

HOUSE BILL NO. 151

INTRODUCED BY C. KEOGH, D. BEDEY, J. FULLER, L. JONES, E. MATTHEWS, J. WINDY BOY, B.
BARKER

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING EDUCATION LAWS RELATED TO
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AND THE MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND; MAKING
EDUCATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ELIGIBLE FOR THE QUALITY EDUCATOR PAYMENT
AND THE QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; EXPANDING THE TYPES OF
EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES THAT CAN RECEIVE INCENTIVES FOR MEETING STARTING TEACHER PAY
BENCHMARKS AND THAT CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAM; ALLOWING
THE MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND TO TRANSPORT RESIDENT STUDENTS BETWEEN
HOME AND THE SCHOOL BY SCHOOL BUS; AMENDING SECTIONS 20-4-502, 20-4-503, 20-4-702, 20-8-
121, 20-9-324, AND 20-9-327, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE DATES AND AN
APPLICABILITY DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 20-4-502, MCA, is amended to read:

"20-4-502. Definitions. For the purposes of this part, unless the context requires otherwise, the
following definitions apply:

(1) "Education cooperative" means a cooperative of Montana public schools as described in 20-7-
451.

(2) "Educational loans" means all loans made pursuant to a federal loan program, except federal
parent loans for undergraduate students (PLUS) loans, as provided in 20 U.S.C. 1078-2.

(3) "Federal loan program" means educational loans authorized by 20 U.S.C. 1071, et seq., 20
U.S.C. 1087a, et seq., and 20 U.S.C. 1087aa, et seq.

(4) "Impacted school" means:

(a) a special education cooperative;

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(a) holds a valid certificate under the provisions of 20-4-106 and is employed by an entity listed in subsection (1) of this section in a position that requires an educator license in accordance with the administrative rules adopted by the board of public education;

(b) (i) is a licensed professional under 37-8-405, 37-8-415, 37-11-301, 37-15-301, 37-17-302, 37-24-301, 37-25-302, 37-39-308, 37-39-309, or 37-39-311; and

(ii) is employed by an entity listed in subsection (1) to provide services to students; or

(c) (i) holds an American Indian language and culture specialist license; and

(ii) is employed by an entity listed in subsection (1) to provide services to students in an Indian language immersion program pursuant to Title 20, chapter 7, part 14; or

(d) meets the qualifications for educational sign language interpreting established by the board of public education and is employed by an entity listed in subsection (1) to provide educational sign language interpreting for deaf and hard-of-hearing students."

COORDINATION SECTION. SECTION 7. COORDINATION INSTRUCTION. (1) IF BOTH HOUSE BILL NO. 252 AND [THIS ACT] ARE PASSED AND APPROVED AND IF HOUSE BILL NO. 252 CONTAINS A SECTION AMENDING 20-9-324, THEN [SECTION 5 OF THIS ACT], AMENDING 20-9-324, IS VOID.

(2) IF BOTH HOUSE BILL NO. 252 AND [THIS ACT] ARE PASSED AND APPROVED AND IF HOUSE BILL NO. 252 CONTAINS A SECTION AMENDING 20-9-327, THEN [SECTION 6 OF THIS ACT], AMENDING 20-9-327, IS VOID AND THE SECTION IN HOUSE BILL NO. 252 AMENDING 20-9-327 MUST BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE A NEW SUBSECTION (3)(B)(IV) THAT READS AS FOLLOWS:

"(IV) IS EMPLOYED BY AN EDUCATIONAL ENTITY LISTED IN SUBSECTION (1) TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS AND MEETS THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING ESTABLISHED BY THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION."

(3) If both House Bill No. 252 and [this act] are passed and approved, then [section 9 of this act] is void and the following must be added to [section 18(2) of House Bill 252], providing a transition section:

"(c) The legislature intends that eligible educational sign language interpreters meeting the qualifications of the board of public education and employed by and working at the Montana school for the deaf and blind during the school fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, are included with the quality educator and

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1 qualified staff payments distributed in school fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 2025."

2 (4) If both House Bill No. 509 and [this act] are passed and approved and if both contain a section
3 that amends 20-4-503, then [section 2 of this act], amending 20-4-503, is void.

4
5 NEW SECTION. Section 8. Effective date DATES. (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (2), [THIS
6 ACT] IS EFFECTIVE ON PASSAGE AND APPROVAL.

7 (2) [This act] is [SECTIONS 1 THROUGH 5] ARE effective July 1, 2025.

8
9 NEW SECTION. SECTION 9. APPLICABILITY. [SECTION 6] APPLIES TO EDUCATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE
10 INTERPRETERS meeting the qualifications of the board of public education and EMPLOYED by the Montana school
11 for the deaf and blind DURING THE SCHOOL FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024, AND SUBSEQUENT SCHOOL FISCAL
12 YEARS SO THAT QUALITY EDUCATOR PAYMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES EMPLOYING EDUCATIONAL SIGN LANGUAGE
13 INTERPRETERS-the Montana school for the deaf and blind ARE INCREASED ACCORDINGLY BEGINNING-for SCHOOL
14 FISCAL-~~YEAR 2026~~ years beginning on or after July 1, 2025. [Section 6] applies to the other educational entities
15 listed in [section 6] for school fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 2026.

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