

## Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana

**Friend,**

*We are very pleased to report the 66th Montana legislature adjourned, sine die, yesterday afternoon.*

Despite our opponents creating the most vicious environment advocates and Legislators have ever experienced, we successfully fought back against four anti-choice bills that gained traction this session. These unconstitutional bills posed an extreme threat to Montanans, were blatant political attacks on the right to make private medical decisions, and directly interfered with the sanctity of the patient-doctor relationship.

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### **Attacks on Reproductive Freedom**

[\*SB 100: Requiring the provision of information before the performance of an abortion\*](#)

Requested by Sen. Keith Regier (R-Kalispell), this bill would require that patients be given the option to look at sonogram images and listen to the fetal heartbeat before their abortion procedures. There is no exception for patients who are seeking abortion after a traumatic incident, like rape or incest, and a physician would still be required to offer the images and audio even when they know the patient would not want to see or hear it. This bill was passed by the legislature and we have requested a veto from Governor Bullock.

[\*SB 354: The Montana Born-Alive Infant Protection Act\*](#)

Proposed by Sen. Albert Olszewski (R-Kalispell), SB 354 is an inflammatory tactic driving a misleading narrative that seeks only to ultimately ban abortion. The bill language is intentionally vague and would criminalize doctors who are helping patients in tragic circumstances. It's important to note this bill is redundant; existing state and federal law already requires health care professionals to provide appropriate and necessary medical care in these extremely rare circumstances. Unfortunately, this bill was passed by the House and Senate so we have asked the Governor to veto this proposed policy.

### [HB 302: Constitutional amendment to define person](#)

After debate in both the House and Senate, Rep. DeVries' (R-Montana City) "personhood" bill, ultimately failed to receive enough support to pass. The bill would have amended the Montana constitution so that "person" would apply to all stages of development, including fertilization or conception. Because of this, the bill would have banned all abortion in Montana, and impacted various contraception methods as well as in vitro fertilization. In attempting to defend his bill on the House floor, Rep. DeVries disrespectfully addressed the Montana American Indian Caucus saying, "*Abortion is a plague on Indian culture and a genocide against [their] own children*". Thank you to legislators and our supporters who saw through his despicable comments and chose to stand with our patients and with Planned Parenthood.

### [HB 500: Adopt the Montana Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act](#)

Introduced by Rep. Lola Sheldon-Galloway (R-Great Falls), this piece of legislation would make it a felony for patients to receive abortions beyond 20 weeks. The bill would even allow for a patient, their spouse, a prosecuting

attorney, or the attorney general to sue the physician who performed the procedure. HB 500 was passed by the House and Senate. We have asked that the Governor veto this abhorrent bill.

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## **Bills We Supported**

### [HB 658: Generally revise healthcare laws and permanently expand Medicaid](#)

Rep. Ed Buttrey's (R-Great Falls) Medicaid Expansion bill continued to have its flaws, including work requirements, despite PPAMT's allied work to improve it. But as the means for protecting access to Medicaid for tens of thousands of Montanans, we made the decision to stand behind it and are proud of its passage which ensures 96,000 Montana's will continue to receive needed health care.

Read President & CEO Martha Stahl's Guest Opinion piece in the Billings Gazette [here](#).

### [HB 425: Generally revise medicaid expansion laws](#)

Requested by Rep. Mary Caffero (D-Helena), this bill served as the House Democrats' vehicle for preserving Medicaid coverage for nearly 100,000 Montanans. As it failed, we ultimately stood by HB 658.

### [HB 465: Generally revise the Montana human rights act](#)

Carried by Rep. Kim Abbott (D-East Helena), HB 465 advocated for adding "sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression" to the existing Montana Human Rights Act, protecting LGBTQ+ Montanans from the threat of being fired or denied housing due to their identities. House Judiciary Committee tabled this bill once again this year, effectively killing it. As we

have in the past, PPAMT will continue the fight for dignity for all Montanans.

[\*HB 595: Require coverage of 12-month supply of prescription contraceptives\*](#)

Introduced by Rep. Laurie Bishop (D-Livingston), HB 595 would have ensured Montanans better access to birth control and the benefits that result from consistent use, such as reducing a user's odds of unintended pregnancy by 30%. Unfortunately this bill was tabled in House Human Services Committee. PPAMT understands the importance of all Montanans having affordable and convenient access to birth control and you can trust that we'll introduce this bill again during the next legislative session.

PPAMT also supported two bills that would have offered fair and effective ways to generate state revenue, which goes toward funding essential services like education and health care. We believe that all Montanans deserve the tools they need to live safe, healthy, and autonomous lives and that often begins with financial stability. Unfortunately, both [\*HB 707: Revise capital gains tax credit\*](#), sponsored by Rep. Kim Abbott (D-East Helena), and [\*HB 697: Restore top income tax brackets on high-income income earners\*](#), sponsored by Rep. Jim Hamilton (D-Bozeman), failed to make it out of the House Taxation Committee.

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## **Bills We Opposed**

[\*HB 146: Establish laws regarding sanctuary cities in Montana\*](#)

Introduced by Rep. Holmlund (R-Miles City), HB 146 is an anti-immigrant bill that would prohibit localities from making their own decision about what to

prioritize to maintain public safety. This bill is an extension of President Trump's push for draconian anti-immigrant policies and practices. When local law enforcement are forced to act as federal immigration agents, immigrants and their families often forgo essential services, including healthcare, out of fear of deportation, harassment, and scrutiny. Unfortunately, this bill was passed by both bodies of the Montana legislature and now awaits a decision from the Governor about whether or not it will become law.

[HB 290: Require child support cooperation for food stamp \(SNAP\) eligibility](#)

Introduced by Rep. Peggy Webb (R-Billings), this bill would have hurt Montana families and children by requiring cooperation with child support enforcement for food stamp eligibility. Taking away food assistance forces low-income parents to make the impossible choice between the food they need and the basic health and safety of themselves and their children. While HB 290 was passed by the legislature, we were grateful for Gov. Bullock's veto.

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## **Thank you**

*It takes all of us to hold the line on protecting access to safe, legal abortion.*

Thank you to our supporters who collectively sent nearly 1,500 messages to elected leaders this Legislative session asking them to protect access to reproductive health care. Thank you also to those who shared your personal stories, testified in committee, attended lobby day, talked with your friends and family, and engaged in our democracy. Together, with our

champions in the state House and Senate and the critically important allyship of Governor Bullock, we successfully defended Montanans access to their constitutionally protected right to the sexual and reproductive health care they need and deserve without shame or judgment.

PPAMT stands proudly with and are grateful to the members of the Montana Reproductive Rights Coalition who are fierce allies in our fight to protect access to sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion. Members of this coalition include: ACLU of Montana, Blue Mountain Clinic, BridgerCare, Montana Human Rights Network, NARAL Pro-Choice Montana, the Montana Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, Montana Women Vote, National Association of Social Workers - Montana Chapter, and Western Native Voice.

**Thank you for your continued support and happy Sine Die!**

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