

YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

HHB 718

Legislative Action:

Introduced by: Lisa Yarnell

House Committee: _____

Authored by: Lisa Yarnell

House: _____

Senate Committee: _____

Delegation: Bozeman

Senate: _____

Governor: _____

Referred to Committee: Hathaway House Blue Committee

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT TO DECONSTRUCT DIVORCE CASES IN
2 MONTANA."

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4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE MONTANA YMCA YOUTH LEGISLATURE:
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6 **Section One: Intent** This bill provides a feasible option for those seeking divorce. By making
7 couples therapy and other such forms of counseling a requirement for those seeking a legal
8 divorce, reconciliation between parties can be reached before legal action is needed. This bill
9 also presents an effective way to combat the high rate of divorce among Montanans. It also
10 serves as a way to decongest our overloaded court system.

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12 **Section Two: Plan:** Upon passage of this bill, the Montana state government will mandate the
13 following:

14 A) That no divorce case will be addressed by any governing court of law until the parties within
15 the suit have participated in no less than 8 hours of either: couples therapy, marriage counseling,
16 and/or other state-approved therapy methods. Upon completion of said therapy, the suit would
17 then follow the required proceedings of law.

18 B) If the parties cannot provide and/or afford a therapist the court system will appoint a
19 therapist/counselor to each case. As such any individual therapist would have to be licensed by
20 the state of Montana in their said profession or field.

21 C) All therapy engaged in before the filing of a divorce suit will not be considered valid, unless
22 the therapy meets all of the requirements outlined within the plan text.

23 D) Cases with parties unwilling to participate in said therapy sessions will be denied legal
24 proceeding in the filed motion of divorce.

25 E) All legalized divorces before passage of bill, will still recognized as legal.

26 F) Divorces legalized in other states will also be considered valid by the law.

27 G) Divorce cases concerning domestic abuse or other such reasons will be exempt from engaging
28 in such therapy, pending court approval.

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30 **Section 3: Funding:** The Montana state court systems have already been allocated funds for
31 therapists. Further funding can be offset by decreases in court and legal fees.

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33 **Section 4: Enforcement:** Enforcement is provided through the passage of the bill.

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Section 5:Enactment Date: This bill will be enacted immediately upon passage.
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