

2022 Wyoming Legislature
League of Women Voters of Wyoming
Bill Summary as of 2-13-22

ELECTIONS/GOVERNANCE

HB26 – Dual public employment and office holding Rep. Bill Fortner, R-Gillette
Restricts public employees from holding elected public office, ostensibly because there would be self-interest in some legislation. (Unlike other professions?)

HB49 – Election reporting requirements Joint Corporations
This greatly expands the kind of activity that requires a financial report. It would include organizations that receives contributions or spends more than \$1,000 to financing an electioneering communication, even if it purports to be an “independent” expenditure. It would include organizations that support or oppose a ballot issue. The meat of the bill is in the definitions.

HB52 Timeline to prepare and process absentee ballots Joint Corps
Authorizes the preparation and proessing aof absentee ballots before an election. This absolutely essential for county clerks to open absentee ballots and have them ready for counting on election day, to prevent delays in announcing winners and enable counting to be completed to meet canvassing deadlines.

HB57 Citizen actions to compel financial reporting compliance Management Audit Commi
This would authorize residents in a jurisdiction – city, county, town, special district or other entity – to institute a mandamus action to disclose compliance with financial reporting requirements. If the action wins judgment, the jurisdiction pays attorneys’ fees.

HB59 Fiscal training and enforcement of financial reporting laws Management Audit Committee
State grants and loans would be conditioned on financial reporting as required by law. Funds would be withheld otherwise. It applies to state agencies and boards of every county, city or town.

HB74 Runoff Elections Rep. Chip Neiman, R-Hulett
Requires a top-2 runoff if no Primary candidate emerges with more than 50 percent of the votes. The bill moves the Primary from Tuesday after 3rd Monday in August to Tuesday after first Monday in May. Runoff moved to Tuesday after the 2nd Monday in August. This would arguably give election officials time to complete nominations before the General Election. Bond elections would no longer be tied to primaries. Juggles reporting schedules to make it work.

HB80 Campaign Reports Joint Corporations
All campaigns and political action committees must file an itemized statement of contributions and expenditures, whether the funds have been spent or not.

SF25 and SF26 District judge positions-authorization Joint Judiciary Committee
Authorizes additional judges in 3rd, 6th and 7th judicial districts. (3rd district is Lincoln, Sweetwater and Uinta counties.) 6th is Campbell, Crook and Weston counties. 7th is Natrona County. They can hire judge and staff when the facilities are ready. Deemed necessary to provide access to justice.

HB100 – Redistricting of the Legislature Joint Corporations Committee

Joint Corporations-approved plan for 62 House Districts and 31 Senate District. Includes designation of two-HD combos for each SD. Find background and proposed maps on the LSO Website – click link at top of home page. Expect floor amendments to protect county-level interests. (See SF60 redistricting plan by Sen. Scott)

SF60 Redistricting of the Legislature – 2 Se. Charles Scott, R-Casper
Sen. Scott’s alternate plan that maintains 60 House Districts and 30 Senate Districts.

SF49 Repeal of specified state boards and commissions Management Audit
Repeals: Palliative Care Advisory Council, Governor’s Food Safety Council, Division of Advisory Committees on Underground Water, Health Benefits plan committee, State Employee Compensation Commission and Wyoming Public Television Council.

SF50 Government waste, fraud, abuse and whistleblower protection Rep. Tom James, R-Green River
Department of Audit would define and set up an anonymous reporting system for governmental waste, fraud and abuse. Detailed instructions on handling and consequences of reports and firing of guilty employees. Defines “abuse” as improper use of government property. “Fraud” defined as wrongful deception intended to result in financial or personal gain, including false representation of fact or concealment of information. “Waste” includes incurring unnecessary costs resulting from inefficient or ineffective practices, systems or controls. (Apparently excludes legislators.)

SF58 Wyoming Council for Women’s Issues-workforce services Joint Appropriations Committee
This would place the council within the Department of Workforce Services.

SF79 Prohibition on private funds for conducting elections Sen. Cheri Steinmetz, R-Lingle
Prohibits election officials from using donations to register voters. May use private funds to train election workers.

EDUCATION

HB30 School finance – increasing cash reserves Joint Education
Raises the amount of reserves a school district may maintain from 15 percent of the total foundation program amount to 30 percent, through FY26. It would prohibit expenditures on capital construction.

HB58 Constitutional instructional and examination requirements Rep. Dan Laursen, R-Powell
Would require schools to instruct students about the US Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights, and also make sure students pass a short-answer citizenship test.

HB97 – Ban on teaching and training critical race theory Rep. Chuck Gray, R-Casper
Note co-sponsors: Reps. Bear, Haroldson, Heiner, Jennings, Laursen, Neiman and Winter and Sens. French and McKeown. Prohibits use of public funds “for instruction that presents any form of blame or judgment on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, color or national origin.”

SF32 K-3reading assessment and intervention program Joint Education Committee
This would require districts to screen students K-3 four times a year for “dyslexia and other reading difficulties” and report results to parents. Also requires professional development of teachers K-3 on reading. \$300,000 is appropriated for districts. Questionable whether quarterly testing is a good idea.

SF62 Civics Transparency Act Sen. Ogden Driskill, R-Sundance

All school districts must publish on their Websites all materials and activities and all policies for selecting those materials and activities. Also direct districts to teach about slavery, race based discrimination and U.S. efforts to end discrimination. No mention of State Board of Education and its authority to set standards.

SF63 County offices open to the public Sen. Cale Case, R-Lander
Removes county commission's authority to close offices on days other than weekends and holidays.

REVENUE/FISCAL

HB8 – Scratch tickets-outdoor recreation funding Joint Travel
Would raise an estimated \$700,000 a year for the State Parks and Cultural Resources, as appropriated by Legislature.

SF2 Legislative budget Management Council
\$23 million is appropriated for the Legislature for the next biennium. Read the fiscal note for details.

HB96 – State officials salary Rep. Bob Nicholas, R-Cheyenne
This would raise annual salaries after the 2022 elections: Governor from \$105,000 to \$140,000 and the other top elected officials from \$92,000 to \$125,000.

HB14 – Fuel Tax Joint Transportation
Raises tax on gasoline, diesel and alternative fuel by 5 cents per gallon, equal to 28 cents per gallon in FY 2023, 10 cents per gallon FY 2024 and 15 cents per gallon FY 2025. Revenue goes by formula to Highway Fund, cities/ towns street and alley, county roads and state parks. Gasoline and diesel will use existing distribution formulas. See the fiscal note. Additional money to the highway fund \$22.4 million the first year, \$44.9 million the second year and \$67.3 million the third year.

HB23 Ag land qualifications – annual gross revenues Joint Revenue
Raises the production income level from \$500 a year to \$5,000 a year, to qualify as ag land and get the lower property tax rates as provided in the Wyoming Constitution. Expected additional income to the School Foundation Fund would be \$381,000 a year.

SF66 American rescue plan act recovery funds appropriations Joint Appropriations Committee
Comprehensive plan for allocating \$334.5 million in federal funding to judicial and executive branches. See bill for details.

SF67 State Funded capital construction Joint Appropriations Committee
Check bill and fiscal note for details. Converts Capitol Building Rehabilitation and Restoration account into a Preservation Account and provides for continuous appropriations for maintenance, preservation and enhancement. Includes Hershcler Building. Includes federal funds, General Fund and other state accounts.

SF69 Property tax limits Sen. Tim Salazar, R-Dubois

Caps increases in assessed valuation of real property to a maximum 5 percent a year. Fiscal notes says impossible to calculate the loss of revenue to the School Foundation Program and to local governments. Also would increase workload for assessors' offices.

SF44 Severance tax distribution-jobs and education Joint Transportation
Redirects about \$80 million a year in severance taxes from two permanent funds (Mineral Trust Fund and Common School Land Fund) and deposits \$61 million in the Highway Fund and \$26.2 million to the Community College Commission. The redirection is permanent.

HEALTH/ENVIRONMENT

HB20 Medical Treatment Opportunity Act Joint Revenue
Medicaid expansion. Directs the Wyoming Department of Health, the state Insurance commissioner and the governor to negotiate with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to amend the state Medicaid plan to cover all persons eligible under section 1902 (a) (10)(A) (i) (VIII) of the Social Security Act. There would be no expansion authority if the federal match drops below 90 percent for expanded Medicaid or below 58 percent for regular Medicaid. If we expand, we will get the 90 percent MedEx match -- PLUS an extra 5 percent match on regular Medicaid, for the next 2 years. For those 2 years, we save enough money to cover our 10 percent share of expansion funding. The bill conditions expansion on making permanent that 5 percent bump for regular Medicaid.

It's estimated expansion would bring an estimated \$56.7 million to the state in FY23 and \$111.2 million in FY24 and FY25. Read the fiscal note for more details on how this would work.

HB85 Child endangering-controlled substance use while pregnant Rep. Ember Oakley, R-Riverton
Adds to our child endangerment statutes the offense of knowingly consuming meth or a controlled substance (without a prescription) while pregnant. Penalty is a max 5 years in prison and/or \$5,000 fine. Generally opposed by groups favoring treatment for pregnant and newly delivered women with substance abuse disorder.

HB92 Abortion prohibition-Supreme Court decision Rep. Rachel Rodriguez-Williams, R-Cody
Under this bill, if the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade, all abortions would be prohibited in Wyoming except to protect a woman's health.

HB68 Broadband and telehealth access projects Select Block Chain/Technology
Appropriates \$7 million in American Rescue Plan Act federal funds for broadband access projects and telehealth access projects. Local governments provide one or more public access points for wireless internet access. Wyoming Business Council would establish a program to provide grants for local governmental entities to complete broadband internet access projects in Wyoming cities, towns and counties. Grants to local govts to enter maximum 5 year contracts for a max \$20,000 with commercial enterprises. Intended to target the unserved, economically disadvantaged population.

HB69 Broadband development – amendments and programs Select Block Chain/Technology
Authorize \$1.5 million annually from broadband development subaccount to local governments to match grants for projects to improve broadband internet access or opportunities for improving access for Wyoming residents. Also for telehealth purposes for Wyoming residents and businesses.

SF36 Pharmacy benefit managers act enhancements Joint Labor Committee
Greatly increases restrictions and regulation of Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBMs)n BMs by the Department of Insurance, at the request of independent pharmacies. Increases DoI staff by 2 and spends \$250,000 to train rest of

staff on how to handle PBM complaints. Will need more funding if more than 200 complaints a year. Previous legislation created PBM licensure by the state. This is the follow-up with further regulation, including prohibition of pricing practices that squeeze the pharmacies and restricting audits by PBMs of pharmacies. PBMs dispute claims of abusing and exploiting Wyoming pharmacies and customers.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

HJ1 Supreme court justices and district judges retirement – Joint Judiciary Committee
Retirement age raised from 70 to 75.

HJ3 Runoff elections-constitutional amendment Rep. Chip Neiman, R-Hulette
To make the runoff elections work in redistricting years, this would move up th Legislature’s redistricting effort every 10 years. Currently, the Legislature redistricts during the budget session after census numbers are released. This amendment would create authority for a special session in December before the budget session.

HJ4 Budget sessions – bill introduction Rep. Steve Harshman, R-Casper
Repeals introductory vote requirement for bills in a budget session.

SJ1 Redistricting Commission Rep. Mike Gierau, D-Jackson
Proposes to amend the Wyoming Constitution to implement a redistricting commission to be responsible for apportioning legislative districts based on decennial census of the United States. Work would take place within 90 days of release of Census data. Commission would be five people named without regard to political affiliation by the House Speaker (1), Senate President (1), Supreme Court chief justice (1) and governor (2). Specifies 60 House Districts and 30 Senate Districts.