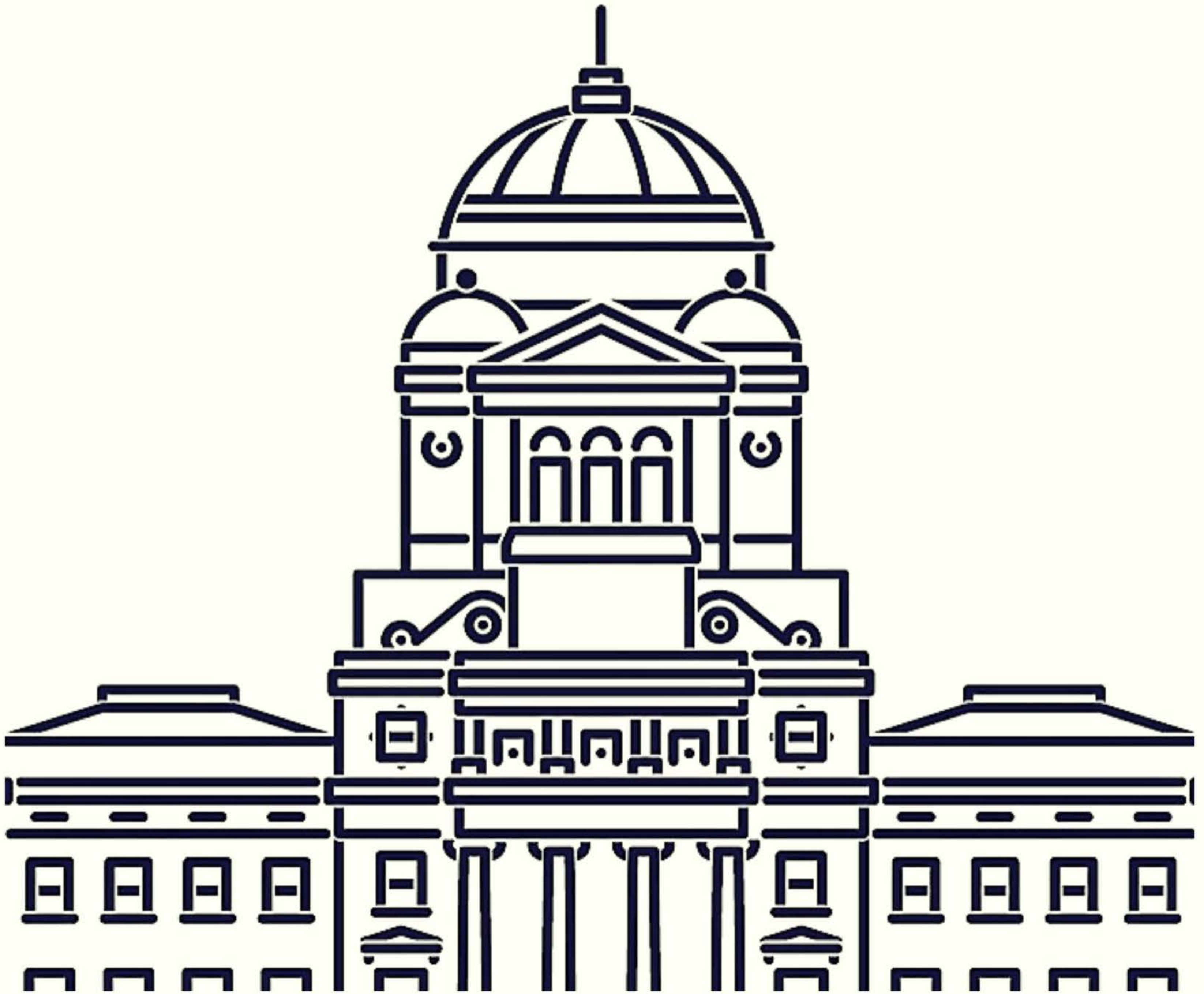


END OF SESSION RESOURCES



**MONTANA HOUSE REPUBLICANS
68TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION
2023**

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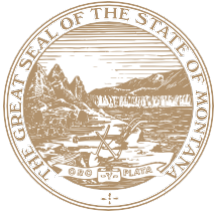
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MATT REGIER

Office of the Speaker

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Montana House Republicans,

As we adjourn the 68th Session of the Montana Legislature, I want to thank you for your service to the people of our state. We came into this session with a vast array of great ideas and priorities which we can be proud to say we have accomplished. In the following pages, you will find a comprehensive list of bills that have become law and that you can share with your constituents throughout the interim.

Montana voters sent a Republican supermajority to Helena with a conservative mandate, which I believe we delivered on. When we began this legislative session, House Republicans committed to passing bills that would hold our government accountable, deliver historic tax relief, balance the budget, provide educational opportunities for our youth, protect Montana families and the next generation, defend our individual freedoms, decrease healthcare costs and improve access, reduce the regulation stifling housing development, increase private property rights, secure our elections and protect Montana's energy future. Our successful legislative session reflects those values.

The session may be over, but our service to the people of Montana doesn't stop here. I look forward to working with you throughout the interim so that we come into the 69th Legislative Session in 2025 stronger than ever.

Sincerely,

Matt Regier

Speaker of the Montana House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Protecting Montana's Next Generation: Montana House Leaders Recap the 68th Legislative Session

HELENA - The 68th Session of the Montana Legislature is one that every Montanan can be proud of. Voters sent a Republican supermajority to Helena and the first thing we did was return overpaid tax dollars to you as well as providing the largest tax cut in Montana state history.

As Republicans our primary constitutional duty is to pass a balanced state budget. The tax relief package is key to our economic growth in the state and lets Montanans keep more of their hard-earned money many years into the future.

The Legislature upheld and expanded individual rights, by enhancing Montana's medical freedoms for both patients and providers. We delivered reliable healthcare reforms that increase access and decrease costs in healthcare; including allowing physician assistants to practice independently, increased Medicaid provider rates for nursing homes to protect our most treasured citizens and allowing interstate license reciprocity for healthcare providers. Furthermore, Montana protected life and the freedom of conscience of medical providers and parents.

During a housing crisis in Montana, we removed government regulations and red tape that increased the cost of living. Republicans also gave more options for private property owners to utilize zoning and housing on their property. Another way we are helping Montana families thrive is by protecting the next generation. We expanded school choice, protected parents' rights and protected students' rights.

As we gear up for another big election, we worked to ensure the security of Montana's elections. We implemented processes to secure tabulation machines and clarified that illegal aliens cannot vote in Montana's elections process.

Finally, and most importantly, House Republicans protected the safety and innocents of our next generation. Because of our focused and unified approach to lawmaking this session, Montana is positioned more competitively as a great place to work, live, and raise a family. In the coming weeks, we plan to write additional articles describing specific policies in the above categories that have been signed into law. While the session may be over, we look forward to working for our constituents throughout the interim.

*Matt Regier (R-Kalispell) is the Speaker of the Montana House of Representatives
Rhonda Knudsen (R-Culbertson) is the Speaker Pro Tempore of the Montana House of Representatives
Sue Vinton (R-Billings) is the Majority Leader of the Montana House of Representatives*

Financial Overview of Session

Surplus Package

HB 192 – Bill Mercer – Signed by Governor

\$480 million toward income tax rebates. Individual taxpayers qualify for up to \$1,250 in rebates on their 2021 state income tax bill, and married couples filing jointly qualify for up to \$2,500. It is estimated 460,000 Montana taxpayers are eligible.

- Appropriation: \$480 million

HB 212 – Josh Kassmier – Signed by Governor

Raises the state's exemption threshold for the business equipment tax of business property from \$300,000 to \$1 million.

- Appropriation: \$3.75 million

HB 221 – Tom Welch – Signed by Governor

Revises the tax rates applicable to net long-term capital gains setting the state's long-term capital gains tax rate at 3% for the first \$41,000 of applicable capital gains income and at 4.1% for income beyond that.

- No Appropriation

HB 222 – Tom Welch – Signed by Governor

Provides a property tax rebate on a principal residence. Current homeowners would receive two payments of \$500, once in 2023 and once in 2024. The Montana Department of Revenue estimated 292,000 households would be eligible each year.

- Appropriation: \$284 million

HB 251 – Llew Jones – Signed by Governor

Directs \$150 million toward paying down the state's existing general obligation debt and potentially addresses another \$100 million in liabilities such as Old Fund.

- Appropriation: \$143.6 million

HB 267 – Courtenay Sprunger – Signed by Governor

Invests \$100 million into a highway construction fund allowing Montana to access additional federal transportation matching funds for much-needed highway projects throughout Montana.

- Appropriation: \$100 million

HB 6 – Mike Hopkins – Returned to House with Amendments
Allocates finances for dams and water infrastructure projects around the state.
- Appropriation: \$26 million

HB 321– Linda Reksten – (H) Scheduled for 2nd Reading
Establishes a conservation district fund within the coal severance tax trust fund.
- Appropriation: \$73 million

HB 332 – David Bedey – Returned to the House with Amendments
Establishes a state-wide insurance pool for teachers not covered by district health insurance.
- Appropriation: \$40 million

HB 479 – Joe Read – (H) 3rd Reading Passed as Amended by Senate
Appropriates funds to the DOJ to provide money to Lake County to offset costs in the biennium.
- Appropriation: \$4 million

HB 569 – Terry Moore – (H) 2nd Reading Senate Amendments Concurred
Generally revises pension laws to allow for increased distributions to sheriff's department, highway patrol, game warden and peace officer retirement systems.
- Appropriation: \$95.6 million

HB 587 – Llew Jones – (H) 3rd Reading Passed as Amended by Senate
Reduces local education mill levies through guaranteed Tax Base Mechanism, which equalizes funding levels for schools with disparate tax bases.
- Appropriation: \$33.3 million

HB 816 – Josh Kassmier – (S) Free Conference Committee
Refunds an additional \$200 Million to taxpayers, with \$100 Million in income tax rebates and \$100 Million in property tax rebates.
- Appropriation: \$135 million

HB 817 – John Fitzpatrick – (H) 2nd Reading Senate Amendments Concurred
Provides funds for infrastructure improvements, including improvements at the State Prison, and appropriating money to communities housing more than 100 inmates or committed mental health patients.
- No Appropriation

HB 856 – Speaker Matt Regier – (H) 3rd Reading Passed as Amended by Senate
Creates a process and appropriates money for improvements to the Capitol and determining which branches of government and agencies are housed in the Capitol.
- Appropriation: \$50 million

HB 872 – Bob Keenan – (H) 3rd Reading Passed as Amended by Senate
Provides funding for behavioral health systems for future generations.
- Appropriation: \$300 million

SB 124 – Greg Hertz – Signed by Governor
Revises the apportionment of income regarding Montana’s corporate income tax by adopting a single sales factor apportionment model.
- No Appropriation

SB 294 – Barry Usher – (S) 2nd Reading House Amendments Concurred
Establishes the end of watch trust fund to financially support family members of officers who are harmed in a line of duty injury or death.
- Appropriation: \$10 million

Reserves

HB 424 – Llew Jones – (H) Revised Fiscal Note Printed
Bolsters all 3 of the State’s reserve and contingency funds. Also temporarily doubles the Governor's emergency fund.
- Appropriation: \$439.5 million

HB 883 – Llew Jones – (H) Revised Fiscal Note Printed
Generally revises state finance regarding the distribution of the fire suppression account in the special revenue fund.
- Appropriation: \$152 million

HB 2 – Budget Summary

The total budget in HB 2 is about \$14.3 billion. This budget addresses population and growth while staying under the rate of inflation. We crafted a conservative budget by keeping state spending below record inflation and population growth while responsibly funding government operations that had been neglected for decades. We positioned our economy to come back stronger than ever by delivering a historic tax relief package to the people of Montana.

Ending fund balance: \$500M

Bad Bills Blocked

HB 201 – Kelly Kortum – Tabled in House Business and Labor

Increased minimum wage to making government the decision maker, instead of free market.

HB 202 – Ed Stafman – Tabled in House Judiciary

Red flag bill, infringed on Second Amendment rights regarding protective orders against those in possession of a firearm.

HB 258 – Jonathan Karlen – Tabled in House Appropriations

Directed a onetime property tax refund to renters, instead of the property owners that paid it.

HB 370 – Dave Fern – Tabled in House Taxation

Increased taxes to pay for government subsidized housing.

HB 378 – Jim Hamilton – Failed in House Third Reading

Prevented political parties from replacing candidates who have withdrawn from the ballot.

HB 414 – Ed Stafman – Tabled in House Judiciary

Required red light cameras to be attached to traffic control devices.

HB 431 – Ed Stafman – Tabled in House Natural Resources

Created limitations on carbon emissions from power production facilities.

HB 432 – Laurie Bishop – Tabled in House Judiciary

Sought to legalize abortions with no limitations, including partial birth abortions, and allowing abortion-inducing drugs to be provided at schools.

HB 471 – Ed Stafman – Tabled in House Judiciary

Sought to force private hospitals and health care facilities to allow a provider to perform an abortion if the mother sought an abortion in accordance with religious beliefs.

HB 564 – Ed Stafman – Tabled in House Judiciary

Criminalizes the “interference with government functions” with extremely broad language.

HB 565 – Ed Stafman – Tabled in House Judiciary

Criminalized the “dissemination of false election information”, violating the first amendment.

HB 570 – Marilyn Marler – Tabled in House Judiciary

Sought to establish civil penalties for anyone who “interfered [impeding, obstructing, preventing, or disturbing with]” an abortion.

Pro-Life

HB 200 – Sherry Essmann – Signed by Governor

Allows the anonymous surrender of newborns in Safe Haven baby boxes at hospitals, police stations, and firehouses.

HB 213 – Braxton Mitchell – Signed by Governor

Provides for a certificate of nonviable birth.

HB 544 – Jane Gillette – Returned from Enrolling

Requires prior authorization for Medicaid –funded “medically necessary” abortions.

HB 575 – Lola Sheldon-Galloway – Transmitted to Governor

Prohibits the abortion of a viable unborn baby and requires a doctor to assess the viability of the unborn baby and put it in writing.

HB 625 – Kerri Seekins-Crowe – Transmitted to Governor

Requires doctors to take whatever means necessary to save the life of a baby born alive from a failed abortion.

HB 721 – Matt Regier – Returned from Enrolling

Bans dismemberment abortions, which are performed after 12 weeks, with the exception of those performed in a medical emergency.

HB 862 – Mike Hopkins – Returned from Enrolling

Prohibits use of public funds for elective abortions.

HB 968 – Amy Regier – Returned from Enrolling

Requires parental consultation for a minor obtaining an abortion.

SB 154 – Keith Regier – Transmitted to Governor

Clarifies the right to privacy doesn't include the right to an abortion. Expected to be challenged in court and is intended to make the courts reconsider the 1999 Armstrong decision saying the Montana Constitution's right to privacy includes the right to pre-viability abortions.

Pro-Family

HB 16 – Jennifer Carlson – (S) 2nd Reading Conference Committee Report Adopted
Revises procedures related to child abuse and neglect cases regarding information disclosure and hearings.

HB 37 – Jennifer Carlson – Transmitted to Governor
Revises child abuse and neglect laws relating to warrants and timelines for proceedings.

HB 225 – Courtenay Sprunger – Returned from Enrolling
Establishes a one-time adoption tax credit of \$5,000 per child or adopted individual incapable of providing self-care.

HB 359 – Braxton Mitchell – (H) 3rd Reading Free Conference Committee Report Adopted
Prohibits minors from attending drag shows and prohibits the performance of drag shows at facilities that receive taxpayer-funding.

HB 482 – Jane Gillette – Sent to Enrolling
Provides access to education and support for children aging out of foster care.

HB 560 – Lola Sheldon-Galloway – Signed by Governor
Allows a parent who has had a child taken from their custody to relinquish parental rights and gives the option to enter into an agreement with the adoptive parents to have contact with the child.

HB 603 – Steve Galloway – Signed by Governor
Provides for the reinstatement of parental rights in child abuse and neglect proceedings; providing that a child petition for reinstatement of parental rights has the right to counsel.

HB 676 – Kerri Seekings-Crowe – Returned to Enrolling
Establishes that parental rights, including the right to educate their child, the religion they raise their child in, and the biometric data of their child, are exclusively the domain of parents and free from government interference.

SB 181 – Dennis Lenz – (S) Returned with Governor’s Proposed Amendments
Requires notice of parents’ legal rights in child protective services.

SB 339 – Ken Bogner – Transmitted to Governor
Empowers parents to allow their children reasonable independence and encourages children at the discretion of parents and/or guardians to be active, independent, learn problem solving skills and develop their intellectual, emotional, and physical maturity. A pro “free range children” bill.

SB 518 – Theresa Manzella – (S) 2nd Reading House Amendments Concurred

Revises parental rights laws to increase parental involvement in education. Requires school districts to provide information to parents about the education opportunities available to children of the district.

SB 419 – Shelley Vance – (S) Signed by President

Bans Tik-tok in Montana.

Protect Rights and Individual Freedoms

HB 29 – Jennifer Carlson – Transmitted to Governor

Bans the commitment of dementia patients to the State Hospital; defers them to community care.

HB 247 – Sue Vinton – Signed by Governor

Allows for-sale-by-owner listings on sites such as Zillow.

HB 435 – John Fitzpatrick – (H) Signed by Speaker

Clarifies that when a development with an exempt well is completed, the developer gets use of the full amount of water allocated in the water right. This ensures that an individual who purchases a lot in a development with an exempt well will have a water right to that well.

HB 443 – Kerri Seekins-Crowe – Transmitted to Governor

Prohibits discrimination regarding the exercise of free speech/religion in the real estate industry.

HB 682 – Katie Zolnikov – Signed by Governor

Requires laboratories to destroy excess genetic material collected from newborns and to destroy any collected genetic material on the request of the parent.

HB 684 – Caleb Hinkle – Signed by Governor

Prohibits the use of vaccination status in certain administrative or legal proceedings.

HB 886 – Ross Fitzgerald – Returned from Enrolling

Establishes that youth criminal records for sexual offences may not be destroyed unless the victim of the crime consents to the destruction of the records.

SB 159 – Becky Beard – Signed by Governor

Reforms eminent domain to remove county recreational and cultural projects from eligible projects.

SB 270 – Keith Regier – Transmitted to Governor

Prohibits employers from firing employees for legal free speech on social media platforms unless the employee has violated their employment contract or employer's written policy on social media use.

SB 325 – Chris Friedel – Transmitted to Governor

Updates Montana's spousal privilege laws for today's technology environment. Bans the government from seeking spouses' communications with each other from third party providers of electronic communications services (phone companies, social media, etc.), with important and notable exceptions (the bill doesn't apply to cases when spouses commit crimes against each other or children, or if spouses are engaged in a civil action like a divorce). The bill puts spouses' communications with each other to a higher standard for government intrusion, recognizing the sanctity of the institution of marriage.

SB 351 – Daniel Zolnikov – (H) 2nd Reading Free Conference Committee Report Adopted
Establishes the Genetic Information Privacy Act requiring transparency and disclosure from companies that have or use people’s genetic data (DNA). The bill requires companies to provide clear privacy policies regarding consumers' genetic information and to obtain consent before collecting or using the person's genetic data or sharing the information with another party.

SB 384 – Daniel Zolnikov – Returned from Enrolling
Creates the Consumer Data Privacy Act establishing policies and protections for Montanans within the industry of data harvesting and brokering. The bill applies to data obtained about individuals through social media, shopping purchases, internet traffic, phone applications, electronic devices, and other means. Gives Montanans more insight into, and control over their data, including opting out of having their data collected. It also gives people the ability to have their data corrected if it's wrong or have it deleted. This is a major consumer protection and digital privacy bill.

SB 397 – Ken Bogner – Returned from Enrolling
Restricts the collection of biometric data by law enforcement agencies. The bill would regulate the technology for individual identification uses and would create strict processes for law enforcement to employ the technology in certain criminal investigations. Currently there are no specific regulations governing facial recognition technology in Montana. SB 397 is the product of two years of work on the topic of facial recognition technology by the Legislature's Economic Affairs Interim Committee.

Second Amendment

HB 356 – Brandon Ler – Signed by Governor
Establishes that a government entity may not enter in a contract with a company that discriminates against firearm entities.

HB 584 – George Nikolakakos – Signed by Governor
Prohibits government lawsuits against firearms manufacturers.

HB 631 – Jedadiah Hinkle – Returned from Enrolling
Establishes that a person who sues the state for burdening one’s right to bear arms and prevails is subject to appropriate relief.

HB 659 – Steve Gist – Signed by Governor
Provides a 30-day grace period for renewals of concealed weapon permits.

HB 674 – Kerri Seekins-Crowe – Returned from Enrolling
Creates an enhanced permit to carry a concealed weapon in areas currently restricted to concealed carry.

SB 359 – Terry Vermeire – Returned from Enrolling
Prohibits the tracking of firearms purchases by financial institutions.

SB 400 – John Fuller – Transmitted to Governor
Extends the permit for concealed carry from four to five years.

SB 423 – Ken Bogner – Transmitted to Governor
Establishes that no cause of action may arise against an individual or a private entity for returning a firearm to the firearm owner at the termination of a firearm hold agreement.

Healthcare

HB 101 – Jane Gillette – Sent to Enrolling

Allows licensing reciprocity for out-of-state practitioners licensed by the Board of Behavioral Health.

HB 303 – Amy Regier – Transmitted to Governor

Gives health providers a legal shield to decline services based on “ethical, moral, or religious beliefs or principles.”

HB 311 – Mike Yakawich – Signed by Governor

Allows for healing and ending addiction through recovery and treatment (HEART) special revenue funds to be used for a chemical dependency treatment voucher program.

HB 313 – Jodee Etchart – Signed by Governor

Allows physician assistants to practice independently.

HB 376 – Jane Gillette – Returned from Enrolling

Establishes a hospital patient bill of rights.

HB 392 – Jodee Etchart – Signed by Governor

Allows direct entry midwives who have received additional certifications, be allowed to obtain and administer oxygen and other prescription drugs to their patients.

HB 557 – Jennifer Carlson – Signed by Governor

Clarifies use of HEART funds to provide for mental health services.

HB 610 – Steve Gist – Signed by Governor

Allows emergency care providers to provide patient care in a health care facility.

HB 612 – Marta Bertoglio – Signed by Speaker

Revises insurance coverage requirements for self-management training and education for diabetes.

HB 655 – Katie Zolnikov – Signed by Governor

Requires Medicaid coverage for certain home births.

HB 665 – Jodee Etchart – Signed by Governor

Revises laws related to insurance coverage of preventative, diagnostic, and supplemental breast examinations.

HB 706 – Naarah Hastings – Signed by Speaker

Establishes the Medical Practice Protection Act, which allows healthcare professionals to prescribe off-label drugs with legal protection.

HB 710 – Casey Knudsen – Signed by Governor
Allows immunization administration by pharmacy interns and technicians under certain circumstances.

HB 777 – Ed Buttrey – Signed by Governor
Adopts the Interstate Counseling Compact.

HB 786 – Lola Sheldon-Galloway – Signed by Governor
Requires reporting on adverse effects of medication abortions.

HB 835 – Bob Keenan – 3rd Reading Passed as Amended by Senate
Creates a Medicaid and 24/7 facility contingency fund.

HB 872 – Bob Keenan – 3rd Reading Passed as Amended by Senate
Establishes the Behavioral Health System for Future Generations Commission.

HB 937 – Lola Sheldon-Galloway – Returned from Enrolling
Requires abortion clinics to obtain a license and requires an inspection at least once a year.

SB 99 – John Fuller – Signed by Governor
Provides a Youth Protection Health Act that prohibits certain medical and surgical treatments to treat minors with gender dysphoria.

SB 100 – Greg Hertz – Signed by Governor
Amends the natural substance formulary list for naturopathic physicians to expand the homeopathic treatments that may be prescribed.

SB 101 – Greg Hertz – Signed by Governor
Revises current law to allow naturopaths to dispense drugs as long as the practitioner registers with the board of pharmacy and complies with all requirements in this bill.

SB 112 – Tom McGillvray – Signed by Governor
Allows pharmacists to prescribe certain drugs and devices under limited circumstances. This bill is especially helpful in rural communities where health care providers are not nearby.

SB 296 – Becky Beard – (S) 2nd Reading House Amendments Concurred
Revises nursing home and/or assisted living funding by creating senior care (nursing home/assisted living) facility access & funding stabilizations, especially for Medicaid payments. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that residential long-term care services are available close to home for Montana seniors who need that level of care, and ensure that the state takes steps to stabilize Medicaid payments to residential long-term care facilities to avoid closures of nursing homes.

SB 308 – Ken Bogner – Transmitted to the Governor

Establishes patient visitation rights requiring that a healthcare facility must allow a patient to have at least one in-person visitation (minimum of 2 hours) per day from a person of their choosing including but not limited to a family member.

SB 340 – Jason Small – Transmitted to Governor

Revises laws related to insurance coverage of insulin. This bill would put a \$35 price cap on Insulin copays.

SB 380 – Jason Small – Returned from Enrolling

Revises health care insurance laws providing for prior authorization requirements, providing exemptions and providing a provider's right to external review and revising the utilization review and grievance procedures.

SB 422 – Ken Bogner – Transmitted to Governor

Expands eligibility for the Right to Try Act. Removes the restriction that patients must be terminally ill to receive experimental medications and treatments under the Right to Try Act. This is a medical freedom bill to give Montanans the freedom to choose to try experimental treatments to treat serious conditions without requiring that they be on their deathbeds to try those treatments.

SB 458 – Carl Glimm – Returned from Enrolling

Provides a common definition for the word “sex” when referring to a human.

SB 564 – Tom McGillvray – Returned from Enrolling

Clarifies that a retired physician participating in the Montana health corps for the purpose of providing outpatient care to individuals eligible for Medicare or Medicaid is immune from liability when rendering care within the scope of the physician's license.

Pro-Jobs & Pro-Business

HB 120 – Russ Miner – Signed by Governor

Allows an alcoholic beverage manufacturer to showcase products at state-sponsored trade shows.

HB 212 – Josh Kassmier – Signed by Governor

Raises the state's exemption threshold for the business equipment tax of business property from \$300,000 to \$1 million.

HB 358 – Katie Zolnikov – Returned from Enrolling

Revises property manager license laws by exempting the property manager license requirement owners of real estate.

HB 418 – Ross Fitzgerald – Signed by Governor

Pro Agri business/irrigators - changes the definition of qualified recipient to specify the definition includes individuals, married couples, corporations, trusts or partnerships that operate as an individual, independent farm operation.

HB 556 – Jennifer Carlson – Returned from Enrolling

Revise laws related to daycare services, providing adjusted definitions for daycare services and excluding private homes that care for 8 or fewer children.

HB 615 – Ross Fitzgerald – Signed by Governor

Requires professional liability insurance coverage for real estate brokers and salespersons licensees.

HB 652 – Steve Galloway – (H) 3rd Reading Passed as Amended by Senate

Revises the duration of unemployment insurance benefits.

HB 836 – Katie Zolnikov – Returned from Enrolling

Increases insurance innovation in Montana by allowing innovative ideas to be tried for three years. These innovations may result in more insurance options or reductions in lost cost or premiums.

HB 881 – Ed Buttrey – Sent to Enrolling

Opens the Big Sky Economic Development program to businesses and allows them to apply directly with the program.

HB 904 – Casey Knudsen – (H) 2nd Reading Senate Amendments Concurred

Provides free CDL driver's license training to independent truck drivers who are eligible, in order to comply with burdensome federal requirements and licensure costs.

HB 971 – Josh Kassmier – Sent to Enrolling

Revises and clarifies the Montana environmental policy act, prohibiting an evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide) and the corresponding impacts to the climate in the state and beyond its borders. This policy could result in greater MT Energy independence and benefits numerous industries including the Energy, Agriculture and Manufacturing industries.

SB 557 – Mark Noland – Returned from Enrolling

Revises Montana Environmental Policy Act relating to litigation. Any challenge to the policy based on greenhouse gases would have no standing unless a federal agency or Congress changes federal requirements.

SB 561 – Steve Hinebauch – Sent to Enrolling

Pro-business, pro-Agriculture – creates veterinary retail facility permits.

Veterans & Military

HB 63 – Scot Kerns – Signed by Governor

Limits liability to National Guard and Air Guard members who render emergency aid.

HB 81 – Braxton Mitchell – Signed by Governor

Creates a new state veterans cemetery near Columbia Falls.

HB 325 – Lyn Hellegaard – Transmitted to Governor

Revises eligibility for disabled veteran property tax assistance program.

HB 336 – Edward Buttrey – Signed by Governor

Provides state recognition for family child-care providers that are licensed by a branch of the United States Armed Forces.

HB 427 – Scot Kerns – Signed by Governor

Revises military affairs laws in order to provide members of the national guard and air national guard worker's compensation benefits.

HB 583 – Brad Barker – Transmitted to Governor

Provides educational occupational licensing reciprocity for military members, spouses, and veterans.

HB 663 – Scot Kerns – Signed by Governor

Establishes a veteran's hall of fame.

SB 221 – Barry Usher – Sent to Enrolling

Allows the USS Montana crew to apply for license plates. At the request of the sailors, this bill would allow sailors on the USS Montana to have Montana license plates when not residents of the state.

Government Accountability and Efficiencies

HB 228 – Terry Moore – Signed by Governor

Ensures that politics and public fund investing remain separate from each other. (ESG)

HB 310 – Jennifer Carlson – Signed by Governor

Requires a report on the uses of healing and ending addiction through recovery and treatment (HEART) special revenue account.

HB 399 – Bill Mercer – Signed by Governor

Requires child sexual abuse cases where an employee of a county attorney office is involved to be reported to the Attorney General.

HB 400 – Bill Mercer – Transmitted to Governor

Requires agency reports to legislature to be in writing.

HB 412 – David Bedey – Enrolling

Revises code of ethics for public officials and government employees, including defining “judicial officer” to include them in current ethics laws.

HB 461 – Lola Sheldon-Galloway – Transmitted to Governor

Requires audio recordings of reports of child abuse and neglect, and requires false reports be investigated by the district attorney.

HB 569 – Terry Moore – In Process to Consider Second House Amendments

Provides \$96 million one-time money to bring three public safety pension plans to a 25-year amortization of unfunded liabilities. Also adjusts the employer contribution annually to ensure the remaining unfunded liabilities are paid over 25 years.

HB 580 - Bill Mercer – Enrolling

Establishes reporting requirements for all state agencies.

HB 639 – Bill Mercer – Signed by Governor

Establishes reducing recidivism as the purpose of the department of corrections.

HB 691 – Greg Oblander – Transmitted to Governor

Requires that the Department of Labor in carrying out its duties inform all individuals of their rights, including their right to file a complaint against the department.

HB 693 – Bill Mercer – Transmitted to Governor

Mandates that a government department may not refuse to disclose public information solely because of litigation or the threat of litigation.

HB 890 – Brad Barker – In Process to Consider Second House Amendments

Requires governing boards of counties and municipalities, as well as health departments, to provide recorded and filmed records of meetings.

HB 922 – Bob Keenan – Returned from Enrolling

Requires DPHHS to develop and implement an Olmstead plan, which requires a plan for people with mental disabilities to live in their communities when appropriate.

SB 332 – Greg Hertz – Enrolling

Requires tax increases to be listed in local government budget documents.

SB 358 – Greg Hertz – Transmitted to Governor

Requires disclosure of taxpayer funds for lobbying by local governments/schools.

SB 432 – Theresa Manzella – Transmitted to Governor

Requires a report on the use of Help America Vote Act funds.

Judicial Restoration

HB 326 – Kerri Seekins-Crowe – Signed by Governor

Reforms the appointment of members of the Judicial Standards Commission and increases checks and balances in the legislative branch.

HB 695 – Bill Mercer – Signed by Governor

Limits temporary restraining orders that can be filed against the state.

HB 709 – Jane Gillette – Signed by Governor

Requires a publicly available performance report for district courts and district court judges.

SB 201 – Greg Hertz – Enrolling

Requires Supreme Court Justices to recuse themselves if an attorney who donated excess of 10,000 dollars to the Justice's campaign is arguing a case in front of the Supreme Court.

SB 224 – Greg Hertz – Signed by Governor

Requires district courts to publish a report of all cases they heard.

SB 252 – Greg Hertz – Transmitted to Governor

Expands state ethics laws to include justices, judges, and judicial branch employees. Applies existing laws for the executive branch (such as not using state time or resources for political campaigns, not accepting gifts, etc.) to judicial branch officials.

SB 286 – Steve Fitzpatrick – Transmitted to Governor

Increases the estate amount eligible to collected by affidavit to \$100,000.

SB 313 – Keith Regier – Transmitted to Governor

Increases transparency of the Judicial Standards Commission. The commission shall make rules for the conduct of its affairs and the enforcement of confidentiality and provide public disclosure when appropriate.

SB 410 – Barry Usher – Transmitted to Governor

Narrows the duties of the court administrator to those duties specified in code. Over the years the responsibilities assigned to the court administrator have grown exponentially because the Supreme Court can assign any job they want. As a result, the office is overworked and overburdened. This bill would limit the Court Administrator and her office to the functions contained in statute to prevent expansion of government.

Fair and Equal Justice

SB 134 – Steve Fitzpatrick – Signed by Governor

Reforms Montana preliminary injunction law to require additional deadlines for temporary restraining orders gained without notice.

SB 135 – Steve Fitzpatrick – Signed by Governor

Reforms Montana preliminary injunction law so that an injunction regarding an administrative rule is not granted before the rule is issued.

SB 136 – Steve Fitzpatrick – Signed by Governor

Reforms Montana preliminary injunction law so that if a construction project is enjoined, the property may be secured and protected from damage.

SB 191 – Steve Fitzpatrick – Signed by Governor

Reforms Montana preliminary injunction law to raise the standard for issuing a preliminary injunction to bring Montana standards in line with national standards. This legislation requires judges to consider potential defenses when considering a preliminary injunction.

Legislative Strength

HB 110 – Bill Mercer – Transmitted to Governor

Makes interim budget committees permanent to better allocate the budget of the people of Montana.

HB 518 – Bill Mercer – Signed by the Governor

Gives the legislature standing to initiate or defend lawsuits.

HB 739 – Bill Mercer – Signed by the Governor

Requires notification of early implementation of rule changes by agencies to the relevant legislative committee. The bill allows the legislative committee to object and delay the rule implementation.

SB 73 – Tom McGillvray – Returned from Enrolling

Ensures auditors can access the information they need to fulfill their constitutional oversight role. Unlike many other states that have robust laws enforcing the rights of their auditors to access records, Montana currently lacks an enforcement mechanism to ensure auditors get the information they need. SB 73 would strengthen the Legislative Auditor's ability to access information, records, and data in state agencies by creating an enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance from government agencies. The bill would apply criminal penalties to elected and appointed officials for official misconduct in cases where audit access is refused or obstructed.

SB 176 – Keith Regier – Returned from Enrolling

Revises interim and statutory committee membership to reflect the composition of the body of the whole. Additionally, it ensures that democracy does not stop at sine die.

SB 278 – Steve Fitzpatrick – Returned from Enrolling

Authorizes legislative officer intervention in declaratory judgment action.

SB 490 – Gerg Hertz – Returned from Enrolling

Spells out the Legislature's investigative and subpoena powers to clarify and push back on the Montana Supreme Court's ruling in the McLaughlin case from the 2021 legislative session that severely restricted the legislature's subpoena and Investigatory powers. SB 490 protects the Legislature's ability to gather the information it needs to legislate effectively and hold the government accountable.

CPS Reform

HB 385 – Jennifer Carlson – Returned from Enrolling

Allows parents being investigated by CPS to examine copies of the evidence being used by CPS in their investigation.

SB 115 – Dennis Lenz – Transmitted to Governor

Requires a diagnosis of psychological abuse and/or neglect to come from a certified professional psychologist in CPS cases.

SB 148 – Dennis Lenz – (S) Hearing Conf Committee

Revises laws regarding legal representation of children. Would ensure minors have proper legal representation in cases of abuse and neglect. When appropriate and in accordance with judicial branch policy, the court may assign counsel at the court's expense for a guardian ad litem or a court-appointed special advocate involved in a proceeding under a petition filed.

SB 149 – Dennis Lenz – (S) Hearing Conferenced Committee

Establishes penalties for false reporting in child protective services cases. Creates penalties for false reporting in CPS cases, which currently do not exist. Malicious false reporting would be subject to a higher penalty.

SB 182 – Dennis Lenz – Returned to the Senate with Amendments

Improves the existing system by creating a specialty court system for dependency and neglect cases. Specifies members and duties and establishes reporting requirements.

SB 328 – Dennis Lenz – Returned from Enrolling

Requires active efforts that are affirmative, active, and thorough and timely efforts that are tailored, in a manner consistent with prevailing social and cultural conditions, to each child protective services cases to maintain or reunite a child with the child's family; and outlines placement preferences for foster care, pre-adoptive, or adoptive placements of children, prioritizing placement with members of a child's extended family.

SB 352 – Dennis Lenz – Returned to Senate with Amendments

Creates a task force to modify and improve CPS.

Local Government Accountability and Efficiencies & Housing

HB 114 – Sue Vinton – Signed by Governor

Accelerates the timeline from 360 days to 105 for the application process, allowing Montana to meet future water needs while also protecting existing water rights holders.

HB 211 – Larry Brewster – Enrolling

Streamlines zoning processes for subdivisions as well as changes the rules on when authorities must hold multiple hearings on a planned subdivision.

HB 241 – Josh Kassmier – Enrolling

Prevents Local Governments from mandating solar panels and electric car infrastructure on new construction, protecting homeowners and home builders.

HB 246 – Scot Kerns – Enrolling

Allows municipalities to create zoning districts for tiny houses.

HB 295 – James Bergstrom – Signed by Governor

Allows for an exception to the hiring of relatives for positions when the population is under 10,000.

HB 360 – Steven Galloway – Enrolling

Clarifies that counties may elect commissioners by district.

HB 364 – Casey Knudsen – Enrolling

Allows for independent subdivision reviews for past due applications.

HB 543 – Jed Hinkle – Transmitted to Governor

Requires bond and levy measures to state that increases may increase rents, and to state the estimated increase on houses valued at 100, 300, and 600 thousand dollars.

HB 592 – Jed Hinkle – Enrolling

Allows the installation of drain fields in areas where a cut has been made into the earth by directing DEQ to allow the installation of certain new septic systems.

HB 703 – Denley Loge – Signed by Governor

Requires additional documentation for “emotional support animals” in rental applications and allows property owners to deny accommodation for “emotional support animals” within the confines of federal law.

HB 724 – Brad Barker – Transmitted to Governor

Requires agencies to post public notice on the electronic versions of newspapers as well as on the agency website.

HB 748 – Katie Zolnikov – Transmitted to Governor

Provides that planning boards can zone for the “separation of incompatible uses of property.”

SB 130 – Forrest Mandeville – Transmitted to Governor

Allows local governments to consolidate land use boards to be more efficient and reduce duplicate meetings and regulations governing housing.

SB 131 – Forrest Mandeville – Transmitted to Governor

Requires subdivision review boards to review and approve or deny applications within 20 days.

SB 143 – John Esp – Transmitted to Governor

Provides for a referendum to terminate a citizen initiated zoning district, and removes certain protest provisions that have been invalidated by district court. Whenever the public interest or convenience may require on petition of 60% of the affected real property owners in the proposed district, the board of county commissioners may create a planning and zoning district and may appoint a planning and zoning commission consisting of up to seven members.

SB 152 – Forrest Mandeville – Transmitted to Governor

Revises the definition of minor subdivisions and changes the date of review of a tract of record for a subdivision from 1973 to 2003, simplifying the subdividing process.

SB 158 – Jason Ellsworth – Transmitted to Governor

Allows families to transfer ownership of properties located within subdivisions to other family members; as long as, such transfers are allowed by the covenants. The bill can help parents keep their kids in the state and help adult children care for elderly parents.

SB 170 – Forrest Mandeville – Transmitted to Governor

Creates an administrative review process for minor subdivisions. This is needed for efficiencies and to speed up the process for approving minor subdivisions.

SB 195 – Jeremy Trebas – Returned from Enrolling

Places of worship that provide temporary emergency housing are exempted from sprinkler requirements.

SB 208 – Jason Small – Transmitted to Governor

Prohibits local governments from banning or limiting energy choices.

SB 228 – Jason Small – Transmitted to Governor

Prohibits local governments from banning petroleum fuels.

SB 237 – Shelley Vance – Transmitted to Governor

Improves water quality laws by stating that DEQ shall approve new connections to wastewater systems as long as the new connections do not exceed the system's rated capacities. Any development that would exceed the rated capacity of the wastewater system would need to be run through DEQ prior to approval.

SB 245 – Daniel Zolnikov – (S) Hearing Free Conference Committee

Revises municipal zoning to allow multifamily and mixed-use development. Reforms Montana's zoning laws to encourage multifamily housing and mixed-use developments in urban areas with existing water and sewer systems. Applies only to Montana's larger towns and cities with populations over 7,000. Focuses on streamlining regulations on multifamily housing and developments that include both commercial and residential uses by opening up commercially-zoned areas to housing development.

SB 285 – Carl Glimm – Returned to the Senate with Amendments

Limits the regulation of septic tanks to those that are higher in elevation or less than 500 feet away from surface waters. Meant to allow more housing than current septic tank regulations allow.

SB 323 – Jeremy Trebas – Returned from Enrolling

Allows for duplex, triplex, and fourplex housing in city zoning. Reforms zoning codes in Montana cities to increase housing options. In cities with at least 5,000 residents, zoning regulations on duplexes would not be allowed to be more restrictive than the requirements for single-family residences. The bill extends the same policy to triplexes and fourplexes in cities with 50,000 or more residents. Legalizes the "missing middle" of housing-homes that are in the size and price range between apartments and large single-family residences-within cities.

SB 382 – Forrest Mandeville – Sent to Enrolling

The Montana Land Use Planning Act requires local governments to establish planning commissions, provide continuous public participation, and adopt land use plans and land use maps. Additionally, it requires local governments analyze expected population trends, take action to meet current and future housing needs, and plan for environmental hazards and other contingencies.

SB 406 – Jeremy Trebas – Transmitted to Governor

Establishes that a county, city or town may not adopt or enforce a building code that is more stringent than the building code adopted by the department or required by state law.

SB 528 – Greg Hertz – Enrolling

Revises zoning laws related to additional dwelling units (ADU). This will increase the housing supply in Montana and lower prices for working Montanans.

Election Security

HB 173 – David Bedey – Signed by Governor

Requires vote tabulation machines have no modems or external communication devices, and that a third party test and verify the absence of external communication devices.

HB 196 – Lyn Hellegaard – Returned from enrolling

Requires that tabulation be continuous, and that from 8 p.m. of election day onward, that updates of the vote count be made publicly available every two hours.

HB 335 – David Bedey – Signed by Governor

Revises election laws related to absentee ballot list procedures regarding voters on the inactive list.

HB 712 – Zack Wirth – Transmitted to Governor

Codifies that illegal aliens cannot vote in the State of Montana.

HB 754 – Lyn Hellegaard – Enrolling

Allows county election officials to access DMV records to verify registration information.

HB 892 – Lyn Hellegaard – Third Reading Concurred

Prohibits double voting and voter registration in Montana and other states simultaneously.

SB 117 – Shelley Vance – Transmitted to Governor

Prohibits the use of certain funds to conduct elections to eliminate outside influence on elections. (Zuckerbucks)

SB 197 – Mike Cuffe – Passed by Legislature

Increases the number of races included in the post-election audit.

SB 254 – Kenneth Bogner – Transmitted to Governor

Removes the audit exemption for counties that tabulate their votes by hand and allows for them to be included in a post-election audit.

SB 481 – Joint Select Committee on Election Security – Returned to House with Amendments

Addresses Machine Auditing and Best Practices. Requires the cast vote record (CVR) function to be activated and turned on in all Montana voting systems at all times. The CVR records must be retained for a time period of 7 years and for legitimate purposes and are not public record.

SB 487 – Shelley Vance – Returned from Enrolling

Requires that a person may not have more than one driver's license or identification card issued by the department.

SB 498 – Joint Select Committee on Election Security – Enrolling

Revises the requirement for absentee list maintenance to be completed annually rather than biannually. Requires all counties to send a request to all absentee voters to require the voter re-up to receive an absentee ballot. Many counties have been doing this, but it wasn't required. Requires the state verify the validity of a voter's registration when an absentee ballot is returned as undeliverable by the post office, if the address cannot be verified the elector is moved to the inactive list.

Education

HB 203 – David Bedey – Transmitted to Governor

Allows students to attend any school district in Montana, regardless of residency in the said school district.

HB 214 – Marta Bertoglio – Enrolling

Requires school districts to provide remote instruction for out-of-district students.

HB 234 – Bob Phalen – Returned from Enrolling

Adds public schools and school libraries to Montana's obscenity statute, prohibiting the display and distribution of obscene materials to students in school.

HB 245 – Sue Vinton – Enrolling

Expands the list of trades eligible for the trades education and training tax credit.

HB 352 – Brad Barker – Enrolling

Provides targeted interventions to support 3rd grade reading proficiency.

HB 361 – Brandon Ler – Signed by the Governor

Protects free speech in schools by prohibiting punishment for students who use call another student their given name or biological sex.

HB 382 – Greg Oblander – Enrolling

Provides for specific technical student organizations to receive funding and clarifies the terms and timeline for distribution of funds to technical student organizations.

HB 393 – Sue Vinton – Sent to Enrolling

Establishes a Students with Special Needs Equal Opportunity Act.

HB 396 – Naarah Hastings – Enrolling

Requires public schools to enroll homeschooled students for part-time enrollment in classes.

HB 408 – Sue Vinton – Signed by Speaker

Increases the aggregate donation amounts allowed for the innovative educational program tax credit and caps the donation amount to one school district at \$50,000, with excess funds to be remitted to the Office of Public Instruction. This increases the number of school districts able to receive these funds.

HB 450 – Jedediah Hinkle – Signed by the Governor

Provides that a student may use reasonable and necessary force to protect themselves or others if physically attacked.

HB 497 – Fred Anderson – Signed by the Governor

Requires prior mill levies to include a list of the prior years' taxes.

HB 504 – Naarah Hastings – Signed by the Governor
Requires public schools to adopt a grievance policy available to the public to hold schools accountable.

HB 535 – Braxton Mitchell – Transmitted to Governor
Requires a financial literacy class to graduate high school.

HB 549 – Fred Anderson – Sent to Enrolling
Establishes public charters under the supervision of the board of public education to increase educational opportunities and options for Montana students.

HB 562 – Sue Vinton – Enrolling
Establishes state charter schools to increase educational freedom.

HB 587 – Llew Jones – (H) In Process to Consider Amendments
Represents \$117 million in permanent property tax reduction by creating a school equalization and property tax reduction fund. The funding for the account comes from existing school equalization levies and other funding sources currently going to the general fund. No new taxes or fees are raised.

HB 588 – Llew Jones – Enrolling
Excludes time teaching under emergency authorization from the “first three years” of a teachers experience for the purposes of compensation.

HB 715 – Jennifer Carlson – Sent to Enrolling
Strengthens medical choice in schools, requiring the exemptions for immunization requirements be posted online, providing for religious exemptions, and prohibiting the copying of medical records by a third party without consent.

HB 744 – Greg Kmetz – Signed by the Governor
Allows students to discuss religion, religious beliefs, or religious practices with another student or teacher.

HB 745 – Greg Kmetz – Signed by the Governor
Protects students right of free exercise of religion and allows for prayer at school-sponsored events.

HB 833 – Brad Barker – Sent to Enrolling
Establishes a teacher-residency program to increase the readiness of Montana’s new teachers.

SB 123 – Greg Hertz – Returned from Enrolling
Requires ballots for bond increases to include estimates of tax increases to promote transparency on local property taxes by requiring more realistic property values be used on ballot language for local bonds.

SB 373 – Dan Salomon – Transmitted to Governor

Establishes an alternative teacher certification program to increase the supply of qualified teachers. Flexibility and Alternative Teacher Certifications would alleviate the ongoing teacher shortages across the state.

SB 444 – Jason Small – Transmitted to Governor

Establishes guidelines for work-based learning programs and encourages work-based learning as an alternative hands-on education option for students.

Outdoor Heritage & Keep Montana, Montana

HB 146 – Josh Kassmier – Signed by Governor

Authorizes landowner preference for hunting deer and antelope licenses.

HB 162 – Braxton Mitchell – Signed by Governor

Allows for the electronic verification of hunting tags.

HB 419 – Jed Hinkle – Signed by Speaker

Allows for bonding of injunctions that prevent the hunting or harvesting of game.

HB 440 – Steve Gunderson – Transmitted to Governor

Establishes that for a multiple-day reservation, if the party fails to arrive at and claim the reserved campsite by 10 A.M. on the second day of the reservation, the reservation is canceled and the campsite may be filled for the duration of the reservation on a first-come, first-serve basis, allowing more opportunity for Montana residents.

HB 456 – Brandon Ler – Signed by the Governor

Gives the purchaser of a general deer or elk tag the chance in the lottery for a Super Tag for mountain goat, Shiras Moose, or mountain sheep.

HB 576 – Rhonda Knudsen – Enrolling

Protects mining jobs from regulation by revising material damage laws to exempt nonsignificant changes in water quality.

HB 596 – Denley Loge – In process to consider Governor's proposed amendments

Reforms elk hunting licenses to give priority to those with 640 acres of land.

SB 58 – Steve Hinebauch – Signed by the Governor

Increases landowner payment cap for block management resulting in more fair compensation for landowners who voluntarily allow the public to hunt on their property and increases hunter's access to private land.

SB 203 – Ken Bogner – Transmitted to Governor

Prohibits the sale, lease or rental of critical infrastructure/ land for agricultural purposes to foreign adversary nations.

SB 274 – Daniel Zolnikov – Transmitted to Governor

Removes redundant permitting for major facilities by the Department of Environmental Quality.

SB 324 – Bob Brown – Transmitted to Governor

Ensures the identity of the purchaser of a large predator tag remains private; allows harvest locations of large predators to be published but doesn't require it.

Tort Reform

HB 410 – Brandon Ler – Signed by Governor

Sets a two-year time limit from filing a complaint for service of process, or the notification of the beginning of a legal process, such as a summons.

Tax Relief

SB 121 – Becky Beard – Signed by Governor

Revises the individual income tax rate, reducing the rate from 6.75% to 5.9%, and saving Montanans an estimated \$380 million.

SB 505 – Greg Hertz – Enrolling

Specifies if a mill levy is excluded from the tax increment calculation the calculation must use the total taxable value of all property located within the area or district.

SB 507 – Daniel Zolnikov – In Process to Consider Second House Amendments

Allows for the county treasurer to accept a payment to allow delinquent property taxes to be paid without paying the current year's taxes. Provides for training for tax appeal board.

SB 530 – Greg Hertz – In Process to Consider Second House Amendments

Revises property taxation of certain class eight business equipment industrial property and provides for a review of the abatement request by a local governing body, clarifies the abatement may not be less than 80% of the taxable value.