_____ 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 ON SPECIAL EDUCATION; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, developing the full educational potential of each person is the constitutionally enshrined goal of the people in establishing Montana's system of education; and

WHEREAS, this includes developing the full educational potential of children with disabilities through special education and related services; and

WHEREAS, special education law and funding are complicated policy and budget areas that are often misunderstood and can change with court decisions and federal policy shifts; and

WHEREAS, having more legislators familiar with special education will help ensure timely and prudent state policy and budget decisions that support Montana's constitutional goal in this evolving landscape.

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 study special education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

(1) collaborate in this study with:

(a) the Board of Public Education;

(b) the Office of Public Instruction;

(c) school district special education directors;

(d) special education cooperative directors;

(e) parents of children with disabilities; and

(f) disability advocacy organizations;

(2) establish a basic understanding of special education law, terminology, and funding;

(3) explore the following:

(a) the educational rights and needs of special education and regular education students;

(b) the increasing intensity of need and the number of children with specific disabilities;

(c) the availability of special education teachers, school psychologists, and related service specialists to provide a free, appropriate public education to children with disabilities; and

(d) any other topic related to special education determined by the committee; and

(4) closely monitor changes in federal special education policy and funding.

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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