

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

2 INTRODUCED BY WYATT

3
4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA URGING THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE BOARD OF PUBLIC
6 EDUCATION TO RECOGNIZE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AS A SEPARATE AND COMPLETE LANGUAGE
7 AND TO AUTHORIZE THE TEACHING OF AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AS PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL
8 AND UNIVERSITY SYSTEM CURRICULUM.

9
10 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the unique social, cultural, and linguistic heritage of the deaf
11 community and its substantial contribution to the enrichment and diversity of our society; and

12 WHEREAS, over the last 20 years, a significant and growing body of scientific inquiry has
13 demonstrated that American sign language is a separate and complete language with its own unique
14 grammar, vocabulary, and syntax; and

15 WHEREAS, American sign language is the third most used foreign language in the United States;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, there is a significant and growing interest by the general public in learning American
18 sign language; and

19 WHEREAS, the study and learning of American sign language contributes to a greater
20 understanding of the social and cultural aspects of deafness and to the breakdown of communication
21 barriers that have existed between hearing people and deaf people.

22
23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
24 STATE OF MONTANA:

25 (1) That the Board of Public Education be strongly urged to recognize American sign language as
26 a language that may be taught in all public elementary and high schools in educational programs for both
27 hearing and deaf students.

28 (2) That the Board of Public Education be encouraged to adopt an accreditation standard
29 authorizing a school district to offer courses in American sign language that may be used to fulfill the
30 foreign language requirements for high school graduation.

1 (3) That the Board of Regents of Higher Education be strongly urged to recognize American sign
2 language as a language and to adopt an administrative rule authorizing each unit of the university system
3 to offer an elective course in American sign language for which a student may receive credit toward
4 fulfillment of a foreign language requirement.

5 (4) That copies of this resolution be sent by the Secretary of State to the Commissioner of Higher
6 Education, the Board of Regents of Higher Education, the Board of Public Education, and to the Office of
7 Public Instruction.

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APPROVED BY COMM. ON EDUCATION
AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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