

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 48

2 INTRODUCED BY J. DARLING, C. COCHRAN, L. BENNETT, M. BERTOGLIO, E. BYRNE, B. EDWARDS, S.
3 FYANT, S. KELLY, K. KORTUM, M. LEE, K. LOVE, G. PARRY, L. REKSTEN, T. RUNNING WOLF, L.
4 SCHUBERT, F. SMITH, J. SOOKTIS, P. STRAND, E. TILLEMAN, Z. WIRTH

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6 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
7 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON MOVING THE DATE OF MONTANA'S PRIMARY
8 ELECTION; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH
9 LEGISLATURE.

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11 WHEREAS, Montana's primary election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June
12 preceding a general election held in an even-numbered year; and

13 WHEREAS, in the 2024 presidential primary cycle, 42 states and territories held their presidential
14 primary election or caucus before Montana's primary election date; and

15 WHEREAS, the nominees for presidential candidates for both major parties have been decided prior to
16 Montana's primary election in each contest since 2008; and

17 WHEREAS, states that hold their presidential primary early in the cycle get more attention from
18 candidates and national media, and the concerns of their citizens are prioritized; and

19 WHEREAS, as of 2024, there were 799,849 registered voters in the state of Montana; and

20 WHEREAS, moving the date of Montana's primary election to earlier in the cycle could increase
21 attention on the issues of concern to the voters of Montana; and

22 WHEREAS, moving the date of Montana's primary election would impact existing dates, deadlines, and
23 election procedures, as well as school and local elections and the people who administer them; and

24 WHEREAS, the House State Administration Committee is committed to keeping all Montana elections
25 honest, fair, and secure.

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

1 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
2 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- 3 (1) study moving the date of Montana's primary election;
- 4 (2) examine existing dates, deadlines, and other procedures in Montana law that would need to be
5 adjusted in order to change the date of the primary election;
- 6 (3) assess any potential conflicts with the current timeline for the decennial districting and
7 apportionment processes;
- 8 (4) evaluate the impact of the changes on election administrators and voters;
- 9 (5) examine the impact on other elections of changing the primary election date and identify
10 possible areas for consolidation and efficiency;
- 11 (6) identify the possible benefits, drawbacks, and tradeoffs for the voters of Montana of moving the
12 date of the primary election; and
- 13 (7) develop legislation to introduce during the 70th legislative session that includes a new primary
14 election date and all the changes needed to the Montana Code Annotated to implement the date change.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study be conducted and the recommendations be developed in
16 consultation with all interested stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- 17 (1) county election administrators;
- 18 (2) the Office of the Secretary of State;
- 19 (3) local and tribal government leaders;
- 20 (4) school administrators and officials;
- 21 (5) the Office of Public Instruction;
- 22 (6) stakeholder groups; and
- 23 (7) interested citizens.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
25 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
27 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

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