



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HJ 48, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 48

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

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