

City of Billings
Weekly Legislative Report
Fourth Week of the Montana Legislature
January 27, 2011

As of today, January 27th, 614 bills have been introduced (of the 2189 bill draft requests filed). For this Report I highlight the following bills:

- HB 334, introduced by Rep. Scott Reichner (R.-Big Fork), will be one of the primary workers compensation bills considered to accomplish reform. The hearing will be January 31st. The Labor Management Advisory Council bill to revise the workers compensation laws (HB 87) was heard on Jan. 21st.
- SB 150, introduced by Sen. Wittich (R. - Bozeman), would allow a person to sue a public official or employee for denying the person's constitutional rights. It would prohibit the use of tax dollars in the legal defense of the public official. The Hearing has been held and executive action is pending.
- HB 68, to revise the Medical Marijuana Act and allow regulation and control by local governments, introduced by Rep. Sands on behalf of the Children's, Families and Human Services Interim Committee. The hearing conducted on Jan. 21st lasted for almost 4 hours with many witnesses expressing a need for state control of the matter. Another important bill dealing with medical marijuana is HB 43, introduced by Rep. Gary MacLean. It would specify employers' rights to test and discharge employees related to the employees use of medical marijuana. HB 43 was heard January 24th in the House Human Services Committee.
- HB 316 and HB 317 are companion bills, introduced by Rep. Cook (R.- Conrad), to decrease the amount of distributions in the numerous statutory appropriations, including the local government entitlement programs, and to eliminate the three-fifths vote required to reduce the amount of the entitlement share to be distributed, and to sunset statutory appropriations at certain times. The Hearing on HB 317, the sunset bill, was held on Jan. 26th. There were numerous opponents.
- SB 82, introduced by Sen. Brad Hamlett (D.-Cascade) would adopt a primary seatbelt law.
- HB 201, introduced by Rep. Warburton (R.- Havre), would permit employees to have guns in their locked vehicles parked in employers' parking lots.
- SB 117, introduced by Sen. Hinkle (R.- Thompson Falls) would require coordination efforts between local governments and the federal government when a federal policy is more restrictive than a local government policy. In effect, this Bill would force local

governments to attempt coordination with the federal government, while state government is exempt from the Bill.

- SB 163, introduced by Sen. Hawks (D.-Bozeman), would add to the general powers of municipalities by permitting regulation of outdoor lighting “in order to reduce light pollution”.
- HB 106, one of the 16 or more DUI bills, is receiving special attention and is strongly supported by the Attorney General. It would establish a “24/7 sobriety project for impaired driver offenders”. The City of Helena has been testing this project with reported success. HB 106 passed the House Judiciary Committee by a vote of 20 to 0.

I look forward to discussing these and other legislative matters of interest to City Council. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like information on any particular topic or bill.

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