

SAMLN17 Update on Key Bills Day 86 of the 2017 Session 4-26-17

Update on Happenings in the Legislature on April 26 Day 86

1 message

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Hi SAMLN17,

Day 86 has come to a close in the legislative session and it was full of fireworks to get to the end of the session, but did not quite accomplish completing the work.

Ever so briefly, here is what happened today...

[HB 639 - Cook](#) - is one of the companion bills to HB 2 – a bill that implements spending provisions of the major budget bill. In this case, the bill related to Section B of HB 2, which is typically health & human services. The bill went to a Free Conference Committee – a Committee where amendments can be added or taken out with little or no connection to the original bill. The Conference Committee report contained language that will create a preschool grant program, called Stars for Quality, for the upcoming biennium that will be administered through the MT Department of Health & Human Services with \$6 million for the biennium. The Conference Report passed in both the Senate and the House and on third reading and was sent to enrolling.

[HB 576 - Windy Boy](#) - the long story of this charter school bill has come to an end (I think!). The story began with a motion to bring the public charter school bill from the Senate Education Committee to second reading on the Senate floor passed 26-24. Opposition to the bill, including from MT-PEC, was based on the bill being unconstitutional but also inefficient and ineffective in addressing the kinds of issues raised by the sponsor. A group of Senators, led by Senator Salomon, had an amendment prepared for the bill that would get support from MT-PEC and appears to have the votes to be successful (basically put Montana's administrative rule for Charter schools, ARM 10.55.604, into the language of the bill). The delay in consideration of the bill on second reading continued through today, when at about 11:30 AM the Senate passed the amendment described and then the bill on 2nd and 3rd reading by about 2:00 PM. The bill moved to the House for the 4:30 PM floor session after a long caucus by both parties to line up votes on this bill and HB 367 (Infrastructure bill). A motion to suspend the rules to hear HB 376 failed 58-42 (needed 2/3 to suspend the rules). About 2 hours later Rep Windy Boy made a motion to suspend the rules to consider HB 376 and that vote failed 55-45 (still needed 2/3 to suspend the rules). May actually be dead, but we will see what tomorrow brings.

[SB 367 - Moore](#) - is the only infrastructure bill that is left for the session. During the 4:30 PM House session they considered the House Appropriations amended HB 367 that contains about \$80.5 million in bonding for projects all over the state, including \$15 millions for some of the Quality Schools Grant Program Projects -- approximately 30 of the 50 on the list would receive some funding. Long debate and political messages were sent during the floor discussion which resulted in 4 attempts to amend things into (or better said -- take away things) the bill, failed. Then the House passed the bill [63-37](#) on 2nd reading. I was thinking they might suspend the rules and take action on 3rd reading tonight, but that did not happen. The House adjourned until 8:00 am tomorrow 4/27 (legislative day 87). HB 367 requires 2/3 to pass on 3rd reading, so tonight will be filled with work to find 4 more votes to pass an infrastructure bill. **If you look at the list of No votes on 2nd reading and see a Representative that should be voting to support infrastructure projects for our state, I'll leave it to you to contact them and request their Yes vote on 3rd reading.**

The stories behind these three bills may appear to be unconnected, but these bills have all been part of both party's discussions to agree on an infrastructure and bonding bill that would then bring the Session to a close. Basically, we are now 4 votes away from having an infrastructure bill, and for the moment, no charter school bill to deal with, and tomorrow looking like the end of the session. There is other stuff, but I wanted you to have the down low on the most important items for today.

Contact us if you have questions. Here's to tomorrow wrapping up the 2017 Legislative Session!



Kirk and Pat