



## **CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND CENSORSHIP BY MUS**

### **69th Montana Legislature**

#### **SENATE MEMBERS**

Willis Curdy  
Mary Ann Dunwell  
Bob Phalen  
Sue Vinton

#### **HOUSE MEMBERS**

Brian Close  
Melody Cunningham  
Caleb Hinkle  
Greg Overstreet

#### **COMMITTEE STAFF**

Rachel Weiss - Lead Staff  
Ania Alduenda - Secretary

# **MINUTES LOG**

March 2, 2026  
Capitol Room 317 & 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. Willis Curdy, Presiding Officer (D)  
Rep. Caleb Hinkle, Presiding Officer (R)  
Rep. Brian Close (D)  
Rep. Melody Cunningham (D)  
Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell (D)  
Rep. Greg Overstreet (R)  
Sen. Bob Phalen (R)  
Sen. Sue Vinton (R) – Via Zoom

#### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff  
Ania Alduenda, Secretary

#### **AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))**

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

### **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

09:30:09 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

### **WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND OPENING REMARKS**

09:30:36 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

09:30:58 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OR ACTS OF CENSORSHIP THAT STUDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED OR WITNESSED AT MONTANA PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

09:31:41 Hannah Allen

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

09:39:32 Caterina Jones, Graduate of Montana State University

09:44:15 Dylan Dean, Graduate of Montana State University

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

09:56:02 Brendan Boreth, Student of Montana State University

09:58:48 Dashiell Johnson, Student of Montana State University & State Chair, Young Americans for Liberty (YAL)

10:02:43 Izabella Ristow, Student of Montana State University

10:04:21 Aston Chiamulon, Student of Montana State University & Chapter President, YAL

10:09:59 Buddy Wilson, President, Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM)

10:12:43 Maya Anderson, Vice President, ASUM

### **Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:15:48 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

10:15:54 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

10:16:06 Rep. Greg Overstreet

10:16:27 Maya Anderson, ASUM

10:17:28 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

10:17:54 Dylan Dean, Graduate of Montana State University

10:19:18 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

10:19:49 Buddy Wilson, ASUM

10:21:39 Sen. Bob Phalen

10:22:08 Dashiell Johnson, YAL

10:23:33 Sen. Sue Vinton

10:24:11 Maya Anderson, ASUM

10:25:03 Rep. Greg Overstreet

10:25:31 Buddy Wilson, ASUM

10:26:58 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

10:27:58 Buddy Wilson, ASUM

10:29:01 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

10:29:23 Caterina Jones, Graduate of Montana State University  
10:30:01 Rep. Melody Cunningham  
10:30:36 Caterina Jones, Graduate of Montana State University  
10:30:53 Rep. Melody Cunningham  
10:31:16 Buddy Wilson, ASUM  
10:32:31 Sen. Bob Phalen  
10:33:06 Dashiell Johnson, YAL  
10:33:32 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
10:34:05 Dylan Dean, Graduate of Montana State University  
10:35:28 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle  
  
10:35:44 **Recessed**  
10:52:17 **Reconvened**

### **COMMITTEE WORK SESSION**

#### **Potential Findings and Recommendations**

10:52:19 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle  
10:52:32 Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 3](#)

#### **Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:55:08 Sen. Sue Vinton  
(See Exhibit 3)  
10:55:31 Rachel Weiss, LSD  
10:56:32 Rep. Melody Cunningham  
10:56:56 Rachel Weiss, LSD  
10:57:22 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle  
10:57:46 Rep. Greg Overstreet  
10:58:12 Rachel Weiss, LSD  
10:58:44 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

#### **Discussion on Findings**

10:59:00 Rep. Greg Overstreet  
[EXHIBIT 4](#)

#### **Committee Discussion / Questions**

11:05:26 Rep. Brian Close  
11:05:38 Rep. Greg Overstreet  
(See Exhibit 4)  
11:07:45 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle  
11:11:19 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
11:11:30 Rep. Greg Overstreet  
11:11:44 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

**Motion**

11:13:06 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy moved to direct staff to draft a letter to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to request they establish ombudsman positions for the Montana University System's universities and colleges. These positions would allow for confidential private discussions of civil rights complaints and be used to remedy complaints that come from students. This letter would be sent to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, the Governor, the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Board of Regents and the presidents of Montana State University and the University of Montana.

**Discussion on the Motion**

11:14:44 Rep. Melody Cunningham  
11:18:56 Sen. Bob Phalen  
11:19:08 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
11:20:44 Sen. Sue Vinton  
11:21:14 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
11:23:01 Rep. Greg Overstreet  
11:24:41 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

**Substitute Motion**

11:24:48 Rep. Greg Overstreet moved to amend Presiding Officer Willis Curdy's motion to include an appeals process to provide accountability to the students for the ombudsman's decisions.

**Discussion on the Motion**

11:25:24 Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
11:25:31 Rep. Brian Close  
11:25:39 Rep. Greg Overstreet  
11:25:52 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle  
11:26:06 Sen. Bob Phalen  
11:26:31 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell  
11:27:21 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle  
11:27:37 Rep. Melody Cunningham  
11:29:21 Rep. Brian Close  
11:29:34 Rachel Weiss, LSD  
11:29:49 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

**Public Comment**

11:30:14 Hannah Allen  
11:33:22 Maya Anderson, Vice President, Associated Students of University of Montana (ASUM)

**Vote**

11:33:48 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

**Further Directions to Staff**

11:34:44 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

**Motion**

11:35:01 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle moved to have the next meeting over zoom only.

**Discussion on the Motion**

11:35:17 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

11:35:59 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle rescinded the motion.

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

11:36:09 Sen. Sue Vinton

11:36:28 Rachel Weiss, LSD

11:36:52 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

11:37:00 Rachel Weiss, LSD

11:37:18 Sen. Mary Ann Dunwell

11:38:04 Rachel Weiss, LSD

11:39:17 Presiding Officer Caleb Hinkle

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 11:39:27