

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 834
2 INTRODUCED BY B. MERCER, J. ESP

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNMENT EVIDENCE AND IMPACT
5 COMMISSION; OUTLINING MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION; PROVIDING DUTIES OF THE
6 COMMISSION; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE
7 AND A TERMINATION DATE."

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9 WHEREAS, the ownership or access to data on its own provides for data protection, and it is the ability
10 to connect different data sets and to define a question to be answered or a problem to be solved with access to
11 data that allows for informed decisionmaking; and

12 WHEREAS, the Legislature and the governor represent all citizens of Montana and are accountable to
13 their constituents to ensure that government is run efficiently; and

14 WHEREAS, the governor is charged with executing the law and managing each executive branch
15 agency for the citizens of the state; and

16 WHEREAS, the Legislature is charged with defining state policy, ensuring accountability of all political
17 subdivisions of the state, appropriating requests to fund the state's operations, and maintaining a balanced
18 budget; and

19 WHEREAS, there is not a cohesive system in place to gather the evidence and measure the
20 programmatic impact that has value to the legislative and agency policymakers; and

21 WHEREAS, the government evidence and impact commission is established to create higher levels of
22 accountability more efficiently within state government.

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

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26 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Government evidence and impact commission.** (1) There is a
27 government evidence and impact commission.

28 (2) (a) The commission consists of the following voting members:

- 1 (i) the presiding officer of the senate finance and claims committee or the officer's designee;
- 2 (ii) the presiding officer of the house appropriations committee or the officer's designee;
- 3 (iii) the majority presiding officer and the minority vice presiding officer of the legislative audit
4 committee or their designees;
- 5 (iv) a member of the modernization and risk analysis committee appointed by the presiding officer
6 of the legislative finance committee;
- 7 (v) a member of the legislature appointed by the governor who is from the opposite party of the
8 member from the modernization and risk analysis committee;
- 9 (vi) the budget director;
- 10 (vii) the director of the department of administration;
- 11 (viii) the director of the office of state public defender;
- 12 (ix) two directors of a state agency appointed by the governor or their designees; and
- 13 (x) one member of the public appointed by the governor.
- 14 (b) The commission consists of the following ex officio, nonvoting members:
- 15 (i) the legislative fiscal analyst;
- 16 (ii) the legislative auditor;
- 17 (iii) a staff member from the legislative services division's legal services office;
- 18 (iv) a deputy budget director; and
- 19 (v) the chief data officer.
- 20 (3) Appointed members of the commission must be compensated and receive travel expenses as
21 provided for in 2-15-124 for each day in attendance at commission meetings or in the performance of any duty
22 or service as a commission member.
- 23 (4) (a) The department of administration shall staff the commission and pay for the operational
24 costs of the commission.
- 25 (b) The office of budget and program planning and the legislative fiscal division shall provide
26 research and analysis at the request of the commission or its legislative members.
- 27 (c) The legislative services division shall provide audio and visual services for meetings held in the
28 capitol building.

1 (5) The commission shall elect a presiding officer from one of the voting members who is not a
2 legislator and elect a vice presiding officer from one of the legislative members.

3 (6) Starting June 1, 2025, the commission shall meet on a quarterly basis when the legislature is
4 not in session.

5 (7) The commission shall reserve time at each commission meeting for public comment. Public
6 participation is encouraged.

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8 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Purpose.** (1) The commission is charged with developing a system of
9 evidence and impact analysis and with making recommendations for the implementation of the analysis on
10 executive and legislative decisionmaking.

11 (2) The system developed must allow policymakers to identify inefficient, redundant, and
12 antiquated programs in state government. A report of an evidence and impact analysis conducted using the
13 developed system may include recommendations for improvements in the analyzed programs.

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15 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Duties.** The commission must receive reports, including but not limited to
16 reports on the following:

17 (1) successful data system implementations that demonstrate existing capabilities to maximize the
18 efficient use of data to inform decisionmaking;

19 (2) examples of programs for which an evidence and impact analysis is most likely to produce
20 efficiencies, cost savings, or more informed decisionmaking;

21 (3) a review of laws governing the administration of state government and of how to make the
22 operation of state government efficient and transparent;

23 (4) the structure of executive and legislative oversight to facilitate efficient access to data;

24 (5) (a) how to prioritize the data and evidence that has the most impact on policy decisions; and

25 (b) the number of evidence and impact analyses that can be conducted within a certain timeframe;

26 and

27 (6) the quantified cost to the state for providing efficient access to data and evidence.

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1 NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$75,000 from the general fund to
2 the department of administration for the biennium ending June 30, 2025, and continuing into the biennium
3 beginning July 1, 2025, for the administration and costs of the commission.

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5 NEW SECTION. **Section 5. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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7 NEW SECTION. **Section 6. Termination.** [This act] terminates December 31, 2026.

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