilizing services as part of a strengths-based planning process that occurs in a team setting to engage with children, youth, and their families;

(2) review services that may be applied to any housing development for homeless individuals to access safe, decent, and affordable housing; and

(3) review permanent supportive housing opportunities, which REFERS to permanent housing in which housing assistance, such as long-term leasing or rental assistance, and supportive services are provided to assist households with at least one member with a disability in achieving housing stability.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, in relation to wraparound services and permanent supportive housing, the committee examine the efficacy, cost savings and offsets related to HEALTH CARE and public safety and consider state programs that may support these service models.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee examine all available homelessness data in Montana, including data related to the last housed location of individuals seeking homeless services and where rural individuals without stable housing may seek services or shelter. The committee shall make a good faith effort to examine data or ANECDOTAL homelessness information from EACH county in Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include input from appropriate stakeholders, including but not limited to homeless shelter directors and staff, homeless services providers, Montanans who have experienced homelessness, homelessness experts and advocates, local governments, and appropriate state department staff.

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

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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