

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21

INTRODUCED BY D. SANDS, C. BOLAND, M. CAFERRO, J. POMNICHOWSKI, J. WELBORN

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE AND VOLUNTEER FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE SYSTEMS; REQUESTING THAT THE STUDY EXAMINE COVERAGE AREAS, PERSONNEL SHORTAGES, TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, EQUIPMENT NEEDS, AND COMPENSATION; AND REQUESTING THAT STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING THE VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SERVICES BE INCLUDED IN A STUDY REPORT.

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature recognizes the need for quality emergency medical services and an effective emergency care system that provides quality care and treatment for victims of sudden and serious injury or illness from first response through initial stabilization and subsequent emergency treatment; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature also recognizes the need for volunteer firefighters throughout the state to provide prompt fire protection services as well as medical first responder services; and

WHEREAS, many factors are contributing to a shortage of volunteer emergency medical service providers and volunteer firefighters, including changing demographics, employers' resistance to allowing volunteers to serve, and lack of incentives to serve; and

WHEREAS, emergency medical and volunteer fire protection services are particularly important in less densely populated areas where access to health care and fire protection services is often limited; and

WHEREAS, the vital nature of emergency medical and fire protection services and the state of constant readiness required to maintain adequate services pose special challenges for rural communities, including adequate funding; recruitment, retention, and training of volunteers and other personnel; and modern communications and medical services and fire protection equipment.

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, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to examine the availability, viability, and sustainability of emergency medical and volunteer firefighter services in Montana.



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee or assigned staff:

2 (1) assess the current emergency medical care and volunteer fire protection systems in Montana;

3 (2) examine statutory and nonstatutory training and education requirements for emergency medical  
4 service providers and volunteer fire protection providers;

5 (3) examine the size of the coverage areas and populations that local emergency medical providers and  
6 volunteer fire protection providers serve;

7 (4) identify areas of the state where personnel shortages, long distances to travel to an incident,  
8 insufficiency of equipment, and other factors are resulting in delayed response times and inadequate response;

9 (5) review adequacy of equipment, including vehicles, medical equipment, and communications  
10 equipment available to the providers;

11 (6) examine compensation, benefits, and incentives offered to personnel and explore alternatives to  
12 funding emergency medical and fire protection services; and

13 (7) identify and report on strategies for enhancing the viability and sustainability of the services.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the participants in the study include but not be limited to local  
15 emergency service providers; local volunteer fire protection providers; emergency medical services systems;  
16 hospitals, physicians, and other health care providers; representatives of local governments; tribal disaster and  
17 emergency services agencies; organizations that represent emergency medical service providers, volunteer  
18 firefighters, fire chiefs, and other appropriate entities; the Department of Public Health and Human Services; and  
19 the Disaster and Emergency Services Division of the Department of Military Affairs.

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

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review  
23 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2018.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,  
25 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 66th Legislature.

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