



PPAMT January Supporter Newsletter

01.10.2021

Welcome Back!

The 67th Montana Legislative Session kicked off this past Monday, January 4. And while much has changed since 2019, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana are ready as ever to fight for reproductive rights — including safe, legal abortion.

We will be working closely with policy makers from across the political spectrum in order to protect sexual and reproductive health care for Montanans. PPAMT is also a member of several other legislative partnerships that advocate for affordable health care access, LGBTQ and immigrant rights, economic security, and more.

Over the course of the next few months, our policy team is committed to keeping you in-the-know and helping you to get involved. Stay tuned to this weekly newsletter for information on bills, important news, and ways to get involved! **This legislative session will be unlike any that Montana has ever experienced and we'll need to work hard and work together to protect our reproductive rights.**

How a Bill Becomes a Law



We all remember [our favorite Schoolhouse Rock cartoon](#), but let's do a quick refresher:

Step 1: Committee Hearings

Every bill that will be considered by the House and Senate is first presented at a committee hearing based on its subject matter (e.g. Judiciary, Human Services, etc.). The bill's sponsoring legislator presents the bill to the committee members then other legislators, lobbyists, and citizens are allowed to testify for or against the bill. The committee members then vote on whether they want to vote down the bill, make changes (a.k.a. 'amendments'), or allow it to pass and be voted on by the entire House or Senate.

Step 2: House & Senate Votes

If a bill passes out of committee, it's presented on the House or Senate floor in a process called Second Reading. Here, legislators further debate the bill before all of the state representatives or senators are asked to vote for or against the bill. If it passes, the body places one more deciding vote upon Third Reading.

Step 3: Do It All Again!

When a bill is introduced by a state representative, the bill goes through a House committee and then the House floor first before passing over to the Senate to begin the process again. When a bill is introduced by a state senator, the bill goes through a Senate committee and then the Senate floor first before passing over the House to begin the process again. If one body decides to make any changes to the bill, it goes back to the other for approval again.

Step 4: Governor's Signature

Once a bill is approved by both the House and the Senate, it's sent to the Governor's desk. The Governor has four options: signing the bill into law, recommending changes and sending it back to the legislators for consideration, vetoing the bill, or taking no action at all (in which case the bill automatically becomes a law after 10 days). If the Governor vetoes a bill but a two-thirds majority of legislators disagrees with that decision, they can override the veto and pass it into law.

Step 5: The Bill Becomes Law

The approved language is then added to the Montana Code Annotated alongside all of Montana's other state laws.

Taking Action

As you'll see below, anti-abortion legislators are already getting a jump on attempts to restrict Montanans' access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care. These bills are only three of the 15 anti-AB bills that we are keeping an eye on!

Although the legislative session has only just begun, we know that the process can move quickly with as little as 48 hours notice. We encourage you to get familiar with ways to contact your state senators and state representatives! [Their phone numbers and email addresses can all be found here](#). Not sure who your senator or representative is? [Simply fill out your address info on this page to find the answer](#).

Due to COVID-19, this will be a 'hybrid' session where you are able to participate in-person or online. If you're considering testifying on a bill in the months to come but will not be traveling to the Capitol, you can still submit written testimony or testify remotely via a phone call or Zoom! [For those planning to be remote, take a look at the form that you will be required to complete no later than 12 p.m. the day prior to a bill's hearing](#). It asks for your contact information and a brief summary of your testimony. At the bottom, the form asks if you would like to testify via Zoom — note that you should click 'Yes' which will then open the option for you to choose between Zoom and a phone call. [More information can be found on the 'Have Your Say' webpage](#).

Have questions? Want to know other ways to support sexual and reproductive health in Montana? Contact Julia Maxon at julia.maxon@ppmontana.org

Bills We're Watching This Week

LC0804 — Establish pain-capable unborn child protection act — Sen. Keith Regier (R), Senate District 3

Although we are still waiting on the bill's language, we believe this to be a bill banning abortions after 20 weeks. The 2019 bill, carried by Rep. Lola Sheldon-Galloway (R), attempted to make it a felony for patients to receive abortions beyond 20 weeks. The bill would have even allowed for a patient, their spouse, a prosecuting attorney, or the attorney general to sue the physician who performed the procedure.

LC0944 — Requiring the provision of information before the performance of an abortion — Rep. Amy Regier (R), House District 6

This bill would mandate that ultrasounds be offered to all patients who seek an abortion in Montana. There will likely be no exception for patients who are seeking abortion after a traumatic incident, like rape or incest. The bill has been re-filed from the 2019 session when the original bill was sponsored by Sen. Keith Regier, who is Rep. Regier's father.

LC1710 — Montana Born-Alive Infant Protection — Rep. Matt Regier (R), House District 4

Another repeat from 2019, this bill purports to protect the lives of infants born during an abortion. Of course it is a bill meant only to shock Montanans and seeks to ultimately ban abortion altogether. It's important to note that Montana already has a law that requires health care professionals to provide appropriate and necessary care. The original bill was sponsored by former Republican state senator Albert Olszewski (R) of Senate District 6. Rep. Matt Regier (R) is the brother of Rep. Amy Regier (R) and the son of Sen. Keith Regier (R).

[Visit our website.](#)

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