

## Montana Legislative Update - State of Day March 27th

Rep. Margie Campbell's tribal id card bill, HB 789, passed 2nd reading Monday (March 26th) in the Senate with a unanimous vote. Her bill to study discrimination in sentencing was tabled, and we should talk about alternative ways to help her get that study done.

Rep. Shannon Augare's bill allowing for an agreement with the Little Shell Tribe for maintaining Giant Springs State Park has successfully traveled the Montana State Legislature and been sent to enrolling.

The Senate Finance and Claims Committee, on a series of motions by Senator Cobb, has begun a process of reducing the "8-pack" of House budget bills to a "4-pack" with separate statutory language bills. Amendments to these bills will bring all budget levels back to subcommittee levels, but additional amounts will have to be included in separate amendments. There will be opportunities for people to be heard in committee on these new bill configurations, but time will be short and the process will continue to have awkward moments. At the very least. I think the Indian Ed and Tribal Economic Development funds both got cut after subcommittee, so the initial substitute bill process should get them back in (though we are still looking to an increase in the Indian Ed funds). Please let me know if you know or hear differently.

Senator Juneau's SB 450, extending the water compact provision, has a hearing before House Natural Resources on April 4th (next week already!) at 3 p.m. in Room 472. The amendment by Senator Shockley to limit the extension, with which all parties agreed, was accidentally left behind in transmittal and needs to be reintroduced. The property tax exemption bill, SB 332, is still in House Taxation but the Governor's Office has asked for an amendment restricting the exemption to property used for governmental purposes.

Senator Pease's SJ 18, encouraging Congress to allocate federal excise taxes to tribes, has a hearing today (March 27th) at 3 p.m. in Room 152.

Rep. Small-Eastman has a few bills still alive and awaiting committee action: HB 732, a Teacher Housing Incentive Program; HB 813, Affordability and Success for Foster Children in Higher Education; and HB 823, Distributing Oil and Gas Funds to Counties.

Rep. Windy Boy has had quite a few successful bills, but his HB 511, funding regional water systems, was tabled in House Appropriations yesterday and HB 812, for infrastructure development funding, was judged early this month to be improperly introduced. HB 781, to revise racial profiling law in the area of data gathering, has a hearing before Senate Judiciary on the 30th at 8 a.m. in Room 303. Look for him on Native View (Channel 11) at 6:30 tonight if you are on Helena television.

Rep. Kasten has brought several funding bills to the House floor in the last few days. If interested in tracking these more closely, look at HB 6, 7, 8, 9. He's introduced some other bills as well, which led to some discussion on the House Floor yesterday of "cat and dog" (pet) bills, but the House was reassured by the Democratic side too that these small-number bills are basic funding bills for infrastructure, the arts, and so on. HB 7 has cleared the House. HB 6 is back up today but needs a 3/4 vote, I think because it spends coal trust money.

Rep. Glaser alluded to a new Republican plan for school funding after his proposal failed last week, but so far I have not seen that surface.

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