

# 2025 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

## STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS

### OVERVIEW

The 2025 Legislature enacted a number of bills related to state-tribal relations and Indian Country. This summary provides an overview of major legislation and budget provisions of House Bill 2 but is not an exhaustive list. To search for additional legislation of interest to you, please visit: <http://leg.mt.gov> and click on "Bill Search".

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

HB 954 – Extends the date by which Lake County may withdraw from enforcement of criminal jurisdiction within the Flathead Indian reservation on behalf of the state (Public Law 280). The date was extended from June 30, 2027 to June 30, 2031.

SB 393 – Appropriates \$6 million from the general fund to Lake County and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) for enforcement of felony criminal jurisdiction on the Flathead Indian reservation.

### EDUCATION

HB 2 – Appropriates the following:

- Increase of 27% in funding for non-beneficiary students at tribal colleges (\$4,183 per student).
- \$367,665 to assist in repatriation efforts through the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) at the University of Montana.
- \$100,000 (one-time appropriation) to the Montana Promise Grant to increase affordability for students at community and tribal colleges.

SB 181 – Establishes that educational agencies work in consultation with Montana tribes to implement Indian Education for All (IEFA). It also requires school personnel to get training in IEFA and, when possible, receive that education from Indian language and culture specialists licensed by the Board of Public Education. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to work with representatives of Montana's tribes in developing content and performance standards related to IEFA. School districts must report on their expenditure of IEFA funds or face reductions in funding, and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) must publish an annual public report listing districts that did not comply with reporting requirements.

SB 182 – Allows tribes that wish to participate in the Indian Language Preservation Program to partner with educational entities in addition to public school districts. It broadens application requirements, such as curriculum development and budgets, for tribal governments wishing to receive funding to carry out the program.

## MISSING PERSONS AND RUNAWAY YOUTH

HB 83 – Establishes a state special revenue account for the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force.\*

HB 545 – Changes the name of the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Advisory Council.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

HB 648 – Requires that Fish, Wildlife, and Parks provide verbal and written notice to local governments, including tribal governments, prior to the department relocating a large predator to a location within the boundaries of that government entity.

## PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND SAFETY

SB 147 – Removes the termination date of June 2025 for the Montana Indian Child Welfare Act (MICWA).

SB 170 – Removes the termination date of the Community Health Aide Program.

HJ 1 – A joint resolution urging the U.S. Congress to fully fund public safety and law enforcement agencies, programs, services, and activities within Montana's reservations.\*

## STATE GOVERNMENT

HB 448 – Establishes the Jim Loud Thunder Memorial Highway.

SB 224 – Establishes Indigenous Peoples' Day as a legal holiday on the same day as Columbus Day (second Monday in October).

SB 303 – Requires state agencies to submit reports to the Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP) on information related to financial assistance provided to tribal entities. OBPP must compile and prepare an annual public report and present its findings by December 1 to the State Tribal Relations Committee.

SB 311 – Requires the state's Director of Indian Affairs to collaborate with the Legislative Services Division to ensure that legislators are made aware of and invited to the annual training offered to state employees on tribal nations in Montana.

**Outcome of Legislation Proposed by 2023-2024 State-Tribal Relations Committee**

<b>HB 83</b>	Establishes a state special revenue account for the Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force	Passed
<b>HJ 1</b>	Resolution urging Congress to fully fund law enforcement in Indian Country	Passed