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*Senate* JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18  
INTRODUCED BY *Eck*

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE LEGISLATURE AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES; AND REQUIRING A REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES BY NOVEMBER 15, 1998.

WHEREAS, Montana has a tradition of a citizen legislature rather than a body of professional politicians; and

WHEREAS, Montana's traditions also allow for and encourage citizen participation in the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, the issues facing legislators and citizens alike continue to grow more complex and to demand actions that effectively and appropriately respond to the state's immediate and long-term needs, opportunities, and challenges; and

WHEREAS, there have been continuing efforts to improve processes internal to the Legislature to ensure the effective and efficient conduct of legislative activities while simultaneously ensuring public access and participation in the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, the pace of change, including legislative term limits, is a compelling reason to continue institutional introspection; and

WHEREAS, it is important that legislators build on the significant improvements that have been made to the legislative process to ensure that the Montana Legislature will continue as a strong, effective institution that commands broad public respect and confidence.

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

That the Legislative Council be assigned to comprehensively examine the structure and processes of the Legislature, including:

- (1) balancing the tradition of and desire for a citizen legislature with the need for productivity;
- (2) providing opportunities for orientation and continuing education to enhance the knowledge and expertise of citizen legislators to facilitate responsible decisionmaking;

1 (3) using technology to enhance legislative productivity, independence, communication, and citizen  
2 access;

3 (4) earning and keeping the public's trust through ethical behavior by everyone involved in the  
4 legislative process;

5 (5) creatively and effectively using the constitutional flexibility for scheduling sessions and  
6 addressing some of the inherent difficulties with the processes of standing committees, conference  
7 committees, and interim committees;

8 (6) initiating new practices that encourage citizens to participate in productive public discussions;

9 (7) developing a foresight capacity to anticipate future issues and challenges;

10 (8) strengthening the policymaking role of the Legislature through legislative independence from  
11 the Executive Branch in policymaking, budget review and appropriations, and oversight while concurrently  
12 recognizing the interdependence with the Executive Branch in budget preparation, long-term planning, and  
13 coordinating activities;

14 (9) recognizing the stewardship role of legislators for the whole state and providing the conditions  
15 that encourage a variety of citizens to serve as legislators;

16 (10) strengthening legislative leadership roles, skills, and opportunities;

17 (11) ensuring accountability in the legislative process by going beyond the ballot box to assess  
18 legislative performance;

19 (12) fostering a better, mutual understanding of the role of the media in the legislative process, of  
20 citizen participation, of public policymaking, and of news reporting and analysis;

21 (13) developing appropriate working relationships with the Judicial Branch, with local governments,  
22 with tribal governments, and with interest groups;

23 (14) respecting the powers reserved for the people by safeguarding the initiative and the  
24 referendum processes;

25 (15) defining the future roles of political parties for a vigorous and flexible party system; and

26 (16) recognizing new roles for legislators in a changing national and international environment.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee involve past leaders, including former legislative  
28 leaders, former governors and other former elected officials, lobbyists, and members of the media in the  
29 examination of traditional and future legislative processes.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee prepare and publish a report prior to November 15,

1 1998, that includes its findings and conclusions, that identifies any options that should be considered  
2 further, and that incorporates any recommendations advocated by the committee.

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