

Kalispell Chamber of Commerce

Second Quarter 2016 Montana Government Affairs Report - July 16, 2016

Cleveland is touring his work as the Republican's pick of the National Republican Convention, while the Democrats will convene in Philadelphia next week for the National Democratic Convention. Statewide, the Governor's race is drawing a lot of attention, along with other statewide campaigns for Attorney General, Office of Public Instruction, State Auditor, and Secretary of State. State legislators have also been raising money and educating voters on key issues facing Montana in the upcoming 2017 Legislature including infrastructure, healthcare, education and the economy.

Legislative interim committees held over Senators and candidates without a primary election have requested over 200 bill draft requests for consideration by the 2017 Montana Legislature.

Legislative Council has set the dates for the legislative convenes for Monday, November 14, 2016; training and legislative orientation will be Monday – Wednesday of that same week and budget training will be on December 8. Legislative Council will meet on August 24-25 in Helena along with a Rules Subcommittee meeting. **(Bob Bennett)**

The Children, Families, Health and Human Services interim committee has recommended a number of committee bills related to its interim studies on guardianship and Alzheimer's disease, investments in mental health, and children's mental health outcomes. LC 2 will create a grant program for training people to volunteer as respite caregivers and appropriate \$100,000 to organizations that provide training. At the August 25-26 meeting the committee will take final action on a number of other bills/drafts including LC3 to adopt legislation on financial exploitation of vulnerable people, LC4 to appropriate \$1.2 million to the state area agencies on aging, LC 6 to add 200 home and community based waiver slots for home and assisted living care, LC 7 to create a guardianship stakeholders group to fund public guardianship efforts, and LC8 to require guardians to report financial exploitation. CFHS agreed not to advance LC9 to appropriate money to a nonprofit group to facilitate providing services for people with Alzheimer's or dementia. Finally, the committee approved LC12 to require Medicaid to reimburse clinical pharmacist practitioners for managing drug therapy. Members noted that bringing pharmacists into the treatment team may improve outcomes.

In other news, CFHS heard from Director Lipper that enrollment in the expanded Medicaid program is steady at 87,000. The state will be providing Medicaid coverage to people in most of Montana's provider networks and will be covering group prenatal care as a way to encourage better birth outcomes. **(Al Hunsicker)**

Economic Affairs will gather for its final meeting on August 30-31 in Helena to review a final report on the air subcommittee working group, and consider committee bill proposals to set a trigger for reports on business and industrial development organizations, modify interim committee duties on advisory councils, and authorize two Department of Commerce bills related to the Board of Increasing and the Board of Housing.

Energy and Telecommunications interim committee had a two-day meeting this month to wrap up recommendations on net metering as part of the Senate Joint Resolution 12. Utilities presented an updated framework for net metering in Montana based on interconnection standards and rules, practices for customer generators and developing a cost-benefit analysis. The primary focus