



2013 Session Final Voting Record Originally Published May 31, 2013, Narrative Updated February 2014

As you know by now, the Montana School Business Officials, MEA-MFT, Montana Rural Education Association, Montana Quality Education Coalition, Montana School Boards Association and School Administrators of Montana have “broken the mold” and collaborated in new and exciting ways in the 2013 Legislative Session. We have undertaken these efforts based on our shared goal of increased academic achievement for children in our public schools and based on our shared belief that public schools in Montana are succeeding, improving, innovative, efficient, supported by voters throughout Montana and in need of adequate funding to continue their good work with children. We succeeded in passing SB 175 into law and, with the support of Governor Bullock in vetoing SB 81, defeated privatization and other legislation that would have harmed the interests of students in our public schools had they passed.

We are confident that the votes we have compiled for the 2013 Legislative Session accurately and clearly document the level of support for and/or opposition to Montana’s Public Schools that each member of the Montana Legislature had demonstrated through his or her position on each of the votes we have chosen to track. We are gratified to see that there is a core bipartisan majority of legislators who did support Montana’s public schools in the 2013 Legislative Session, and we look forward to continued collaborations with legislators from both parties as we move forward in supporting and defending the interests of children served in Montana’s public schools.

The Bills we have Chosen to cover in the Post Session Voting Record

On the Senate side, the bills we have chosen to cover consist of:

1. **SB 175**, Sen. Jones, embracing the recommendations of the K-12 Vision Group
2. **SB 81**, Sen. Lewis, tax credit for donations to scholarship organizations
3. **HB 210**, Rep. McClafferty, appropriation for the Montana Digital Academy
4. **HB 213**, Rep. Fitzpatrick, tuition tax credit
5. **HB 239**, Rep. Smith, sex education opt in
6. **HB 301**, Rep. Halvorson, increase bonding limit for schools
7. **HB 377**, Rep. Woods, restore actuarial soundness for TRS
8. **HB 454**, Rep. McChesney, restore actuarial soundness for PERS
9. **SB 191**, Sen. Taylor Brown, Use of tuition levy for special education costs
10. **SB 348**, Sen. Thomas, School safety

On the House side, the bills we have chosen to cover consist of:

1. **SB 175**, Sen. Jones, embracing the recommendations of the K-12 Vision Group
2. **HB 181**, Rep. Balance, voiding Board of Public Ed’s Library/Media Standards
3. **HB 210**, Rep. McClafferty, appropriation for the Montana Digital Academy
4. **HB 213**, Rep. Fitzpatrick, tuition tax credit
5. **HB 239**, Rep. Smith, sex education opt in
6. **HB 288**, Rep. Schwaderer, voucher for special needs students
7. **HB 301**, Rep. Halvorson, increase bonding limit for schools
8. **HB 315**, Rep. Knudsen, charter schools without elected school boards
9. **HB 357**, Representative Hansen, voucher for special needs students
10. **HB 377**, Rep. Woods, restore actuarial soundness for TRS

11. **HB 384**, Rep. O'Neil, expanding allowed possession of guns in schools
12. **HB 423**, Rep. Smith, referendum on sex ed opt in
13. **HB 454**, Rep. McChesney, restore actuarial soundness for PERS
14. **SB 81**, Sen. Lewis, tax credit for donations to scholarship organizations
15. **SB 191**, Sen. Taylor Brown, use of tuition levy for special education costs
16. **SB 348**, Sen. Thomas, school safety

The Calculation of Legislators' Ratings:

The percentage attributed to each legislator represents the percentage of "correct" votes of the total votes cast on the bills we have incorporated into the record. Specific standards and criteria are as follows:

1. We default to a 3rd reading vote whenever available, as 3rd reading is the official vote on a bill.
2. When a 3rd reading vote has not been taken, we default to the last vote taken. This occurs in situations, for example, where a bill fails on 2nd reading or when a bill is passed on 2nd reading and then re-referred to House Appropriations or Senate Finance and Claims.
3. Because of the importance of SB 175 to our members and the unusual process undertaken by opponents of the bill to damage the bill through a series of harmful amendments, we have also included the voting record on several proposed amendments to SB 175.
4. Votes identified as "right" consist of votes cast as suggested by the unanimous testimony and/or lobbying of each of our groups, which in turn are based on resolutions and other position statements taken by each of our membership groups.
5. Votes identified as "wrong" consist of votes cast against the unanimous position of our groups.
6. An unexcused absence on a particular vote is categorized as "wrong" as the legislator is either present but not voting in such instances, or has failed to secure an excuse from the Legislator for his or her absence on a particular vote.
7. An excused absence is neither counted for or against a legislator.

Disclaimer:

The organizations collaborating on the preparation of this voting record are organized in a variety of ways, with some being 501(c)(3) organizations while others are 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) organizations. This voting record is intended to be nonpartisan, with the aim of helping our respective members engage existing legislators of all political persuasions in dialogue regarding their views relating to student achievement. We are hopeful that through such dialogue with sitting legislators who have already been elected, our members may be able to increasingly find common ground with all legislators, based on an interest in serving the interests of public school students, families and communities.

The joint publication of this record by the sponsoring groups does not reflect, should not be construed as and is not intended to be used as either an endorsement or a condemnation of any candidate or party or faction within a party or to determine a legislative candidate's fitness to serve in elected office.

Summary:

We are confident that this post-session voting record provides our members and the public useful information that can be used to inform the necessary discussions between elected legislators and the constituents who elected them to represent their interests in the 2013 Session. We appreciate your assistance in helping us both defend and advocate for the children served in Montana's public schools.