

House JOINT RESOLUTION NO. *32*

INTRODUCED BY

Wm. E. Boharski
Katzberg *McCon* *Leuckert* *Harvington* *Ellis*

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING THAT AN APPROPRIATE INTERIM COMMITTEE STUDY THE PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING SYSTEM; AND REQUIRING THE COMMITTEE TO REPORT ITS FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 56TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, in 1989, the Montana Supreme Court declared that the state's system of public school funding denied the right of equal educational opportunities for Montana students as guaranteed by Article X, section 1, of the Montana Constitution; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, the Legislature created a new public school funding system (House Bill No. 667, Chapter 633, Laws of 1993) to provide a more equalized funding mechanism for public education in Montana; and

WHEREAS, this new funding system set minimum and maximum general fund budget ranges and required all school districts to adopt budgets within those ranges by fiscal year 1998; and

WHEREAS, this coming fiscal year, all school districts will be at or above the minimum general fund budget or BASE budget; and

WHEREAS, it is now time for the Legislature to determine if the new school funding system adequately addresses the equalization of school funding as envisioned by the framers of House Bill No. 667.

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

(1) That an appropriate interim committee be appointed from the members of the House and Senate education and taxation committees to examine the BASE funding system and determine if the system adequately addresses the issues of expenditure and taxpayer disparities and adequacy of funding that were identified by the Supreme Court as a major criticism of the previous school funding system.

(2) That the study may include but is not limited to:

(a) the effect of the BASE funding system on:

(i) schools of various sizes;

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(a) the effect of the BASE funding system on:

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- 1 (ii) urban and rural school districts;
- 2 (iii) special education programs; and
- 3 (iv) vocational education programs;
- 4 (b) the fairness of the basic entitlement for school districts of various sizes;
- 5 (c) the impact of federal education aid on the BASE funding system;
- 6 (d) the adequacy of the guaranteed tax base program;
- 7 (e) the effects of the BASE funding system on property taxpayers; and
- 8 (f) recommendations for improving the BASE funding system, in regards to equalization, with current
- 9 funds.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee form an active working group of education
11 and taxation professionals from the Legislative Services Division, the Legislative Fiscal Division, the Office
12 of Public Instruction, and the Department of Revenue, as well as from other interested education and
13 taxation groups, to work with the committee to identify problems and opportunities and to advise the
14 committee regarding potential solutions.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee prepare a report of its findings, conclusions,
16 options for further consideration, and recommendations, including legislation if advisable, to the 56th
17 Legislature.

18 -END-

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2 INTRODUCED BY PECK, BOHARSKI, HARRINGTON, ELLIS, KITZENBERG, MCCANN, SIMPKINS

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4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
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