

**MINUTES**  
**MONTANA SENATE**  
**68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**  
**COMMITTEE ON (S) FINANCE AND CLAIMS**

**Call to Order:** Chair John Esp-R, on April 20, 2023 at 8:07 AM, in 317

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Sen. John Esp, Chair (R)  
Sen. Janet Ellis, Vice Chair (D)  
Sen. Carl Glimm, Vice Chair (R)  
Sen. Kenneth Bogner (R)  
Sen. Ellie Boldman (D)  
Sen. Mike Cuffe (R)  
Sen. Pat Flowers (D)  
Sen. John Fuller (R)  
Sen. Dennis Lenz (R)  
Sen. Ryan Lynch (D)  
Sen. Forrest Mandeville (R)  
Sen. Tom McGillvray (R)  
Sen. Christopher Pope (D)  
Sen. Daniel Salomon (R)  
Sen. Shelley Vance (R)  
Sen. Jeffrey Welborn (R)

**Members Excused:** Sen. Dan Bartel (R)  
Sen. Mike Lang (R)  
Sen. Shane Morigeau (D)

**Staff Present:** Julie Johnson, Research Analyst  
Joe Triem, Fiscal Analyst  
Cy Walsh, Secretary

**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 223 04/19/2023  
HB 587 04/19/2023  
HB 648 04/19/2023  
HB 749 04/19/2023

HB 916 04/18/2023  
HB 917 04/18/2023  
HB 946 04/18/2023  
HB 952 04/19/2023

Executive Action:

HB 4 BE CONCURRED IN AS  
AMENDED  
HB 749 TO TABLE  
HB 952 BE NOT CONCURRED IN  
HB 332  
HB 482 BE CONCURRED IN  
HB 864  
HB 868

**HEARING ON HB 946 - Implement provisions of HB2 - Section E - education**

**Opening Statement:**

08:09:33 Rep. David Bedey (R), HD 86, opened the hearing on HB 946, Implement provisions of HB2 - Section E - education.

**Proponent Testimony:**

None

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

08:14:31 Paul Taylor, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

08:15:11 Jennie Stapp, Montana State Library

08:15:26 Melissa Briggs, Montana State Library

**Closing Statement:**

08:16:28 Rep. David Bedey (R), HD 86, closed the hearing on HB 946.

08:19:19 Sen. Bogner has left

08:19:29 Sen. Mandeville has left

**HEARING ON HB 587 - Generally revise school finance laws related to property taxes**

**Opening Statement:**

08:16:54 Rep. Llew Jones (R), HD 18, opened the hearing on HB 587, Generally revise school finance laws related to property taxes.

**Proponent Testimony:**

08:21:16 Lance Melton, Montana School Boards Association (MSBA)

08:21:45 Jason Rittal, Montana Association of Counties (MACo)

08:22:40 Bob Story, Montana Taxpayers Association

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

08:25:07 Paul Taylor, Office of Public Instruction

08:25:18 Nancy Hall, Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP)

**Questions from Committee:**

08:26:00 Chair John Esp

08:27:34 Rep. Llew Jones-R

08:27:38 Sen. Mike Lang

08:28:08 Rep. Llew Jones-R

08:29:56 Chair John Esp

08:30:43 Rep. Llew Jones-R

**Closing Statement:**

08:30:52 Rep. Llew Jones (R), HD 18, closed the hearing on HB 587.

**HEARING ON HB 749 - Revise Montana digital academy laws**

**Opening Statement:**

08:32:33 Rep. Llew Jones (R), HD 18, opened the hearing on HB 749, Revise Montana digital academy laws.

**Discussion:**

[EXHIBIT\(230420FCSa1\)](#)

**Proponent Testimony:**

08:35:23 Dylan Klapmeyer, Governor's Office

08:36:37 Lance Melton, Montana School Boards Association (MSBA)

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

08:39:48 Shauna Lyons, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education  
08:39:58 Jay Phillips, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)  
08:40:18 Jason Neiffer, Montana Digital Academy  
08:40:35 Mike Agostinelli, Montana Digital Academy

**Questions from Committee:**

08:41:23 Sen. Mike Cuffe  
08:43:23 Rep. Llew Jones-R  
08:44:04 Vice Chair Carl Glimm  
08:44:28 Rep. Llew Jones-R  
08:44:56 Jay Phillips, OPI  
08:45:34 Vice Chair Janet Ellis  
08:45:52 Rep. Llew Jones-R  
08:46:33 Sen. Mike Lang  
08:46:40 Rep. Llew Jones-R  
08:47:10 Chair John Esp  
08:49:37 Rep. Llew Jones-R

**Closing Statement:**

08:49:54 Rep. Llew Jones (R), HD 18, closed the hearing on HB 749.

**HEARING ON HB 917 - Authorize transfers and other necessary measure to implement  
HB 2 section B**

**Opening Statement:**

08:51:26 Rep. Bob Keenan (R), HD 5, opened the hearing on HB 917, Authorize transfers and other necessary measure to implement HB 2 section B.

**Proponent Testimony:**

None

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

None

**Questions from Committee:**

None

**Closing Statement:**

08:54:33 Rep. Bob Keenan (R), HD 5, closed the hearing on HB 917.

**HEARING ON HB 916 - Authorize transfers and other necessary measures to implement HB2-Section D**

**Opening Statement:**

08:55:32 Rep. Bill Mercer (R), HD 46, opened the hearing on HB 916, Authorize transfers and other necessary measures to implement HB2-Section D.

**Proponent Testimony:**

None

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

09:03:24 Natalie Smitham, Department of Corrections (DOC)

09:03:45 Koan Mercer, Office of State Public Defender

**Questions from Committee:**

09:04:16 Sen. Tom McGillvray

09:06:58 Rep. Bill Mercer-R  
09:07:18 Sen. Ryan Lynch  
09:07:22 Rep. Bill Mercer-R  
09:07:29 Chair John Esp  
09:07:30 Rep. Bill Mercer-R

**Closing Statement:**

09:08:05 Rep. Bill Mercer (R), HD 46, closed the hearing on HB 916.

**HEARING ON HB 648 - Provide for the best beginnings scholarship program**

**Opening Statement:**

09:11:57 Rep. Alice Buckley (D), HD 63, opened the hearing on HB 648, Provide for the best beginnings scholarship program.

**Proponent Testimony:**

09:15:25 Sheridan Johnson, Montana Chamber of Commerce and Billings Chamber of Commerce  
09:16:06 John Metropoulos, Sibanye-Stillwater Mining  
09:17:07 Heather O'Loughlin, Montana Budget and Policy Center (MBPC)  
09:19:15 Ella Smith, Montana Advocates for Children  
09:20:16 Stacey Anderson, Montana Primary Care Association

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

09:21:18 Erica Johnston, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

**Questions from Committee:**

09:22:04 Sen. Ryan Lynch

09:22:09 Heather O'Loughlin, MBPC  
09:24:07 Sen. Tom McGillvray  
09:24:14 John Metropoulous, Sibanye-Stillwater Mining  
09:25:08 Sen. Daniel Salomon  
09:25:23 Erica Johnston, DPHHS  
09:26:03 Sen. Tom McGillvray  
09:26:27 Rep. Alice Buckley-D  
09:28:10 Sen. Tom McGillvray  
09:28:13 Rep. Alice Buckley-D  
09:28:19 Erica Johnston, DPHHS  
09:28:57 Sen. Christopher Pope  
09:29:19 Erica Johnston, DPHHS

**Closing Statement:**

09:29:51 Rep. Alice Buckley (D), HD 63, closed the hearing on HB 648.  
  
09:37:23 Sen. Mandeville has arrived

**HEARING ON HB 952 - Create grant program for autism facilities**

**Opening Statement:**

09:32:05 Rep. Courtenay Sprunger (R), HD 7, opened the hearing on HB 952, Create grant program for autism facilities.

**Proponent Testimony:**

None

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

09:35:36 Gene Hermanson, Department of Public Health and Human Services  
(DPHHS)

**Questions from Committee:**

09:36:59 Sen. Daniel Salomon  
09:37:01 Gene Hermanson, DPHHS  
09:37:49 Sen. Daniel Salomon  
09:38:25 Rep. Courtenay Sprunger-R  
09:39:36 Sen. Shane Morigeau  
09:40:39 Gene Hermanson, DPHHS  
09:41:15 Sen. Pat Flowers  
09:41:42 Rep. Courtenay Sprunger-R  
09:42:20 Sen. Mike Cuffe  
09:43:55 Rep. Courtenay Sprunger-R  
09:45:17 Chair John Esp  
09:45:23 Rep. Courtenay Sprunger-R

**Closing Statement:**

09:45:31 Rep. Courtenay Sprunger (R), HD 7, closed the hearing on HB 952.

09:54:08 **Recessed**

10:36:19 **Reconvened**

10:38:48 Sen. Bogner has arrived

**HEARING ON HB 223 - Expanding the disabled veteran property tax assistance program**

**Opening Statement:**

10:36:35 Rep. Scot Kerns (R), HD 23, opened the hearing on HB 223, Expanding the disabled veteran property tax assistance program.

**Proponent Testimony:**

None

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

10:40:46 Brittany Mari, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

10:41:30 Chair John Esp

10:41:41 Rep. Scot Kerns-R

10:42:14 Chair John Esp

10:42:20 Rep. Scot Kerns-R

10:42:33 Brittany Mari, DOR

10:43:19 Chair John Esp

10:43:29 Brittany Mari, DOR

10:43:42 Sen. Kenneth Bogner

10:45:59 Rep. Scot Kerns-R

10:46:42 Brittany Mari, DOR

10:47:33 Chair John Esp

10:47:44 Brittany Mari, DOR

**Closing Statement:**

10:49:08 Rep. Scot Kerns (R), HD 23, closed the hearing on HB 223.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 4 - Appropriations by budget amendment**

10:51:25 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 4 BE CONCURRED IN.**

10:51:31 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 4 BE AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

10:52:13 Sen. Dan Bartel  
10:52:20 Joe Triem  
10:51:31 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.  
10:53:20 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 4 BE CONCURRED IN AS AMENDED.**  
10:53:20 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 749 - Revise Montana digital academy laws**

10:54:56 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 749 BE CONCURRED IN.**  
**Discussion:**  
10:55:16 Sen. Daniel Salomon  
10:55:44 Sen. Ryan Lynch  
10:56:07 Sen. Mike Cuffe  
10:56:30 Sen. Mike Lang  
10:56:48 Chair John Esp  
10:57:31 Sen. Daniel Salomon  
10:54:56 **Vote:** Motion failed 15 - 4 by roll call vote with Sen. Bogner, Sen. Cuffe, Sen. Lang, Sen. Salomon, voting yes.  
11:00:00 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 749 TO TABLE.**  
11:00:00 **Vote:** Motion carried 15 - 4 by voice vote with Sen. Bogner, Sen. Cuffe, Sen. Lang, Sen. Salomon, voting no.  
10:59:21 Sen. Boldman has arrived  
11:00:20 Sen. Lenz has arrived

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 952 - Create grant program for autism facilities**

11:00:44 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 952 BE NOT CONCURRED IN.**  
**Discussion:**  
11:01:10 Sen. Ellie Boldman

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 332 - Generally revise laws related to school employee health benefits**

11:02:17 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 332 BE CONCURRED IN.**

11:02:24 **Motion:** Sen. Daniel Salomon moved that **HB 332 BE AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

11:02:53 Sen. Daniel Salomon

11:02:24 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11:03:46 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 332 BE CONCURRED IN AS AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

11:04:01 Vice Chair Carl Glimm

11:04:56 Chair John Esp

11:03:46 **Vote:** Motion carried 11 - 8 by roll call vote with Sen. Bartel, Sen. Fuller, Sen. Glimm, Sen. Lang, Sen. Lenz, Sen. Mandeville, Sen. McGillvray, Sen. Vance, voting no.

11:03:46 **Carrier Assigned:** Sen. Greg Hertz

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

11:07:20 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 482 BE CONCURRED IN.**

**Discussion:**

11:07:39 Vice Chair Carl Glimm

11:08:41 Sen. Daniel Salomon

11:07:20 **Vote:** Motion carried 17 - 2 by voice vote with Sen. Cuffe, Sen. McGillvray, voting no.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 864 - Authorize transfers and other necessary measure to implement HB 2 section A**

11:10:33 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 864 BE CONCURRED IN.**

11:10:42 **Motion:** Sen. Ryan Lynch moved that **HB 864 BE AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

11:11:20 Sen. Ryan Lynch

11:10:42 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11:12:00 **Motion:** Sen. Tom McGillvray moved that **HB 864 BE AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

- 11:12:33 Sen. Tom McGillvray  
11:13:07 Sen. Mike Lang  
11:13:22 Chair John Esp  
11:13:26 Sen. Tom McGillvray  
11:13:37 Chair John Esp  
11:13:43 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
11:14:36 Sen. Ryan Lynch  
11:15:44 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
11:15:55 Sen. Ryan Lynch  
11:12:00 **Vote:** Motion carried 15 - 4 by roll call vote with Sen. Bartel, Sen. Lenz, Sen. Mandeville, Sen. Welborn, voting no.  
11:17:52 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 864 BE CONCURRED IN AS AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

- 11:18:21 Sen. Tom McGillvray  
11:19:36 Sen. Ryan Lynch  
11:20:03 Vice Chair Carl Glimm  
11:20:24 Sen. Ryan Lynch  
11:17:52 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.  
11:17:52 **Carrier Assigned:** Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
11:12:23 Sen. Flowers has arrived

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 868 - Authorize transfers and other necessary measure to implement HB 2 section C**

- 11:21:11 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 868 BE CONCURRED IN.**  
11:21:36 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 868 BE AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

- 11:22:31 Vice Chair Janet Ellis  
11:21:36 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11:23:15 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 868 BE AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

11:23:47 Chair John Esp

11:23:15 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11:24:00 **Motion:** Vice Chair Carl Glimm moved that **HB 868 BE CONCURRED IN AS AMENDED.**

11:24:00 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

11:24:00 **Carrier Assigned:** Sen. Jeffrey Welborn

11:25:47 **Recessed**

11:30:26 **Reconvened**

11:30:43 **Committee Discussion:** Discussion of House Bill 5

11:31:10 Katie Callon, Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD)

11:32:07 Chair John Esp

11:32:10 Katie Callon, LFD

11:32:54 Sen. Dan Bartel

11:33:02 Katie Callon, LFD

11:40:41 Chair John Esp

11:41:15 Katie Callon, LFD

11:41:56 Sen. Ryan Lynch

11:41:58 Chair John Esp

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 11:42:26

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Cy Walsh, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230420FCSaad\)](#)