

1 _____ JOINT RESOLUTION NO. _____
2 INTRODUCED BY _____
3 (Primary Sponsor)

4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO REVIEW THE ELECTION AND EVALUATION OF
6 JUDGES AND JUSTICES IN MONTANA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE
7 REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

9 WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature has heard numerous bills and hours of testimony during the last
10 few sessions regarding changes to the way Montanans elect or otherwise select judges and justices; and

11 WHEREAS, during these years, expert and lay witnesses provided a variety of ideas and options that
12 merit a more thorough review of the methods of selecting the officers of the Judicial Branch that other
13 jurisdictions have adopted around the country as well as new ideas that may not have been implemented in any
14 state as of today; and

15 WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature recognizes that changes to Montana laws and our Montana
16 Constitution could aid the Judicial Branch and that it is in Montanans' interest to investigate, consider, and
17 compare options regarding judicial selection, judicial transparency and evaluations, and methods of informing
18 the public about judges, justices, and judicial candidates.

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
21 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

22 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
23 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

24 (1) review and analyze options to implement more transparency in Montana's judicial selection
25 system;

(2) compare other methods of electing or selecting the judiciary, performing judicial evaluations, and conducting informational forums for all candidates running for a judicial office to inform voters;

28 (3) change the way Montanans elect or otherwise select judges and justices; and

1 (4) determine whether legislative or constitutional changes are warranted to our current judicial
2 selection structure.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study involve input and feedback from stakeholders, including
4 retired judges and justices, representatives of the Governor's office, attorneys and others involved in court
5 proceedings, and the public.

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

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

10 - END -