



CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND CENSORSHIP BY MUS

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Willis Curdy
Mary Ann Dunwell
Bob Phalen
Sue Vinton

HOUSE MEMBERS

Brian Close
Melody Cunningham
Caleb Hinkle
Greg Overstreet

COMMITTEE STAFF

Rachel Weiss - Lead Staff
Ania Alduenda - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

November 03, 2025
Capitol Room 137 & Zoom
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sen. Willis Curdy, Presiding Officer (D)
Rep. Caleb Hinkle, Presiding Officer (R)
Rep. Brian Close (D)
Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell (D) - Via Zoom
Rep. Greg Overstreet (R)
Sen. Bob Phalen (R)
Sen. Sue Vinton (R) - Via Zoom

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rep. Melody Cunningham (D) - Via Zoom

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff
Ania Alduenda, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

09:00:06 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

Introductions of Committee Members and Staff

09:00:53 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
09:01:00 Rep. Melody Cunningham joined the meeting via Zoom.
09:01:11 Sen. Bob Phalen
09:01:46 Rep. Brian Close
09:02:05 Rep. Caleb Hinkle
09:02:29 Rep. Greg Overstreet
09:03:28 Sen. Sue Vinton
09:04:12 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
09:05:36 Rep. Melody Cunningham
09:06:48 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
09:07:12 Ania Alduenda, Secretary, LSD
09:07:38 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Committee Structure and Duties, Interim Committee Rules, Proxy Voting Procedures, and Budget and Travel Claims

09:08:29 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
09:08:57 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 1](#)
[EXHIBIT 2](#)

Election of Presiding Officers

09:12:29 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

Motion

09:12:49 Rep. Greg Overstreet nominated Rep. Caleb Hinkle to be the Presiding Officer of the Civil Rights Violations and Censorship by the Montana University System (CRV) Committee.

Committee Discussion / Questions

09:13:17 Rep. Melody Cunningham
09:13:41 Rachel Weiss, LSD
09:14:11 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
09:14:34 Rachel Weiss, LSD

Discussion on the Motion

09:15:02 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
09:15:56 Sen. Sue Vinton

Vote

09:16:09 Failed 4 - 4 by roll call vote with Rep. Caleb Hinkle, Rep. Greg Overstreet, Sen. Bob Phalen, and Sen. Sue Vinton voting 'yes'.

First Motion

09:16:45 Rep. Brian Close nominated Sen. Willis Curdy to be the Presiding Officer of the CRV Committee.

Second Motion

09:16:58 Sen. Sue Vinton nominated Rep. Greg Overstreet to be the Presiding Officer of the CRV Committee.

Discussion on the Motions

09:17:07 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

09:17:16 Sen. Sue Vinton

09:17:53 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

09:19:10 Sen. Sue Vinton

09:19:59 Rep. Caleb Hinkle

09:20:44 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

09:21:36 Sen. Sue Vinton

09:22:16 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

Vote

09:22:41 Failed 4 - 4 by roll call vote on the first motion to nominate Sen. Willis Curdy as Presiding Officer with Rep. Brian Close, Rep. Melody Cunningham, Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell, and Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy voting 'yes'.

Vote

09:23:16 Failed 4 - 4 by roll call vote on the second motion to nominate Rep. Greg Overstreet as Presiding Officer with Rep. Caleb Hinkle, Rep. Greg Overstreet, Sen. Bob Phalen, and Sen. Sue Vinton voting 'yes'.

Committee Discussion / Questions

09:23:45 Rep. Brian Close

09:23:53 Sen. Sue Vinton

09:23:58 Rachel Weiss, LSD

Motion

09:24:35 Rep. Brian Close nominated Sen. Willis Curdy and Rep. Caleb Hinkle to share and rotate the roles of Vice Presiding Officer and Presiding Officer of the CRV Committee. The sitting Presiding Officer would be selected by a coin toss before each meeting.

Discussion on the Motion

09:25:24 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

09:25:34 Sen. Sue Vinton
09:26:06 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
09:27:04 Rep. Caleb Hinkle
09:27:15 Rachel Weiss, LSD
09:27:52 Sen. Sue Vinton
09:27:59 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

09:28:07 **Recessed**
09:33:08 **Reconvened**

Election of Presiding Officers - Continued

09:33:09 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
09:33:16 Rachel Weiss, LSD

Substitute Motion

09:33:51 Rep. Brian Close nominated Rep. Caleb Hinkle and Sen. Willis Curdy to share the presiding officer position as co-chairs of the CRV Committee.

Discussion on the Motion

09:34:07 Acting Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
09:34:29 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

Vote

09:35:18 Carried 5 - 3 by roll call vote with Rep. Greg Overstreet, Sen. Bob Phalen, and Sen. Sue Vinton voting 'no'.

Discussion on the Vote

09:35:47 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
09:36:32 Rachel Weiss, LSD
09:37:03 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

REVIEW OF RECENT LEGISLATION

House Bill 284 (2025)

09:37:10 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 3](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

09:40:32 Rep. Brian Close
(See Exhibit 3)
09:40:58 Rachel Weiss, LSD
09:43:37 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
09:45:26 Sen. Sue Vinton
09:46:27 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle
09:46:57 Sen. Bob Phalen
09:47:23 Rep. Greg Overstreet

09:48:26 Rep. Brian Close
09:49:23 Rep. Melody Cunningham
09:50:05 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
09:51:22 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle
09:52:00 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM'S CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREE SPEECH ON CAMPUSES

09:52:51 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
09:53:14 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
09:53:23 Ali Bovingdon, Chief Legal Counsel, Montana University System (MUS)
[EXHIBIT 4](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

10:15:33 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle
10:16:21 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:24:21 Rep. Melody Cunningham
10:25:41 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:27:41 Sen. Bob Phalen
(See Exhibit 4)
10:29:28 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:31:43 Rep. Greg Overstreet
(See Exhibit 4)
10:32:24 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:34:51 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
10:35:43 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:40:10 Rep. Brian Close
10:40:21 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:41:53 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle
10:42:16 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:42:54 Sen. Sue Vinton
10:43:31 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:44:12 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
10:45:55 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:55:11 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle
10:55:38 Ali Bovingdon, MUS
10:56:00 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

Public Comment

10:56:36 William Andrew Coyle
10:57:59 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
10:58:08 Rachel Weiss, LSD

Committee Discussion / Questions

11:01:07 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

11:01:17 Sen. Bob Phalen

11:01:44 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

11:02:26 **Recessed**

11:13:53 **Reconvened**

OVERVIEW OF DRAFT WORK PLAN AND FUTURE MEETING DATES

11:13:54 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

Draft Work Plan

11:14:16 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

(See Exhibit 1)

Committee Discussion / Questions

11:18:32 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

11:18:52 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

11:19:22 Rep. Melody Cunningham

11:19:49 Sen. Sue Vinton

(See Exhibit 5)

11:20:43 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

Motion

11:21:06 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell moved to indefinitely adjourn the Civil Rights Violations and Censorship by the Montana University System Committee.

Discussion on the Motion

11:21:34 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

11:21:47 Rep. Greg Overstreet

11:21:58 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

11:23:55 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

11:24:16 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

11:25:38 Sen. Sue Vinton

11:25:58 Rep. Greg Overstreet

11:26:55 Sen. Bob Phalen

Vote

11:27:34 Failed 6 - 2 by roll call vote with Rep. Brian Close and Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell voting 'yes'.

Committee Discussion / Questions

11:28:17 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

11:28:34 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

11:29:07 Sen. Bob Phalen
11:29:22 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
11:29:51 Rachel Weiss, LSD
11:31:26 Rep. Melody Cunningham
11:32:17 Rachel Weiss, LSD

Motion

11:32:50 Rep. Brian Close moved to adopt the work plan as presented.

Discussion on the Motion

11:33:36 Sen. Sue Vinton

Vote

11:33:48 Carried unanimously by roll call vote.

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION

Further Direction to Staff

11:34:14 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
11:34:32 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
11:35:22 Sen. Sue Vinton
11:35:34 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
11:36:05 Rep. Brian Close
11:36:22 Rep. Melody Cunningham
11:36:57 Sen. Sue Vinton

Motion

11:37:14 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell moved to request, from the Chief Legal Counsel of the Legislative Services Division, a legal review on the assigned tasks, goals, and mission of the Civil Rights Violations and Censorship by the Montana University System Committee.

Discussion on the Motion

11:37:51 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle
11:38:11 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
11:39:13 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
11:39:21 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
11:39:36 Rep. Greg Overstreet
11:40:19 Sen. Bob Phalen
11:40:27 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy
11:40:56 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell
11:41:17 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

Vote

11:41:38 Failed 6 - 2 by roll call vote with Rep. Brian Close and Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell voting 'yes'.

Committee Discussion

11:42:12 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

11:42:24 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

11:42:54 Sen. Sue Vinton

11:43:14 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 11:43:33