

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

INTRODUCED BY

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING THE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS TO STUDY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE X, SECTION 1, SUBSECTION (2), OF THE MONTANA CONSTITUTION, THE ROLE OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC REGARDING AMERICAN INDIAN ISSUES; AND REQUIRING A REPORT TO THE 55TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, American Indians are the largest minority group in Montana; and

WHEREAS, American Indians compose 6% of the state's population, 10% of the K-8 public school

population, and 7% of the public high school population; and

WHEREAS, American Indians accounted for 84% of the state's population growth between 1980 and 1990; and

WHEREAS, the American Indian population is expected to continue to increase in size; and

WHEREAS, Article X, section 1, of the Montana Constitution guarantees equality of educational opportunity to each person in the state; and

WHEREAS, Article X, section 1, further recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of  
American Indians and expresses the state's commitment to preserving that cultural integrity; and

WHEREAS, sections 20-4-211 through 20-4-214, MCA, encourage school districts to provide the means by which school personnel can gain an understanding of and appreciation for American Indians; and

WHEREAS, American Indian history, culture, and contemporary issues are not required topics of study in Montana's public schools; and

WHEREAS, there is a disproportionate number of American Indian high school dropouts and credit-deficient students in Montana's public schools; and

WHEREAS, Montana has seven tribal colleges located on its seven Indian reservations with curricula include tribal studies.

39

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE



1 STATE OF MONTANA:

2 That the Committee on Indian Affairs be requested to study:

3 (1) the degree to which Montana's public schools are in compliance with Article X, section 1,  
4 subsection (2), of the Montana Constitution;

5 (2) the role of American Indian studies in the overall curriculum of the Montana University System  
6 and other institutions of higher learning in the state, with special attention to the teacher education  
7 curriculum; and

8 (3) the level of knowledge of the general public about historical and contemporary American Indian  
9 issues.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that recommendations be made on how best to address the  
11 deficiencies if the study determines that:

12 (1) the public schools are not in compliance;

13 (2) American Indian studies are not an integral part of the university curriculum; or

14 (3) general knowledge about American Indian issues is lacking.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study be conducted in consultation with the Montana Indian  
16 Education Association, the Montana Tribal Chairmen's Association, the Montana Advisory Council for Indian  
17 Education, the Office of Public Instruction, the Indian Impact Aid Schools Association, and the American  
18 Indian Higher Education Consortium.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Committee report its findings, conclusions, and  
20 recommendations to the 55th Legislature.

21 -END-

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23 INTRODUCED BY BROOKE, STANG, HEAVY RUNNER, WELDON, HARDING, TUSS, STOVALL, GAGE  
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