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CHILDREN, FAMILIES, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTERIM COMMITTEE
69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS	HOUSE MEMBERS	COMMITTEE STAFF
John Esp	Melody Cunningham	Milly Allen – Lead Staff
Dennis Lenz	Jodee Etchart - Chair	Maddie Krezowski – Legal Staff
Cora Neumann	SJ Howell - Vice Chair	Emily McKay – Legal Staff
Mike Yakawich	George Nikolakakos	Jolanda Songer – Research Assistant
	Melissa Nikolakakos	

MINUTES LOG

September 09, 2026
Room 172 & Zoom
Helena, Montana

Minutes logs provide an annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of a meeting and the time at which a topic is presented or discussed, a motion made, or a vote taken. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion in the video. The minutes log is only a guide to the video of the meeting. The official record of the meeting is the video. Minutes logs can be accessed at https://committees.legmt.gov and videos can be accessed at https://media.legmt.gov.

For more information, please contact:
The Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for policy committees;
The Legislative Fiscal Division at 406-444-2986 for fiscal committees; or
The Legislative Audit Division at 406-444-3122 for the Legislative Audit Committee.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. SJ Howell, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Rep. Melody Cunningham (D)
Sen. John Esp (R)
Sen. Dennis Lenz (R)
Sen. Cora Neumann (D)
Rep. George Nikolakakos (R)
Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos (R)
Sen. Mike Yakawich (R)
Rep. Jodee Etchart, Presiding Officer (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Milly Allen, Lead Staff
Maddie Krezowski, Legal Staff
Emily McKay, Legal Staff
Jolanda Songer, Research Assistant

MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH MANAGEMENT: JERRY HOWE, LEGISLATIVE SERVICES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR • ANGUS MACIVER, LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR • AMY CARLSON, LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ANALYST • TODD EVERTS, LEGAL SERVICES DIRECTOR • DALE GOW, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER • RACHEL WEISS, RESEARCH DIRECTOR • ANGIE CARTER, FINANCIAL OFFICE DIRECTOR • KELLY DASILVA, HR DIRECTOR

AGENDA (Attachment 1)

VISITORS' LIST (Attachment 2)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

00:00:00 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES UPDATES

Department Presentation: Updates

00:01:09 Kim Aiken, Deputy Director, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

EXHIBIT 1

Medicaid Updates

00:02:08 Jessie Counts, Executive Director, Human Services Division, DPHHS

(See Exhibit 1)

Committee Questions / Discussion

00:18:09 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

00:18:33 Jessie Counts, DPHHS

00:27:00 Rep. Melody Cunningham

00:27:35 Jessie Counts, DPHHS

00:32:21 Sen. Nora Neumann

00:35:02 Jessie Counts, DPHHS

Snap Waiver Updates

00:02:06 Jessie Counts, DPHHS

(See Exhibit 1)

Best Beginnings

00:39:13 Tracy Moseman, Division Administrator, Early Childhood and Family Support Division, DPHHS

(See Exhibit 1)

00:47:07 Brenda Crawford, Internal Control and Compliance Officer, Early Childhood and Family Support Division, DPHHS

(See Exhibit 1)

00:51:25 Tracy Moseman, DPHHS

Best Beginnings Parent Portal Demo

00:55:17 Emily Kosovich, Business Analyst Supervisor, Early Childhood and Family Support Division, DPHHS

(See Exhibit 1)

Committee Questions / Discussion

01:01:19 Sen. Mike Yakawich
01:02:34 Tracy Moseman, DPHHS
01:03:46 Kim Aiken, DPHHS
01:06:23 Rep. George Nikolakakos
01:07:27 Tracy Moseman, DPHHS
01:12:25 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
01:13:58 Tracy Moseman, DPHHS
01:15:11 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos
01:15:49 Tracy Moseman, DPHHS
01:20:20 Jessie Counts, DPHHS
01:23:01 Joseph Lehman, Bureau Chief, Child Care Bureau, DPHHS

Best Beginnings Parent Portal Demo - Continued

01:23:43 Emily Kosovich, DPHHS
(See Exhibit 1)

Committee Questions / Discussion

01:34:05 Rep. Melody Cunningham
01:34:36 Emily Kosovich, DPHHS

Medicaid Provider Rate Cost Report Study (HB 419)
Background and Methodology

01:36:34 Gene Hermanson, Deputy Medicaid Director, DPHHS
(See Exhibit 1)

Findings

01:42:11 Gene Hermanson, DPHHS
01:45:16 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart left the meeting and Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell assumed the Chair.

Fiscal Impact Calculations

01:46:10 Gene Hermanson, DPHHS

Key Takeaways

01:48:40 Gene Hermanson, DPHHS

Recommendations

01:50:42 Gene Hermanson, DPHHS

Committee Questions / Discussion

01:52:37 None

Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Update

01:53:15 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart rejoined the meeting and resumed the Chair.

01:53:22 Michelle McNamee, RHTP, DPHHS

(See Exhibit 1)

Committee Questions / Discussion

02:02:16 Rep. Melody Cunningham

02:02:48 Michelle McNamee, DPHHS

Public Comment

02:04:08 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

02:04:50 Sarah Mitchell, Circle Time

EXHIBIT 2

02:06:53 Jessica Dehn

02:08:53 Sybil Walton, Missoula

02:10:50 Heather Reel, Missoula

02:13:22 Carrie Krepps, CEO, Florence Crittenton

02:17:41 Andria Schafer, Montana Budget and Policy Center

02:19:11 Jennifer Hensley, Ability Montana, Speech, Language Pathologists, and Audiologists, Occupational Therapists

02:23:26 Nathan Stahley, Billings, National Organization of Social Workers

02:24:42 Bob Mullen, Chair, Central Service Area Authority

EXHIBIT 3

LAST MEETING CHECKLIST

Review Checklist and Timeline for the Remainder of the Interim

02:34:18 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 4

02:37:46 **Recessed**

03:04:08 **Reconvened**

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW AND PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION

Administrative Rule Review

03:04:18 Emily McKay, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 5

03:07:11 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, LSD

EXHIBIT 6

EXHIBIT 7

(See Exhibit 4)

Public Comment

03:12:18 Sierra Riesberg, Executive Director, Behavioral Health Alliance of Montana

Committee Questions / Discussion

03:13:15 Emily McKay, LSD

EXHIBIT 8

03:15:19 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

03:17:22 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

Motion

03:18:11 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to sustain the committee's informal objection to MAR 2026-847.1.

EXHIBIT 9

Vote

03:18:33 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion

03:18:53 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to formally object to MAR 2026 847.1

Discussion on the Motion

03:19:57 Emily McKay, LSD

EXHIBIT 10

03:22:09 Sen. Dennis Lenz

03:22:45 Emily McKay, LSD

03:30:21 Milly Allen, LSD

03:31:03 Sen. John Esp

03:31:20 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

03:32:27 Sen. John Esp

03:32:54 Emily McKay, LSD

03:35:20 Sen. Dennis Lenz

03:35:54 Emily McKay, LSD

03:37:38 Sen. John Esp

Motion (Withdrawn)

03:38:43 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell withdrew the motion to formally object to MAR 2026 847.1.

Discussion on the Motion

03:39:20 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

03:39:30 Emily McKay, LSD

EXHIBIT 11

(See Exhibit 7)

03:41:18 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

03:42:08 Milly Allen, LSD

03:42:24 Presiding Officer SJ Howell

Motion

03:43:05 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to send a recommendation letter to the department for MAR 2026 48.1

EXHIBIT 12

Discussion on the Motion

03:44:03 Emily McKay, LSD

(See Exhibit 11)

Vote

03:44:54 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion

02:45:08 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to informally object to MAR 2026 48.1.

EXHIBIT 13

Vote

03:45:20 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion

03:45:34 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to adopt provisional draft AO 1.3 as a committee bill.

(See Exhibit 7)

Discussion on the Motion

03:45:46 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

03:46:35 Sen. Dennis Lenz

Vote

03:46:48 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Discussion

03:47:50 Sen. Mike Yakawich

03:48:22 Sen. Dennis Lenz

03:49:10 Maddie Krezowski, LSD

03:50:01 **Carrier:** Rep. Jodee Etchart with Sen. Mike Yakawich as a backup.

Motion

03:51:16 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos moved to file an informal objection to MAR 2026 533.1.

EXHIBIT 14

Discussion on the Motion

03:52:02 Sen. Dennis Lenz

03:52:06 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

(See Exhibit 5)

03:53:22 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

03:53:49 Emily McKay, LSD

03:53:51 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

03:54:11 Milly Allen, LSD

Vote

03:53:12 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

03:55:04 **Carrier:** Rep. Jodee Etchart with Sen. Mike Yakawich as the backup.

03:55:20 **Recessed**

05:06:30 **Reconvened**

DENTIST AND DENTAL HYGIENIST COMPACT

Review of Compact Language

05:06:56 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 15

EXHIBIT 16

05:08:11 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

Public Comment

05:08:59 Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI)

05:10:10 Brad Longcake, Montana Dental Hygienists' Association

05:11:00 Webb Brown, Montana Dental Association

05:13:45 Quinlan O'Connor, Chief Legal Counsel, DLI

05:14:21 Stacy Anderson, Montana Primary Care Association

Committee Questions / Discussion

05:15:03 None

Motion

05:15:13 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to adopt the dental and dental hygienists compact as a committee bill.

Discussion on the Motion
05:15:29 Sen. Mike Yakawich

Vote
05:15:41 Carried unanimously by voice vote.
05:15:55 **Carrie**r: Rep. Jodee Etchart with Sen. Mike Yakawich as the backup.

ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE COMPACT
Review of Compact Language
05:16:16 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
05:17:31 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

Public Comment
05:17:54 Sarah Swanson, DLI

Motion
05:18:25 Sen. John Esp moved to table the APRN Compact bill draft.

Vote
05:18:39 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

HOUSE BILL 50 (2025) Protections for Parents and Pregnant Women with Substance Use Disorder
05:18:47 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
EXHIBIT 18
EXHIBIT 19

Public Comment
05:21:32 Mary Collins, Policy Director, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
05:25:10 Stacey Anderson, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Committee Questions / Discussion
05:26:03 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

Motion
05:27:25 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to pass House Bill 50 – Revised.

Committee Questions / Discussion
05:27:37 Sen. Dennis Lenz
05:29:06 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

Substitute Motion
05:32:44 Sen. Dennis Lenz moved the original motion of House Bill 50.

Committee Questions / Discussion

05:33:01 Sen. John Esp

05:33:31 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos

05:34:52 Rep. Melody Cunningham

05:35:31 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

Vote

05:36:28 Failed 6 - 3 with Sen. Esp, Sen. Lenz, Sen. Yakawich voting yes.

Motion (Revised Version)

05:37:21 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

05:37:26 Sen. John Esp

Committee Questions / Discussion

05:37:42 Sen. Mike Yakawich

05:38:30 Sen. Dennis Lenz

Vote

05:39:19 Carried 7 - 2 with Sen. Esp, Sen. Lenz voting no.

05:40:12 **Carrier:** Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos with Sen. Cora Neumann as the backup.

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION

Social Work Licensure Compact

05:41:04 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 20

EXHIBIT 21

Motion

05:41:55 Sen. Dennis Lenz moved to adopt the Social Work Licensure Compact.

Vote

05:42:21 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

05:43:19 **Carrier:** Sen. Dennis Lenz with Sen. Mike Yakawich as the backup.

Public Comment

05:42:33

05:42:43 Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI)

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Compact

05:43:31

Public Comment

05:44:10 Sarah Swanson, DLI

Committee Questions / Discussion

05:44:52 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
05:45:03 Quinlan O'Connor, Chief Legal Counsel, DLI
05:46:14 Sen. John Esp
05:47:15 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
05:47:44 Sen. Dennis Lenz
05:48:36 Rep. George Nikolakakos
05:49:59 Sen. John Esp
05:50:51 Rep. Melody Cunningham
05:51:21 Commissioner Swanson, DLI
EXHIBIT 22
EXHIBIT 23
05:54:09 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

Vote

05:54:12 Carried 7 - 2 by voice vote with Sen. Esp, Sen. Lenz voting no.
05:54:52 **Carrier:** Rep. Jodee Etchart with Sen. Mike Yakawich as the backup.

HJ 26: REVIEW OF PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION - GUARDIANSHIP AND CONSERVATORSHIP

Review of Sixth Provisional Draft (HJ 26 1.6)

05:55:42 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
EXHIBIT 24
05:58:02 Sen. John Esp left the meeting.

Public Comment

06:04:47 Rep. Brian Close, Bozeman, House District 65
06:07:01 Dave McAlpin, Court Administrator, Judicial Branch of State Government
06:07:50 Kristin Page-Nei, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Montana
06:09:33 Karissa Taylor, Helena
06:13:55 Jason George, Montana Health Care Association
06:15:51 Shyla Patera, Policy and Peer Coordinator, North Central Independent Living Services
06:16:44 Bruce Spencer
06:20:06 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
06:20:16 Bruce Spencer **proposed a conceptual amendment**.
06:21:46 Milly Allen, LSD
06:22:26 Sen. Dennis Lenz

Motion

06:23:06 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to adopt HJ 26 1.6 as a committee bill.

Committee Questions / Discussion

06:23:23 Sen. Dennis Lenz

06:23:35 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell **withdrew the motion**.

06:25:52 Milly Allen, LSD

06:27:04 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

06:28:10 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos

06:29:11 Milly Allen. LSD

06:31:26 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

06:32:47 Milly Allen, LSD

06:35:01 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

06:36:46 Rep. Brian Close, House District 65

06:38:21 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos

Motion

06:38:26 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos moved to remove section 9, subsection 2c from HB 26 1.6.

(See Exhibit 24)

Discussion on the Motion

06:38:54 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

06:40:11 Sen. Dennis Lenz

Vote

06:40:34 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion

06:41:03 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to adopt HJ 26 1.6 as a committee bill.

Vote

06:41:23 Carried 8 - 1 by voice vote with Sen. Esp voting no.

06:41:37 **Carrier:** Rep. SJ Howell with Sen. Cora Neumann as the backup.

SJ 48: REVIEW OF PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION - MARIJUANA
Review of Provisional Drafts (SJ 48 1.3, SJ 48 2.3-A, SJ 48 2.3-B, and SJ 48 2.3-C)

06:42:04 Milly Allen, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 25

06:42:45 Sen. John Esp rejoined the meeting.

Amendment

06:43:13 Sen. Yakawich moved to amend SJ 48 1.3.

EXHIBIT 26

Discussion on the Motion

06:46:11 Rep Nikolakakos left the meeting.

06:46:35 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
06:47:07 Sen. John Esp
06:47:27 Sen. Dennis Lenz

Vote

06:47:45 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Committee Questions / Discussion

06:48:04 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
06:48:30 Milly Allen, LSD
06:49:44 Sen. Dennis Lenz

Motion

06:50:53 Sen. Mike Yakawich moved to accept September 1, 2028, as the date for the Department of Public Health and Human Services to submit an annual state recreational marijuana impact report to the legislature.

Vote

06:51:09 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Discussion on the Motion

06:51:46 Milly Allen, LSD
06:52:13 Sen. Mike Yakawich
06:52:57 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
06:53:51 Sen. John Esp
06:56:06 Sen. Mike Yakawich
06:56:08 Sen. Cora Neumann left the meeting via Zoom.
06:56:17 Milly Allen, LSD

Motion

06:57:07 Sen. Mike Yakawich moved to remove Section 2.

Vote

06:57:24 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Public Comment

06:58:18 Leanna Troesh, Safe Montana
07:01:06 Nathan Stahley

Motion

07:02:11 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to adopt SJ 48 1.3 as amended as a committee bill.

Vote

07:02:29 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

07:03:01 **Recessed**

07:14:07 **Reconvened**

Review of Provisional Drafts (SJ 48 1.3, SJ 48 2.3-A, SJ 48 2.3-B, and SJ 48 2.3-C) - Continued

07:14:13 Milly Allen, LSD

EXHIBIT 27

EXHIBIT 28

EXHIBIT 29

Motion

07:16:50 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos moved SJ 48 2.3-C with Rep. Yakawich' amendment.

EXHIBIT 30

Discussion on the Motion

07:17:29 Sen. Mike Yakawich

07:21:11 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell

07:23:18 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos

07:24:42 Sen. John Esp

07:25:15 Milly Allen, LSD

07:28:43 **Recessed**

07:32:47 **Reconvened**

Vote

07:33:07 Carried 8 - 1 by voice vote with Rep. Howell voting no.

Conceptual Amendment

07:33:35 Sen. Yakawich moved to add a conceptual amendment to sunset on June 30, 2030.

Vote

04:22:00 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion

07:34:15 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to adopt SJ 48 2.3-C as twice amended as committee bill.

Vote

07:34:09 Carried 7 - 2 by voice vote with Rep. Cunningham, Rep. Howell voting no.

07:34:54 **Carrier:** Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos with Sen. Mike Yakawich as the backup.

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued
Review of Action Items
07:35:26 Milly Allen, LSD
(See Exhibit 4)

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MATTER WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE CHS INTERIM COMMITTEE THAT IS NOT ON THE AGENDA
07:39:04 Uryah Babineau, Empowered Living Solutions
07:47:27 Shyla Patera, Policy and Peer Coordinator, North Central Independent Living
07:49:52 Dr. Michael Englehart, Billings
07:54:48 Dr. Barry Mckenzie

Committee Questions / Discussion
07:57:18 Sen. Mike Yakawich
07:57:33 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued
07:57:51 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
07:59:16 Emily McKay, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
EXHIBIT 31

Motion
08:00:57 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to formally object to MAR 2026 48.1. formal objection.

Vote
08:00:52 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Committee Questions / Discussion
08:01:15 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
EXHIBIT 32

Motion
08:01:45 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to formally object to MAR 2026 847.1.

Vote
08:01:57 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion
08:02:30 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell moved to formally object to MAR 2026 533.1.
EXHIBIT 33

Discussion on the Motion
08:02:47 Rep. Melissa Nikolakakos
08:03:53 Vice Presiding Officer SJ Howell
08:05:28 Sen. John Esp

08:06:04 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
08:07:32 Maddie Krezowski, Legal Staff, LSD
08:07:58 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart

Vote

08:10:58 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Committee Questions / Discussion

08:11:41 Sen. Mike Yakawich
08:13:05 Presiding Officer Jodee Etchart
08:15:03 Sen. John Esp

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 08:17:10