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**Legislative Update: April 17**

1 message

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**Rob Watson** <SAMLN@saom.memberclicks.net>  
Reply-To: samrw@sammt.org  
To: samks@sammt.org

Mon, Apr 17, 2023 at 7:02 AM

**Dear SAM LN 2023:**

We are getting down to the wire on legislative deadlines. HB2, the bill that defines the state budget, is currently being decided in Senate Finance and Claims. Once this bill makes it through and passes the Senate Floor it would go back to the house for a final hearing, if amended. This could all happen this week. If HB2 clears both chambers, there could be motivation to end the session. Any bills that have not been cleared at that point would die. So there is a rush to get all the bills heard quickly, hopefully before HB2 gets finalized.

Below are the most recent bills we continue to monitor this week:

**HB234 Amendment:** A reminder that this is the obscenity bill that removed an exception for school librarians from the statute. It may have the effect of censorship of some library materials. The bill was significantly amended in Senate Education. The new amendment seeks to clean up language in 45-8-206, as this section is narrowly defined to apply to "commercial establishments" not schools. Schools are impacted by 45-8-201. While not a perfect fix, it will fix the confusing language in section 206 and will likely have the effect of voiding what the bill sponsor was trying to do, which was censor library materials. The bill will be heard on the Senate Floor on Monday morning.

**HB332: Amendment.** This is the health insurance trust bill which had a good hearing in Senate Ed last week. The amendment added some extra protection to the trust for districts who are joining who may be carrying a liability. It also added a repayment method to the state if trust did well over time. Bill passed Senate Ed as amended (8-3). Next up will be Senate Finance and Claims.

**HB352:** The Early Literacy bill will be heard on Wednesday in Senate Ed. Because there is an appropriation - it will need to go to Senate Finance and Claims as well. There are still some big hurdles for this bill. We will be there to testify in support on Wednesday. Also, if HB352 fails to pass, then **HB946** would go into effect, which essentially eliminates the exceptional circumstances option for schools to enroll 4 y/o students.

**HB393:** The establishment of a Special Education Savings account, will be heard in Senate Education on Monday afternoon at 3pm. It is expected that this bill will pass the session and will potentially be unconstitutional. The CAMPS partners will be monitoring and making decisions about next steps for this legislation if it does pass.

**HB549** and **HB562:** The two competing charter school bills will be heard on Monday at 3pm. There is a chance that both of these bills pass the legislature and then it may be up to the Governor. If he signs both, there would be competing programs - under 549, charters would be established under the authority of the Board of Public Ed and under 562, charters would have no accountability.

**HB774:** This is the election bill. It was amended recently. Originally, the bill stipulated that the district annual budget would be approved in June rather than August. The amendment moved this requirement back to August as it currently exists in law. The bill will be heard in front of the Senate Administration committee at 3pm on Wednesday.

**SB518:** One of three parent rights bills. While the majority of the requirements in this bill are already stipulated in state and federal law, this bill does have the potential to add work, like posting requirements on websites and notification processes for families. A reminder there have been 3 parent rights bills, as well as numerous bills that were seeking to limit sex ed instruction. It is likely that some of these bills will pass the session. We are attempting to limit or mitigate the impact. This bill will be heard in the House Judiciary committee on Tuesday morning at 8am.

Here is a link to the final spreadsheet that has all the last minute bills we are tracking:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vTsQFTXmRHwNxCtth966gewxh6qlmTK5ykbCG8BE3vesuKAgladwLEyev\\_A4ipxCw/pubhtml](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vTsQFTXmRHwNxCtth966gewxh6qlmTK5ykbCG8BE3vesuKAgladwLEyev_A4ipxCw/pubhtml)

Reminder that we have our zoom meeting at noon on Monday (April 17). If you have any questions or concerns, please be sure to tune in. Thanks!

SAM LN23 Zoom Meeting: Monday, April 17, Noon  
School Administrators of Montana is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: School Administrators of Montana's Personal Meeting Room

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