

MINUTES
MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION
COMMITTEE ON (H) EDUCATION

Call to Order: Chair Fred Anderson-R, on February 24, 2023 at 4:24 PM, in 137

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Rep. Fred Anderson, Chair (R)
Rep. Linda Reksten, Vice Chair (R)
Rep. Tyson Running Wolf, Vice Chair (D)
Rep. James Bergstrom (R)
Rep. Marta Bertoglio (R)
Rep. Sherry Essmann (R)
Rep. Brandon Ler (R)
Rep. Eric Matthews (D)
Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R)
Rep. Mark Thane (D)

Members Excused: Rep. Lee Deming (R)
Rep. Braxton Mitchell (R)
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)

Staff Present: Rose Harmon, Secretary
Amanda Persons, Remote Meeting Coordinator
Laura Sankey Keip, Research Analyst

Audio Committees: These minutes are in outline form only. They provide a list of participants and a record of official action taken by the committee. The link to the audio recording of the meeting is available on the Legislative Branch website.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted:

HB 482 02/20/2023
HB 502 02/21/2023
HB 531 02/21/2023
HB 707 02/21/2023

Executive Action:

HB 501 DO PASS
HB 549 DO PASS AS AMENDED
HB 562 TO TABLE
HB 587 DO PASS
HB 588 DO PASS

HB 504 DO PASS AS AMENDED
HB 482 DO PASS
HB 531 DO PASS
HB 288 DO PASS AS AMENDED

16:26:26 Vice Chair Reksten assumed the chair.

HEARING ON HB 482 - Provide access to education and supports for children aging out of foster care

Opening Statement:

16:26:32 Rep. Jane Gillette (R), HD 64, opened the hearing on HB 482, Provide access to education and supports for children aging out of foster care.

Proponent Testimony:

16:33:31 Kelly Cresswell, Executive Director, REACH Higher Montana

16:34:58 Rhonda Safford, Student Services Director, REACH Higher Montana

16:37:13 Kaitlin Baker, Self

16:39:46 Daneen Peterson, Foster Parents, Dawson Promise at Dawson Community College

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

16:44:03 Erica Johnston, Human Services Executive Director, Director's Office, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

16:44:30 Helen Thigpen, Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE)

Questions from Committee:

16:45:00 Vice Chair Linda Reksten

16:45:18 Helen Thigpen, OCHE

16:45:49 Rep. Jane Gillette-R

16:49:54 Vice Chair Linda Reksten

16:50:10 Rep. Jane Gillette-R

16:50:49 Rep. Sherry Essmann

16:51:29 Rep. Jane Gillette-R

Closing Statement:

16:54:21 Rep. Jane Gillette (R), HD 64, closed the hearing on HB 482.

HEARING ON HB 531 - Establish annual combined meeting of the board of education

Opening Statement:

16:55:05 Rep. Tony Brockman (R), HD 9, opened the hearing on HB 531, Establish annual combined meeting of the board of education.

Proponent Testimony:

16:57:19 Dylan Klapmeier, Governor's Education Advisor, Montana Governor's Office (GOV)

16:57:57 Elsie Arntzen, Montana State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent)

16:58:37 Helen Thigpen, Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE)

16:59:22 McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education (BPE)

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

17:00:14 Vice Chair Linda Reksten

17:00:42 Helen Thigpen, OCHE

17:01:02 Chair Fred Anderson resumed the Chair.

Closing Statement:

17:02:00 Rep. Tony Brockman (R), HD 9, closed the hearing on HB 531.

HEARING ON HB 502 - Revise education laws related to human sexuality instruction

Opening Statement:

17:03:31 Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R), HD 43, opened the hearing on HB 502, Revise education laws related to human sexuality instruction.

Proponent Testimony:

17:05:35 Alba Pimentel, Chapter Chair, Moms for Liberty, Yellowstone County

17:07:42 Cary Smith, Former Montana State Senator, District 27

17:11:38 Jessie Browning, Parent, Moms for Liberty, Yellowstone County

17:13:33 Heather Higgs, Self

17:15:43 Jeff Laszloffy, Montana Family Foundation

17:16:56 Elsie Arntzen, Montana State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent)

Opponent Testimony:

17:18:23 Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Boards Association (MSBA), Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools (CAMPS)

17:24:11 Erik Burke, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE)

17:27:21 Jenny Murnane Butcher, Executive Director, Montanans Organized For Education (MOFE)

17:28:42 Keegen Medrano, American Civil Liberties Union of Montana

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

17:31:40 Rep. Eric Matthews

17:32:25 Lance Melton, CAMPS

17:35:13 Rep. Marta Bertoglio

17:35:27 Lance Melton, CAMPS

17:37:50 Rep. Mark Thane

17:38:43 Lance Melton, CAMPS

Closing Statement:

17:40:31 Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R), HD 43, closed the hearing on HB 502.

HEARING ON HB 707 - Allow certain elementary districts to create new high school district

Opening Statement:

17:49:43 Rep. Jodee Etchart (R), HD 48, opened the hearing on HB 707, Allow certain elementary districts to create new high school district.

Proponent Testimony:

17:51:26 Elsie Arntzen, Montana State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent)

17:53:29 Sen. Chris Friedel, SD 26, (R)

17:55:33 Don Jones, Self

17:57:06 Susie Layton, Self

17:59:15 Luke Romo, Self

18:01:32 Missy Jones, Self

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

18:04:23 Tobin Novasio, Superintendent, Lockwood Schools

Questions from Committee:

18:04:56 Rep. Marta Bertoglio

18:05:11 Tobin Novasio

18:06:06 Rep. Lee Deming-R

18:07:01 Tobin Novasio

18:08:22 Rep. Mark Thane
18:08:51 Rep. Jodee Etchart-R
18:09:58 Rep. Mark Thane
18:10:13 Rep. Eric Matthews
18:11:06 Rep. Jodee Etchart-R
18:11:45 Rep. Eric Matthews
18:12:13 Rep. James Bergstrom
18:13:42 Susie Layton
18:15:03 Chair Fred Anderson
18:15:33 Susie Layton
18:16:53 Rep. Sherry Essmann

Closing Statement:

18:18:18 Rep. Jodee Etchart (R), HD 48, closed the hearing on HB 707.

18:20:30 **Recessed**

19:04:00 **Reconvened**

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 501 - Revise school textbook laws

19:04:28 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 501 DO PASS.**

Discussion:

19:04:41 Laura Sankey Keip
19:05:18 Rep. Eric Matthews
19:05:53 Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe
19:07:30 Chair Fred Anderson
19:08:40 Vice Chair Linda Reksten

Vote: Motion carried 9 - 4 by roll call vote with Rep. Matthews, Rep. Romano, Rep. Running Wolf, Rep. Thane, voting no.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 549 - Authorizing establishment of public charter schools

- 19:10:43 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 549 DO PASS.**
- 19:11:12 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 549 BE AMENDED.**
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
- 19:16:43 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 549 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**

Discussion:

- 19:17:00 Rep. Eric Matthews
- 19:17:09 Chair Fred Anderson
- 19:19:09 Rep. Marta Bertoglio
- Vote:** Motion carried 11 - 2 by roll call vote with Rep. Mitchell, Rep. Seekins-Crowe, voting no.
Rep. Mitchell, By Proxy

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 562 - Authorize establishment of community choice schools

- 19:22:09 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 562 DO PASS.**
- Discussion:**
- 19:22:39 Rep. Marta Bertoglio
- 19:22:54 Laura Sankey Keip
- 19:24:56 Rep. Mark Thane
- 19:25:45 **Substitute Motion:** Rep. Eric Matthews moved that **HB 562 BE TABLED.**
Vote: Substitute Motion failed 9 - 4 by roll call vote with Rep. Matthews, Rep. Romano, Rep. Running Wolf, Rep. Thane, voting yes.
- 19:28:00 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 562 DO PASS.**
Vote: Motion carried 8 - 5 by roll call vote with Rep. Bertoglio, Rep. Matthews, Rep. Romano, Rep. Running Wolf, Rep. Thane, voting no.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 587 - Generally revise school finance laws related to property taxes

- 19:30:06 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 587 DO PASS.**
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 588 - Revise TEACH Act incentives to increase starting teacher salary

19:31:26 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 588 DO PASS.**

Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 504 - Revise school laws to require trustees to adopt a grievance policy

19:32:11 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 504 DO PASS.**

19:32:34 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 504 BE AMENDED.**

Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

19:33:55 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 504 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**

Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 482 - Provide access to education and supports for children aging out of foster care

19:34:35 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 482 DO PASS.**

Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 531 - Establish annual combined meeting of the board of education

19:35:30 **Motion:** Vice Chair Linda Reksten moved that **HB 531 DO PASS.**

Vote: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 288 - Revise laws related to tuition waivers for American Indian students

19:36:38 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tyson Running Wolf moved that **HB 288 BE TAKEN FROM THE TABLE.**

Discussion:

19:37:20 Vice Chair Tyson Running Wolf

19:39:00 Rep. James Bergstrom

19:41:54 Vice Chair Linda Reksten

19:43:18 Chair Fred Anderson

19:46:05 Rep. Mark Thane

19:46:51 Rep. Eric Matthews

Vote: Motion carried 9 - 2 by roll call vote with Rep. Bergstrom, Rep. Seekins-Crowe, voting no.

19:50:05 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tyson Running Wolf moved that **HB 288 DO PASS.**

19:50:12 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tyson Running Wolf moved that **HB 288 BE AMENDED.**

Vote: Motion carried 10 - 3 by voice vote with Rep. Bergstrom, Rep. Mitchell, Rep. Seekins-Crowe, voting no.
Rep. Mitchell, By Proxy

19:53:50 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tyson Running Wolf moved that **HB 288 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**

Vote: Motion carried 9 - 4 by voice vote with Rep. Bergstrom, Rep. Bertoglio, Rep. Mitchell, Rep. Seekins-Crowe, voting no.
Rep. Mitchell, By Proxy

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 19:55:27

Rose Harmon, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230224EDHaad\)](#)