



STATE ADMINISTRATION AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Mike Cuffe
Theresa Manzella
Wendy McKamey
Jacinda Morigeau

HOUSE MEMBERS

Kelly Kortum
Marc Lee
Kathy Love
Mark Reinschmidt
Lukas Schubert
Peter Strand
Eric Tilleman

COMMITTEE STAFF

Rebecca Power - Lead Staff
Andria Hardin - Legal Staff
Ania Alduenda - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

March 9, 2026
Capitol Room 154 & 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:

Sen. Theresa Manzella, Presiding Officer (R)
Rep. Kelly Kortum (D)
Rep. Kathy Love (R)
Sen. Wendy McKamey (R)
Sen. Jacinda Morigeau (D)
Rep. Mark Reinschmidt (R)
Rep. Lukas Schubert (R)
Rep. Peter Strand (D)
Rep. Eric Tilleman (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Mike Cuffe (R)
Rep. Marc Lee, Vice Presiding Officer (D)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Rebecca Power, Lead Staff
Andria Hardin, Legal Staff
Ania Alduenda, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

08:30:44 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

OPENING REMARKS

08:32:14 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS (DMA)

Veteran Service Officers Overview and Follow-up to Committee Letter re. Helena Veterans' Affairs Hospital

08:32:56 Brigadier General Trenton Gibson, Adjutant General, Montana National Guard & Director, DMA

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

[EXHIBIT 3](#)

[EXHIBIT 4](#)

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

[EXHIBIT 6](#)

[EXHIBIT 7](#)

08:37:36 Sen. Mike Cuffe joined the meeting via zoom.

08:48:56 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

Public Comment

08:50:04 Dave Kesler, Phillipsburg Resident

08:53:29 Shannon Wilson, National Legislative Committee Person, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

[EXHIBIT 8](#)

08:57:22 **Recessed to address a technical issue.**

09:04:22 **Reconvened**

Public Comment - Continued

09:04:33 Duane Cunningham, American Legion of Montana

09:10:28 Mike Talia, Board Member, Montana National Guard Officer's Association

09:13:38 Roger Hagan, Montana Department of the American Legion

[EXHIBIT 9](#)

[EXHIBIT 10](#)

[EXHIBIT 11](#)

09:17:57 Brigadier General Trenton Gibson, DMA

09:18:54 Mary Moe

09:20:24 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

Committee Discussion / Questions

09:20:59 Rep. Kelly Kortum

09:21:49 Brigadier General Trenton Gibson, DMA

09:23:49 Rep. Peter Strand

09:24:11 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

09:24:42 Rep. Lukas Schubert
09:25:06 Brigadier General Trenton Gibson, DMA
09:25:23 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
(See Exhibit 9)
09:26:04 Roger Hagan, Montana Department of the American Legion
(See Exhibit 9 and 10)
09:27:15 Rebecca Power, LSD
09:27:32 Rep. Eric Tilleman
09:27:47 Janine Mahn, Veterans Services Officer, DMA
09:29:38 Sen. Mike Cuffe
09:31:00 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
09:31:39 Roger Hagan, Montana Department of the American Legion
(See Exhibit 10 and Exhibit 11)
09:33:41 Matt Young, Administrator, Montana Veterans' Affairs Division (MVAD), DMA
09:34:31 Brigadier General Trenton Gibson, DMA
09:40:46 Dave Kesler, Phillipsburg Resident
09:44:34 Sen. Mike Cuffe
09:45:21 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL PRACTICES (COPP)

Use of Artificial Intelligence by the COPP

09:47:26 Chris Gallus, Commissioner, COPP
10:12:28 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

Audits of Lobbying Reports

10:13:01 Commissioner Chris Gallus, COPP
[EXHIBIT 12](#)
10:15:12 Sen. Mike Cuffe left the meeting via zoom.
10:22:24 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
10:23:04 Stacy Wallace, Compliance Auditor, COPP
[EXHIBIT 13](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

10:30:18 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
10:30:33 Commissioner Chris Gallus, COPP
10:33:43 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

10:34:53 **Recessed**
10:47:39 **Reconvened**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 48: STUDY OF MOVING THE PRIMARY ELECTION

Summary of Committee Work on House Joint Resolution 48

10:47:40 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
10:48:02 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 14](#)

[EXHIBIT 15](#)
[EXHIBIT 16](#)
[EXHIBIT 17](#)
[EXHIBIT 18](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

10:53:22 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
10:53:30 Rebecca Power, LSD
10:53:41 Rep. Lukas Schubert
10:53:57 Rebecca Power, LSD
10:54:40 Rep. Kelly Kortum
10:55:17 Rep. Lukas Schubert
10:55:28 Rebecca Power, LSD

Public Comment

10:55:41 Lisa Bennett, Carbon County Resident
10:56:53 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

Motion

10:57:22 Rep. Lukas Schubert moved to continue the committee's work on the House Joint Resolution 48 study.
10:57:38 Rebecca Power, LSD

Discussion on the Motion

11:03:46 Rep. Eric Tilleman
11:04:21 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:05:01 Rebecca Power, LSD

Vote

11:05:54 Carried 7-4 by roll call vote with Sen. Wendy McKamey, Sen. Jacinda Morigeau, Rep. Peter Strand, and Rep. Eric Tilleman voting no. Rep. Marc Lee and Sen. Mike Cuffe by proxy.

Motion

11:07:03 Rep. Lukas Schubert moved to direct staff to draft language to move the school election and primary election dates two weeks earlier in the election cycle.

Discussion on the Motion

11:07:22 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:07:43 Sen. Wendy McKamey
11:08:33 Rep. Lukas Schubert
11:10:42 Rep. Peter Strand
11:11:52 Rep. Kelly Kortum
11:12:01 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:12:41 Rebecca Power, LSD

Vote

11:12:34 Failed 6-5 by roll call vote with Sen. Mike Cuffe, Rep. Kelly Kortum, Rep. Kathy Love, Rep. Lukas Schubert, and Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella voting yes. Rep. Marc Lee and Sen. Mike Cuffe by proxy.

Committee Discussion / Questions

11:13:41 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:14:01 Rebecca Power, LSD
11:14:38 Sen. Wendy McKamey
11:16:25 Rep. Peter Strand
11:16:51 Rebecca Power, LSD
11:17:18 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:17:41 Andria Hardin, Legal Staff, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
11:19:37 Rep. Lukas Schubert
11:20:32 Rebecca Power, LSD
11:20:55 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:21:17 Rep. Eric Tilleman
11:21:30 Regina Plettenberg, Clerk and Recorder, Ravalli County
11:23:16 Rep. Lukas Schubert
11:23:48 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
11:24:51 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:25:06 Rep. Lukas Schubert
11:26:41 Rep. Kelly Kortum
11:26:52 Rebecca Power, LSD
11:27:22 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:27:53 Rep. Peter Strand
11:28:11 Sen. Wendy McKamey
11:28:30 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:28:45 Rebecca Power, LSD

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY TOPIC WITHIN SAVA JURISDICTION**Written Public Comments ([Attachment 3](#))**

11:31:57 Regina Plettenberg, Clerk and Recorder, Ravalli County
11:33:35 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:34:08 Lisa Bennett, Carbon County Resident
[EXHIBIT 19](#)
11:35:02 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
11:44:17 Roy Mulvaney, Chief Election Judge, Jefferson County
11:45:21 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

Committee Discussion / Questions

11:46:58 Rep. Lukas Schubert

11:48:09 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
11:48:19 Rebecca Power, LSD
11:49:12 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
(See Exhibit 19)
11:51:23 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

11:52:02 **Recessed**
13:00:51 **Reconvened**

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE MEMO DISCUSSION

13:00:52 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
(See Exhibit 19)
13:01:55 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
(See Exhibit 19)
13:06:26 Roy Mulvaney, Chief Election Judge, Jefferson County
13:08:28 Rep. Kelly Kortum
13:09:42 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
13:09:55 Andria Hardin, Legal Staff, LSD
13:11:28 Rep. Mark Reinschmidt
13:12:09 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
13:12:21 Rebecca Power, LSD
13:12:36 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
13:12:52 Rep. Kelly Kortum
13:13:01 Sen. Wendy McKamey
13:13:37 Regina Plettenberg, Clerk and Recorder, Ravalli County
13:15:47 Rebecca Power, LSD
13:15:59 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
13:16:42 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
13:18:16 Andria Hardin, LSD
13:19:43 Sen. Wendy McKamey
13:19:55 Rep. Kelly Kortum
13:20:16 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 35: STUDY OF VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE AND INTEGRITY

Research Request: The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) Laws in Other States

13:21:45 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 20](#)
[EXHIBIT 21](#)
[EXHIBIT 22](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

13:26:09 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
(See Exhibit 21)

13:27:04 Sen. Wendy McKamey
13:27:36 Rep. Eric Tilleman
13:28:00 Regina Plettenberg, Clerk and Recorder, Ravalli County
13:28:56 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
13:33:48 Rep. Eric Tilleman
13:34:21 Rebecca Power, LSD
13:34:31 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

Research Request: Returned Jury Notices

13:35:27 Rebecca Power, LSD
13:37:11 Sen. Mike Cuffe joined the meeting via zoom.

Committee Discussion / Questions

13:37:37 Sen. Mike Cuffe
13:40:53 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
(See Exhibit 21)
13:42:21 Rebecca Power, LSD
(See Exhibit 21)
13:43:14 Sen. Wendy McKamey
13:43:34 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
13:44:28 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
(See Exhibit 20 and Exhibit 21)
13:44:51 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
13:45:26 Janel Tucek, Clerk and Recorder, Fergus County
13:49:03 Rebecca Power, LSD
(See Exhibit 20)
13:52:56 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
13:53:11 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
13:53:32 Rep. Kelly Kortum
13:53:56 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
13:54:58 Sen. Mike Cuffe
13:55:36 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
13:56:36 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County

Summary of Committee Work on Senate Joint Resolution 35

13:58:27 Rebecca Power, LSD
(See Exhibit 20 and Exhibit 22)

Committee Discussion / Questions

14:04:28 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
(See Exhibit 22)
14:05:57 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
14:08:49 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
14:14:09 Rebecca Power, LSD

Public Comment

14:14:39 Lisa Bennett, Carbon County Resident
14:17:12 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

Committee Work Session on Senate Joint Resolution 35

14:17:54 Rebecca Power, LSD
[EXHIBIT 23](#)
14:18:42 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:19:24 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
14:19:44 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
14:20:53 Rep. Kelly Kortum
14:21:02 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:21:24 Rebecca Power, LSD
(See Exhibit 21)
14:23:05 Sen. Wendy McKamey
14:23:36 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:23:51 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
14:24:41 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:25:46 Rep. Peter Strand
14:26:35 Rep. Mark Reinschmidt
14:28:02 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
14:28:45 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
14:30:18 Rep. Kathy Love
(See Exhibit 22)
14:31:16 Rep. Peter Strand
14:31:48 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:32:18 Sen. Mike Cuffe
14:33:18 Rebecca Power, LSD
(See Exhibit 20)
14:33:41 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:34:43 Rep. Kelly Kortum
14:35:08 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
14:36:22 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:37:13 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
14:38:03 Sen. Wendy McKamey
14:38:31 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
14:38:43 Rebecca Power, LSD
14:41:32 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

14:42:32 **Reconvened**
14:56:30 **Recessed**

MEMBER TOPIC: ELECTION SUPPORT PILOT PROGRAM

Roundtable Discussion

- 14:56:31 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
- 14:57:08 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 24](#)
- 14:57:50 Rep. Kelly Kortum
- 14:59:04 Regina Plettenberg, Clerk and Recorder, Ravalli County
- 15:00:46 Janel Tucek, Clerk and Recorder, Fergus County

Committee Discussion / Questions

- 15:04:36 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
- 15:04:43 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
- 15:05:48 Rep. Kelly Kortum
- 15:06:11 Rep. Peter Strand
- 15:06:47 Rebecca Power, LSD
- 15:08:03 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
- 15:09:54 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
- 15:10:14 Rep. Kathy Love
- 15:10:28 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
- 15:12:25 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
- 15:14:41 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
- 15:15:46 Sen. Mike Cuffe
- 15:17:49 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
- 15:18:18 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
- 15:21:34 Rep. Mark Reinschmidt
- 15:21:56 Rep. Kelly Kortum
- 15:22:42 Rebecca Power, LSD
- 15:23:17 Rep. Kathy Love
- 15:23:41 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
- 15:24:19 Rep. Eric Tilleman
- 15:24:46 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
- 15:24:54 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
- 15:26:49 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
- 15:29:15 Sen. Wendy McKamey
- 15:31:25 Rep. Kelly Kortum
- 15:31:43 Rebecca Power, LSD
- 15:32:33 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
- 15:32:44 Rep. Peter Strand
- 15:33:02 Janel Tucek, Fergus County
- 15:34:44 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
- 15:36:02 Rebecca Power, LSD

15:36:13 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
15:36:29 Regina Plettenberg, Ravalli County
15:37:13 Rebecca Power, LSD
15:37:53 Rep. Kelly Kortum

Public Comment

15:39:07 Lisa Bennett, Carbon County Resident
15:44:28 Roy Mulvaney, Chief Election Judge, Jefferson County

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

Overview of March Rule Memo

15:47:33 Andria Hardin, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 25](#)

Committee Discussion / Questions

15:48:53 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
15:49:11 Andria Hardin, LSD
15:49:34 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
15:49:59 Andria Hardin, LSD
15:52:24 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
15:55:20 Sen. Wendy McKamey
15:56:19 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION

Committee Legislation Idea Tracker Discussion

15:57:03 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
15:57:22 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 26](#)
15:59:45 Rep. Kelly Kortum
15:59:52 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:00:35 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:00:53 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:03:23 Rep. Eric Tilleman
16:03:34 Rebecca Power, LSD
(See Exhibit 21)
16:05:24 Rep. Kelly Kortum
16:05:37 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:05:48 Andria Hardin, Legal Staff, LSD
16:06:19 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:06:28 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:08:36 Rep. Kelly Kortum
16:08:46 Rep. Eric Tilleman
16:09:09 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

16:10:01 Rep. Peter Strand
16:10:41 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:13:00 Rep. Eric Tilleman
16:13:34 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:13:53 Sen. Jacinda Morigea
(See Exhibit 6)
16:15:04 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:15:13 Rebecca Power, LSD

Committee Work Plan Discussion

16:15:31 Rebecca Power, LSD
[EXHIBIT 27](#)
16:17:52 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:18:17 Rep. Kelly Kortum
16:18:32 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:18:49 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:19:50 Sen. Wendy McKamey
16:20:09 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:20:15 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:22:31 Sen. Jacinda Morigeau
16:23:16 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:23:51 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

MEETING WRAP UP

16:26:11 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella
16:26:39 Rebecca Power, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 28](#)
16:30:42 Rep. Kelly Kortum
16:30:49 Rebecca Power, LSD
16:31:03 Presiding Officer Theresa Manzella

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:31:18