



1 *House* JOINT RESOLUTION NO. *54*  
 2 INTRODUCED BY *Frank Bradley, Ed Egan, Wynne Russell, Howell, Quinn, Kelly, Brubaker*  
 3  
 4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF  
 5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING  
 6 ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERIM COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND  
 7 FAMILIES.

8  
 9 WHEREAS, in fiscal year 1989, 3,961 Montana children and  
 10 youth were removed from their families and placed in foster  
 11 homes, group homes, residential treatment facilities,  
 12 psychiatric hospitals, and state youth correctional  
 13 facilities, costing taxpayers \$21.27 million; and

14 WHEREAS, traditionally, most public resources have been  
 15 focused toward families in crisis or toward assisting  
 16 families after breakup has already occurred; and

17 WHEREAS, because of the high level of expenditures  
 18 required to provide out-of-home placement, many experts now  
 19 question whether many of these expenses could be avoided if  
 20 family-based services were established to enable a family to  
 21 stay together; and

22 WHEREAS, it is preferable to leave the family intact,  
 23 whenever possible, and provide individualized services to  
 24 improve family functioning and to strengthen the family  
 25 unit; and

1 WHEREAS, mounting evidence demonstrates that efforts  
 2 made to support and strengthen vulnerable families before a  
 3 crisis occurs can substantially contribute to family health  
 4 and stability and prevent future long-term governmental  
 5 costs; and

6 WHEREAS, an effective service system for children and  
 7 families should include a range of services aimed at  
 8 strengthening and supporting families, rather than focusing  
 9 only on families when they have developed severe problems or  
 10 are in crisis; and

11 WHEREAS, early intervention and family support services,  
 12 in combination with more specialized services, can  
 13 strengthen the capacity of parents to care for their own  
 14 children and can increase the likelihood of keeping children  
 15 in their own homes; and

16 WHEREAS, specialization of social service professions  
 17 has tended to fragment service delivery, creating a variety  
 18 of programs that fall short of the integration necessary to  
 19 provide a full continuum of services for families and  
 20 children; and

21 WHEREAS, research shows marked similarities in the  
 22 children who make up the child welfare, juvenile justice,  
 23 and child mental health populations in that these children  
 24 often respond to and need the same type of services; and

25 WHEREAS, promoting family well-being is in the best



INTRODUCED BILL  
 HJR 54

1 interest of all citizens of Montana.

2

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

5 That the Legislature establish an appropriate interim  
6 committee on children and families.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

8 (1) examine public and private programs and services  
9 for at-risk children and families to identify duplications  
10 or gaps in, and the effectiveness or inefficiency of,  
11 existing programs and services;

12 (2) study the "Healthy Start" program in Hawaii,  
13 including the delivery of services and the laws and  
14 administrative rules used to implement that program in  
15 Hawaii;

16 (3) study methods of interagency coordination of  
17 programs and services for at-risk children and families in  
18 Montana;

19 (4) develop recommendations for programs and services  
20 to:

21 (a) strengthen and preserve families to enable them to  
22 continue as a family and to prevent removal of children from  
23 their homes;

24 (b) assist children and families before crises emerge  
25 by providing early intervention and other individualized

1 family services; and

2 (c) provide a continuum of care for children in  
3 out-of-home placement;

4 (5) explore the feasibility of a legislative oversight  
5 committee to review and monitor public and private programs  
6 and services for at-risk children and families.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee apply to the  
8 National Conference of State Legislatures for technical  
9 assistance in developing a comprehensive state policy toward  
10 children and families in crisis or at risk.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee report its  
12 findings and recommendations to the 53rd Legislature and, if  
13 appropriate, prepare legislation to implement its  
14 recommendations.

-End-

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 2 INTRODUCED BY BROOKE, BRADLEY, REAM, ECK, WATERMAN, WYATT,  
 3 RUSSELL, R. JOHNSON, DOWELL, SQUIRES, HALLIGAN, BRUSKI  
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