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## This Week at the Montana Legislature

April 4, 2021

**To our LGBTQ+ community members: We see you. You matter. And we've got your back.**

We want to thank all of you who took the time to call and email legislators about [Senate Bill 215](#) (legalizing 'religious' discrimination) and [House Bill 112](#) (essentially banning trans students from playing school sports) over the past few months. In total, they received about 3,500 total phone calls! While too many legislators still voted to pass these harmful bills last week (on Transgender Day of Visibility, no less), your voices and your work have been truly invaluable.

We will be sure to share with you all any Free & Fair Coalition news, updates, and calls to action that come as these two bills head to Gov. Gianforte's for signature. Of note, [our friends at the Montana Human Rights Network have shared this comprehensive list of great Montana businesses](#) who signed onto a letter shopping opposition to these 'Discrimination by Design' bills, including House Bills 112 and 427, and Senate Bills 215, 280, and 99.

## Take Action

Legislative members took a long weekend, but things will quickly go from 0 to 60 come Tuesday morning. Here's how you can help steer them in the right direction:

### **House Bill 337: What it is, What it's not, and What you can do about it**

Rep. Caleb's House Bill 337 is an extremist bill that would ban *all* abortion in Montana and possibly even common forms of birth control. This bill has *nothing* to do with the health of Montanans.

[You can email Senate Judiciary Committee members and your senator here](#), or you can leave them a message by calling the Legislative Information Desk at **406-444-4800**. The desk is available to take calls weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the very friendly staff are always happy to answer your questions!

### **Why doesn't Rep. Jane Gillette want health care for all Montanans?**

Between House Bill 229 and last week's HB 676, you wouldn't blame us for wondering why Rep. Jane Gillette is so opposed to quality health care for *all* Montanans. Thankfully her HB 676 attempt to kick kids off of CHIP and families off of Medicaid was tabled in committee, but her bill to deprive many Montanans of the option to buy health insurance that covers abortion is still around. Please tell your senator to vote No on HB 229!

### **Medicaid Expansion works for Montana — leave it alone**

Sen. Cary Smith's SB 100 could kick low-income Montanans off of Medicaid and SNAP. Tell your House Human Services Committee members and your House rep to vote No on this attempt to mess with a good thing!

### **Write a Letter to the Editor!**

We don't have to tell you how important it is to show widespread support for Planned Parenthood and your opposition to dangerous bills such as SB 99. Calling and emailing our legislators at the Capitol is absolutely crucial, and so is speaking out within our communities. Submitting an LTE to your local newspaper is very easy and we're happy to look over your draft, help you put something together, or offer any support you need. Drop us a line at [info@ppamt.org](mailto:info@ppamt.org) and let's get started!

Interested in writing an LTE for your local newspaper, testifying on a bill, or learning how else to make your voice heard during the 67th Legislative Session? Contact Julia, 406-561-7649 or [info@ppamt.org](mailto:info@ppamt.org)!

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## This Week

**HB 229: Prohibiting health insurance plans offered through the Health Insurance Exchange from covering abortion services** [by Rep. Jane Gillette \(R\), House District 64](#), would mean that people who rely on the Affordable Care Act's Health Insurance Exchange would not have any options to get coverage for abortion. Banning this coverage from Exchange plans would place safe, legal abortion out of reach for the lowest income families in Montana. HB 229 passed out of Senate Judiciary Committee about a week-and-a-half ago but hasn't yet made it to the Senate floor so **there's still time to call 406-444-4800 and [email your senator](#) to tell them to vote No on HB 229!**

**[HB 337: Constitutional amendment to define a person by Rep. Caleb Hinkle \(R\), House District 68](#)**, is an attempt to give a *fertilized egg, a zygote, or a fetus* all of the same legal rights that you have as a Montanan. This bill means zero access to safe abortion — even for victims of rape or incest. And although some Republican legislators are arguing otherwise, this bill language makes clear that access to common forms of birth control such as the pill, IUDs, or emergency contraception may be jeopardized. House Bill 337 was heard Wednesday morning in Senate Judiciary Committee so we can expect it to be up for a committee vote very soon. **Please light up the phones and inboxes of committee members as well as your senator this week! You can call 406-444-4800 or [send them a message through the legislature's website](#) telling them to vote No on Rep. Hinkle's HB 337.**

**SB 99: [Prohibiting abortion providers from offering education by Sen. Cary Smith \(R\), Senate District 27](#)** would ban the use of educational resources offered by abortion providers such as Planned Parenthood of Montana. In fact, Sen. Smith has been very clear time after time that this bill (and its predecessors) is only about attacking PPMT. SB 99 passed out of House Education Committee a couple weeks ago so we can assume that it will make it to the House floor before long. **Call 406-444-4800 to leave a message or [email your representative](#) and tell them to vote No on SB 99** because Montana youth deserve quality sex education and Montanans deserve legislators who work for the common good, not their personal vendettas.

**SB 315: Adopt the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act by Sen. David Howard (R), Senate District 29**, is the policy bill version of [HB 167](#), which we previously opposed. As a reminder, House Bill 167 would place anti-abortion language on the next general election ballot and leave

it up to Montanans to vote for or against our constitutional right to abortion and personal privacy. Because SB 315 is a regular policy bill, it is up to legislators to decide if this false, stigmatizing, anti-abortion narrative should be made law. The bill was heard in House Judiciary Committee on Friday morning with a few notable fireworks, including House District 60's Rep. Laurie Bishop (D) reminding committee members (*\*cough\* Rep. Derek Skees \*cough\**) that constituents who testify on bills must be listened to and respected — not berated with disingenuous questions as a means of attack.

**[HB 427: Provide for youth health protection by John Fuller \(R\), House District 8](#)**, is the reincarnation of House Bill 113 — the anti-trans bill that prohibits surgical care for trans, non-binary, or Two-Spirit youth in Montana. This is yet another attempt by legislators to insert themselves into the personal, private health care decisions. Similar to HB 112, this bill took a month to get from the House floor through the Senate Judiciary Committee, but both are receiving their final votes in the Senate any day now. **Please call [and message your senator](#) first thing Tuesday morning and tell them to vote No on House Bill 427!**

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## Recommended Reading

### ***MT Lawmakers Focus on Restricting Trans, Reproductive Rights***

[PPAMT VP of External Affairs Laura Terrill] noted lawmakers have introduced bills restricting reproductive health care and sexual education in schools.

"You can't simultaneously take away preventive measures like access to good, quality health care and education, and then also outlaw services because the need for abortion isn't going to go away," Terrill argued. "It's just going to become more dangerous."

### **[My Legislator's Disappointing Work on Health Care](#)**

Rep. Gillette is a dentist, but as a legislator, she's been trying to insert herself into highly personal health decisions of people she's never met. This session, she introduced a bill, HB 229, that would ban ACA insurance from covering abortion care, even in cases of rape or incest. I do not understand why someone with a medical degree is trying to prevent Montanans from getting healthcare.

### **[Controversial Personhood Bill Moves Through Montana Legislature](#)**

“Women could even be prosecuted for wearing a seat belt or downhill skiing or engaging in any other behavior that someone could reasonably deem too risky,” said Laurel Hesse, from the ACLU of Montana.

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**Questions about these bills or how you can help us fight them? [Contact Julia!](#)**

[Visit our website.](#)

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