



This and every month, we are enormously grateful to be fighting with you and for you!

This Week at the Montana Legislature March 28, 2021

60 Days Down (*but who's counting?*)

Well folks, we are officially past the 2/3 mark! Tomorrow marks Day 61 of the 90-day legislative session and as you can expect, things haven't slowed down a bit. Read on for updates on anti-abortion bills like House Bills 229 and 337, as well as dangerously anti-LGTBQ+ legislation such as SB 215 and, of course, what you can do to stop them!

Take Action

Tell your Senator to vote **No** on House Bill 337.

[House Bill 337 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.](#) That means 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. This bill is nothing more than a blatant extremist attempt at banning abortion altogether.

[You can email 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!

Montana health insurance coverage *must* cover Montana health care!

Rep. Jane Gillette wants to make it impossible for low-income Montanans [to get health insurance coverage for abortion](#) — even if they paid for their insurance with their own money! And we all know that the legal right to abortion means nothing if you can't afford to access it. Please call and [email your senator](#) telling them to vote No on HB 229.

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 and let's get started!

We are (finally!) two-thirds of the way through the 67th Legislative Session but it's never too late to get involved! [Sign-up to volunteer](#).

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 on Friday morning. **Please 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. Despite a month-long delay between passing out of House Judiciary Committee and getting a vote on the House floor, HB 337 is back again and will receive its hearing in Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday morning. **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. 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 passed out of House Education Committee last week and will soon head to the House floor for debate and the final two votes. **Call 406-444-4800 to leave a message or [email your representative](#) and tell them to vote No on SB 99.**

[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.

Fighting Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation

[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 was passed out of House Judiciary Committee and will be debated on the House

floor any day now. **Please call or [message your representative](#) and tell them to vote No on this shameful attempt to legalize discrimination!**

[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. Nearly two months after passing out of the House, this bill was heard and passed in Senate Judiciary Committee.

[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 Monday and tell them to vote No on both HB 112 and HB 427!

Veto Requests

House Bills [136](#), [140](#), and [171](#) still haven't made it to the Governor's desk for his signature. Unless he vetoes them (*let's be frank: not going to happen*), they will be made law and added to the Montana Code Annotated with or without a special signing ceremony. Just as we always have when dangerous anti-reproductive health bills have passed, the Montana Reproductive Rights Coalition submitted veto letters for each. Again, we know chances are incredibly slim that any of these three bills would be vetoed but it's crucial that we put into public record the myriad of legal and moral issues that these bills pose — and that those issues were blatantly ignored.

(Note: While HB [167](#) was approved in the Senate on the same day as House Bills 136, 140, and 171, it was also amended there. For that reason, it heads back to the House for them to approve the changes.)

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

Visit our website.

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