



## Legislative Update

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### From the exec's chair

*COEN*

Our members at [Child and Family Services](#) recently sat down with the Billings Gazette and aired some of the concerns they have this legislative session. With the Department of Public Health and Human Services looking at some serious cuts to an already understaffed and overworked division of DPHHS, the proposed \$93 million would result in the loss of about \$1 million to the CFS division impacting their ability to fill vacant positions. Governor Bullock addressed the issues faced by CFS in his State of the State address urging the legislature to not tie the hands of those who serve on the frontlines of keeping Montana kids safe. While this is certainly of concern, I want to caution everyone that it is still very early in the session and a lot can happen.

I attended the MEA-MFT board meeting January 27-28. This is the third MEA-MFT board meeting I have attended since our unions passed resolutions last year to explore the potential of merger. There is still a lot of work to do on this front but the meetings have been informative and the MEA-MFT board has made me feel extremely welcome and part of the team.

### Legislative watch list

Representative Mary Ann Dunwell (HD 84-D) is introducing [HB 341](#), generally revise state travel and per diem laws, to the House State Administration Committee on February 7. Representative Dunwell has asked that we support her bill with emails to committee members and those who are able to testify in person at the hearing. We realize that per diem does not impact all state employees but we also know that a significant number of MPEA and MEA-MFT members are negatively impacted. Considering that the per diem for state employees has not been increased in 20 years, it might be time to bump in-state and out-of-state per diem just a bit. You can use the links below to weigh in on the issue.

Governor Bullock announced that he exercised his right to offer an amendatory veto to HB 1 – designated to give legislators more money writing “I cannot in good faith accept a bill that allows one branch of government a free pass while everyone else pulls their weight. Montanans deserve better.” MPEA applauds Governor Bullock’s actions on behalf of the thousands of executive branch state employees we represent.

**New [LC1780/HB 383](#)** – Primary sponsor Geraldine Custer (R) HD 39 to provide actuarial required funding for Sheriffs’ Retirement System.

Please contact your [MPEA staff](#) regarding bills on this list or bills you believe MPEA should be tracking. Those bills appearing in **bold red** were tabled in committee.

### Bills

- [HB 2](#) General Appropriations Act (Governor Bullock’s proposed biennial budget)
- [HB 13](#) State employee pay plan
- [HB 14](#) Bonding program (Governor Bullock’s infrastructure bill)
- [HB 72](#) Increase university system supplemental contributions to TRS
- [HB 94](#) Generally revise public safety officer standards/training council laws
- [HB 136](#) actuarial funding for the Game Wardens and Peace Officers Retirement System – Passed 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in the House and on its way to House Appropriations.

- [HB 155](#) Eliminate election day as state holiday
  - **HB 169 Tabled in House Business & Labor**
  - [HB 181](#) Establish requirements for police dogs
  - **HB 185 Tabled in Committee**
  - [HB 202](#) Generally revise laws related to government employees and officers
  - [HB 208](#) Provide that it is unlawful to retaliate against public whistleblowers
  - [HB 248](#) Revise anti-bullying laws – House Education
  - [HB 262](#) Generally revise concealed carry regulations for legal gun owners – House Judiciary
  - [HB 273](#) Generally revise concealed weapons laws – House Judiciary
  - [HB 341](#) Generally revise state employee travel and per diem laws – House State Administration
  - [SB 5](#) Revise INTERCAP loan program
  - [SB 57](#) Clarify highway patrol funding sources and increase certain registration fees
  - **SB 69 Tabled in committee**
  - [SB 85](#) Submitting a 6-mill ley for support of the Montana University System to voters. Passed Senate referred to House Tax
  - [SB 87](#) Revise campaign finance report laws
  - [SB 99](#) Prohibit enforcement of federal firearms laws by Montana public employees. Referred to Senate Judiciary.
  - [SB 141](#) Establish commission to study legislative compensation and conduct – Senate State Administration
  - [SB 148](#) Establish the Montana Pay Equity Act – Senate Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs.
- HEARING DATE February 7**

Bill drafts – only new bill drafts will be listed in future legislative updates.

- No new bill drafts of note at this time

### Contact your legislator

Legislators respond when they hear from their constituents. That's you! Not sure about your House or Senate district, no problem Legislative Services has a webpage for that [find a legislator](#). Call or email individuals or entire committees through the Legislative Services Division online [contact your legislator](#) page.

### Watch & Listen

Legislative Services has made it even easier to [watch and listen](#) to committee hearings online through your home or work computer. You can even go back and review archived minutes of committee hearings.

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