



Protect Sex Ed in Montana



This Week at the Montana Legislature March 7, 2021

And we're back!

Well, folks, we've made it past the halfway point and we're still standing! While we had a few days' rest, the legislative session starts up again tomorrow at full throttle and there's no slowing down now. As you'll see below, a few particularly harmful bills failed to make it to the other side thanks in large part to your hard work in opposing them. Thank you for all that you've done and all that you'll continue to do in the weeks to come. If you're ever interested in writing a Letter to the Editor for your local paper, joining us to testify on a bill, or learning how else to make your voice heard during the session, you can always reach out to us at 406-561-7649 or info@ppamt.org!

Take Action

Help us to protect Sex Ed in Montana — tell House Judiciary Committee members to vote No on Senate Bill 99

Sen. Cary Smith's SB 99 has gone through some changes in recent weeks but one big problem remains — the attempt to bar abortion providers such as Planned

Parenthood of Montana from providing sex education resources to Montana schools. Sen. Smith has attempted this bill several times in the past and has always been clear about his intent: to target Planned Parenthood.

[You can email the House Judiciary Committee members 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 their staff is always happy to answer your questions!

Adios, Ciao, Sayonara

We'd say 'farewell' or 'goodbye' to these terrible bills, but honestly 'good riddance' seems far more appropriate. Here are the harmful pieces of legislation that didn't make it past Transmittal because of your calls, emails, and opposition!

[HB 337: Constitutional amendment to define a person by Rep. Caleb Hinkle \(R\), House District 68](#), was an attempt to give a *fertilized egg, a zygote, or a fetus* all of the same legal rights that you have as a Montanan. That would have meant zero access to safe abortion and potentially even a ban on common forms of birth control such as the pill, IUDs, or emergency contraception — even for victims of rape or incest. It was clear to all of us that HB 337 had absolutely nothing to do with the health of Montanans and all of your calls and messages to your representatives helped remind them of that!

LC 3124, requested by Rep. Derek Skees (R), House District 11, was an attempt to ban all abortion in Montana, making narrow exceptions for only rape, incest, or when deemed necessary to save the pregnant patient's life. And just to be totally clear, that third exception was only to prevent the *death* of the patient because Rep. Skees even explicitly removed language for protecting their physical or mental health.

[SB 245: Implement medical ethics and diversity act requested by Sen. Keith Regier \(R\), Senate District 3](#), would have made it legal for health care workers to refuse care, for example a receptionist could have legally refused to admit a trans patient to the hospital.

Bills We're Fighting This Week

[SB 99: Requiring parents to opt-in to sexual education in schools, Prohibiting abortion providers from offering education by Sen. Cary Smith \(R\), Senate District 27](#), as amended, would ban the use of educational resources offered by abortion providers

such as Planned Parenthood of Montana. Comprehensive sex education covers everything from birth control and abstinence to STD prevention and safe, healthy relationships. Our young people must have every opportunity to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy decisions. SB 99 will be heard in the House Education Committee on Wednesday afternoon. **Call or email committee members and tell them to vote No on SB 99!**

The bills below haven't yet been assigned hearing dates but could crop up any time. Follow our social media channels — [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) — for updates on how to take action!

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.

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. This bill was assigned to Senate Judiciary Committee *one month ago* but still hasn't had its hearing scheduled. Maybe this week, maybe not.

Legislation We're Watching

SB 215: Religious Freedom Restoration Act by Sen. Carl Glimm (R), Senate District 2, would allow any person, corporation, or other entity to use religion as an excuse to discriminate against and harm others. Examples of this bill's dangerous potential include a religiously-affiliated school firing a teacher for becoming pregnant while not married, an employer justifying racial discrimination, a pharmacy refusing to fill birth control prescriptions, or a school counselor refusing to help a gay student. As members of the Free & Fair Coalition, we are joining with partner organizations to fight this baseless attack that would have an outsized impact on LGBTQ+ Montanans. This

bill will be heard on Thursday morning in House Judiciary Committee. ***Stay tuned for updates from us!***

HB 112: Require interscholastic athletes to participate under sex assigned at birth by Rep. John Fuller (R), House District 8, would ban transgender athletes from participating in sports in Montana public schools. The bill was passed in the House a couple weeks ago and will in time be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee. ***Please call your Senator and tell them to vote No on House Bill 112!***

[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. It has passed out of the House and will next be heard in Senate Judiciary Committee, though a hearing date has not yet been assigned.

House Bills [136](#), [140](#), [167](#), and [171](#) passed out of the Senate a couple weeks ago. HBs 136, 140, and 171 will soon head to the Governor's desk for his signature. If he signs them, they will be made law and added to the Montana Code Annotated. Because HB 167 was amended in the Senate, it heads back to the House for them to approve the changes. The Montanan Reproductive Rights Coalition, which PPAMT leads, will be submitting veto requests to the Governor's office just as we have in the past when anti-reproductive health bills have passed out of both legislative chambers.

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

[Visit our website.](#)

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