

Report card time for legislators

MEA-MFT 2005 legislative voting record

The 2005 Legislature was bittersweet for MEA-MFT. We scored some major victories for our members and lost some crucial battles. We will not give up on the bills we lost; we will be back at the legislature when it next convenes, fighting for our members and the people they serve.

The voting guide that follows explains the bills MEA-MFT used for our voting record. These are the votes most important to public services and public education.

HB = House Bill SB = Senate Bill

HB 2 (Witt) General Appropriations for State Government: Authorizing all state spending for the next two years, HB 2 is the omnibus budget act for the State of Montana. Easily the most debated and amended bill in the session, HB 2 is traditionally the focus of partisan debate and finger pointing.

This year, Republicans made several last-minute efforts to trim over \$100 million out of the state budget. This would have decimated state agency budgets and services.

With a House evenly divided along party lines, it took four separate votes to gain the final 51-48 vote that protected a reasonable state budget and ended the 2005 session.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Votes:

3rd Reading, House Floor 4/21/05

3rd Reading, Senate Floor 4/19/05

Status: Became law.

HB 63 (Villa) School Funding Tourniquet: Originally an innocuous "clean-up" bill, HB 63 morphed into the 2005 school funding bill that purported to address Montana's school funding crisis.

As amended, HB 63 continues the Martz administration's restrictions on using county retirement levies for federally funded personnel. Unfortunately, this means an ongoing cost to local school district budgets of over \$10 million a year. HB 63 provides a total of \$29 million in new dollars to schools in Fiscal Year (FY) '06 and maintains that funding level in FY '07.

However, when coupled with declining en-

rollment and ongoing spending caps, most school districts will see no real relief for their ongoing budget difficulties and will only be able to maintain the status quo dismantling of quality that started over a decade ago.

MEA-MFT position: Oppose

Votes:

3rd Reading Concur, House Floor 4/14/05

3rd Reading Concur, Senate Floor 4/14/05

Status: Became law.

HB 124 (Facey) K12 SHIP: HB 124 was MEA-MFT's top priority for k-12 schools in the 2005 session. Had it passed, it would have provided affordable, cost-efficient, and ongoing health benefits for every teacher and almost all other school employees in Montana.

Pooling school employees statewide into one health benefits system would provide millions of dollars in net savings to Montana taxpayers, schools, and school employees.

Tragically, despite broad bipartisan support, all the governor's horses and all the governor's men wouldn't let SHIP pass the House.

MEA-MFT position: Support Votes 1 and 2; Oppose Vote 3

Votes:

1) 2nd Reading, House Floor 3/15/05

2) Motion to bring from table, House Floor 3/23/05

3) Motion to Table, House Floor 3/29/05

Status: Bill tabled. To be continued.

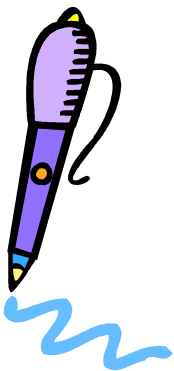
HB 148 (Lambert) Preserving Montana's Public Employees Retirement System: HB 148 sought to inject over \$2.4 million new dollars into the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) to help the system regain its financial footing after historic losses during the 2001 recession. Without this funding, the system maintains excess unfunded liabilities in violation of Montana's constitution and actuarial good sense.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Vote: 3rd Reading, House Floor 3/24/05

Status: Passed House, tabled by Senate Finance & Claims Committee at governor's request.

Throughout the session, MEA-MFT members stayed informed and involved. Your calls, letters, and e-mails made a huge difference. **THANK YOU!**



HB 181 (Musgrove) Preserving Montana's Teachers Retirement System: Like HB 148 for PERS, HB 181 would have allocated additional state and local revenue for the Teachers Retirement System (TRS), meeting the state's constitutional requirement that its retirement systems be actuarially sound.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Vote: 3rd Reading, House Floor 3/21/05

Status: Passed House, tabled by Senate Finance & Claims Committee at governor's request.

HB 338 (Jent) Professional Retirement Option for Teachers: Introduced at MEA-MFT's request, HB 338 would increase the TRS benefit multiplier to 2% per year of service for retirees with 25 or more years of TRS credited service.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Vote: 2nd Reading, House Floor 3/8/05

Status: Passed the House, referred to House Appropriations Committee where it was tabled.

HB 404 (Koopman) Anyone Can Teach—and For Free: Not only do radical anti-public school members of the legislature want teacher licensure to be optional, they also want teachers to simply volunteer. HB 404 was a pot-shot at the profession.

MEA-MFT position: Oppose

Vote: Motion to bring from committee, House Floor 4/4/05

Status: Motion failed. HB 404 remained deadlocked in House Education Committee.

HB 418 (Keane) Definition of Supervisor: Another bill introduced at MEA-MFT's request, HB 418 was designed to end a growing practice by some public employers to "define" bargaining units out of existence.

HB 418 provides a consistent definition of a supervisor that will allow workers to organize even when they are given occasional assignments to guide or lead teams of workers. All kinds of state agency opposition surfaced to kill this bill, but in the end, the governor signed it after allowing MEA-MFT to make our case.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Votes:

3rd Reading, Accept Senate Amendments, House Floor 4/13/05

3rd Reading, Senate Floor 4/5/05

Status: Became law.

HB 447 (Gallik) State Pay Plan: HB 447 is the state executive branch pay plan negotiated by MEA-MFT and the Montana Public Employees Association with the governor's office. HB 447 provides salary increases of 4% and 3.5% in the next two years. Maximum salary increases, targeted to the state's lowest paid employees, will be as high as 10% per year. And the state will cover insurance premium increases of \$46 in year 1 of the biennium and \$50 in year 2.

The vote recorded here represents the only speed bump in what otherwise was the quickest pay plan approval in modern legislative history. Republicans staged a last-minute partisan effort to nix the deal MEA-MFT members overwhelmingly ratified with the governor. MEA-MFT member Bernie Olson heroically refused to vote for his party's amendment.

MEA-MFT position: Oppose amendment, support HB 447 as introduced

Votes:

Motion to Amend, House Floor 2/4/05

3rd Reading, Senate Floor 2/18/05

Status: House amendment failed. HB 447 as introduced became law.

HB 456 (Koopman) Anyone Can Run a School and Get the State to Pay: As a fitting sequel to his HB 404, Rep. Koopman sought to give public education dollars to anyone who wanted to play school. Wal-Mart, the Taxpayers' Association, or anyone could open and run a public school, so long as they gained approval from a school board, university unit, or local government. The schools would not have to abide by any standards, because there wouldn't be any.

Another attempted shot to the gut of public education, HB 456 was stuck in committee until Republicans used a "silver bullet" to bring it to second reading where it died.

MEA-MFT position: Oppose

Vote: 2nd Reading, House Floor 2/22/05

Status: Bill failed.

SB 48 (Harrington) Business Equipment Tax Freeze: The most important piece of tax legisla-

tion to pass the 2005 session, SB 48 freezes the business equipment tax at 3% and strips the ill-conceived mechanism that eventually would have eliminated this source of revenue for Montana's struggling public agencies and schools.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Votes:

3rd Reading, House Floor 4/16/05

3rd Reading, Senate Floor 3/15/05

Status: Became law.

SB 78 (Harrington) Increasing the Minimum Wage: SB 78 would have increased the Montana minimum wage 30 cents in 2005 and another 35 cents in 2006. The current minimum wage is \$5.15.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Votes:

2nd Reading, House Floor 4/5/05

3rd Reading, Senate Floor 2/1/05

Status: Bill failed. To be continued.

SB 152 (Ryan) Definition of Quality Education: SB 152 provoked a slug-fest at the very beginning of the session when senators spent nearly a week hammering out differences along ideological and party divides. Thanks to strong Democrat leadership and bipartisanship from both parties when it counted, the beginnings of a workable definition emerged.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Votes:

3rd Reading, House Floor 3/18/05

3rd Reading, accept House amendments,

Senate Floor 3/29/05

Status: Became law.

SB 206 (Lewis) Two Bits for All: Perhaps MEA-MFT's most long-awaited victory, HB 206 retroactively provides pay increases for over one hundred state employees who were denied any pay increase in the 2003 state pay plan bill.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Votes:

3rd Reading, House Floor 4/1/05

3rd Reading, Senate Floor 2/7/05

Status: Became law.

SB 299 (Toole) Clean Contracting: After watching botched and misguided privatization of state services ranging from prisoner transfers to state purchasing, MEA-MFT asked that SB 299 be introduced to bring sunlight, process, and accountability to privatization decisions.

Position: Support

Votes: 3rd Reading, House Floor 4/6/05

3rd Reading, Senate Floor 2/11/205

Status: Became law.

SB 520 (Elliott) Residential Property Tax Rebate: SB 520 would have redesigned the 2003 Martz income tax cut benefiting the wealthiest Montanans to provide property tax relief for low and middle income Montanans.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Vote: 3rd Reading, Senate 4/4/05

Status: Passed the Senate. Tabled in House Taxation Committee.

SB 525 (Tester) Quality Schools Interim Study: SB 525 provides funding and a work plan for an interim study to address the state Supreme Court's directives in the school funding lawsuit.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Votes:

3rd Reading, House Floor 4/18/05

3rd Reading, Senate 4/13/05

Status: Became law.

SB 526 (Cobb) Relaxation of Archaic Spending Cap: A Senate Republican introduced SB 526 to relax a heretofore never-enforced spending cap that has gone unnoticed for over two decades. His proposal would have allowed additional capacity for the legislature to address ongoing budget problems without bookkeeping trickery and without shortchanging k-12 and university system budgets. If legislatures were rational, consistent, or long-memoryed, SB 526 would have passed overwhelmingly.

MEA-MFT position: Support

Vote: 3rd Reading, Senate Floor 4/18/05

Status: Passed Senate. No action taken in House Appropriations. ■

How did your legislators do?

Voting records appear on the following pages.

Voting record key

R = Right vote according to MEA-MFT position.

W = Wrong vote according to MEA-MFT position.

E = Excused from voting. Vote not counted.

A = Absent from voting (without official excuse). Counted as a wrong vote.

Number Right = Number of times the legislator voted according to MEA-MFT position.

Percent Right = Percentage of the legislator's votes that agreed with MEA-MFT position.

MEA-MFT Voting Record

Montana Senate

2005 Legislative Session

Name and Party	Hometown	HB 2	HB 63	HB 418	HB 447	SB 48	SB 78	SB 152	SB 206	SB 299	SB 520	SB 525	SB 526	% Right
Carolyn Squires (D)	Missoula	R	R	R	R	R	R	E	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Dan Harrington (D)	Butte	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Don Ryan (D)	Great Falls	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Joe Tropila (D)	Great Falls	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Lane Larson (D)	Billings	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	100%
Bob Hawks (D)	Bozeman	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Brent Cromley (D)	Billings	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Carol Williams (D)	Missoula	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Dan Weinberg (D)	Whitefish	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Glenn Roush (D)	Cut Bank	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Jeff Mangan (D)	Great Falls	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Jesse Laslovich (D)	Anaconda	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Jim Elliott (D)	Trout Creek	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Jon Ellingson (D)	Missoula	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Jon Tester (D)	Big Sandy	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Ken "Kim" Hansen (D)	Harlem	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Ken Toole (D)	Helena	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Lynda Moss (D)	Billings	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Mike Cooney (D)	Helena	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Mike Wheat (D)	Bozeman	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Sam Kitzenberg (R)	Glasgow	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	92%
Steve Gallus (D)	Butte	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Trudi Schmidt (D)	Great Falls	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Vicki Cocchiarella (D)	Missoula	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	92%
Gerald Pease (D)	Lodge Grass	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	E	R	R	R	R	91%
Kim Gillan (D)	Billings	R	W	R	R	R	R	E	R	R	R	R	R	91%
Frank Smith (D)	Poplar	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	83%
Greg Lind (D)	Missoula	R	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	83%
John Cobb (R)	Augusta	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	R	75%
Dave Lewis (R)	Helena	R	W	R	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	W	67%
John Brueggeman (R)	Polson	R	R	R	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	58%
Bob Story (R)	Park City	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	42%
Corey Stapleton (R)	Billings	W	R	W	R	W	R	W	R	R	W	W	W	42%
Don Steinbeisser (R)	Sidney	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	42%
Duane Grimes (R)	Clancy	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	42%
Gary Perry (R)	Manhattan	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	W	R	W	42%
Jerry Black (R)	Shelby	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	42%
John Esp (R)	Big Timber	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	42%
Kelly Gebhardt (R)	Roundup	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	42%
Rick Laible (R)	Victor	W	W	W	R	W	R	R	R	W	W	R	W	42%
Bill Tash (R)	Dillon	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	33%
Dan McGee (R)	Laurel	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	33%
Gregory Barkus (R)	Kalispell	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	33%
Jeff Essman (R)	Billings	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	33%
Jim Shockley (R)	Victor	W	R	W	R	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	33%
Keith Bales (R)	Otter	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	33%
Aubyn Curtiss (R)	Fortine	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	W	25%
Jerry O'Neil (R)	Columbia Falls	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	25%
Joe Balyeat (R)	Bozeman	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	W	25%
Bob Keenan (R)	Bigfork	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	17%
Total Votes With MEA-MFT Position		30	16	32	47	31	31	43	50	32	26	45	29	

		HB 2	HB 63	HB 124	HB 124 Motion	HB 124 Table	HB 148	HB 181	HB 338	HB 404	HB 418	HB 447 AMD 1	HB 456	SB 48	SB 78	SB 152	SB 206	SB 299	SB 525	% RIGHT	
Gary Matthews (D)	Miles City	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	78%
Elsie Arntzen (R)	Billings	W	R	R	W	R	R	R	R	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	67%
Alan Olson (R)	Roundup	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	67%
Mark Noennig (R)	Billings	W	W	R	W	R	R	R	R	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	61%
Gordon Hendrick (R)	Superior	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	50%
Bill Jones (R)	Kalispell	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	50%
Carol Lambert (R)	Broadus	W	W	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	R	W	50%
Mike Milburn (R)	Cascade	W	W	R	W	R	W	R	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	50%
Jim Peterson (R)	Buffalo	W	W	R	W	R	R	R	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	R	W	50%
Bill Warden (R)	Bozeman	W	W	R	R	R	R	W	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	50%
Bill Glaser (R)	Billings	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	44%
Llew Jones (R)	Conrad	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	44%
Gary Maclaren (R)	Victor	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	44%
Joe McKenney (R)	Great Falls	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	44%
Walter McNutt (R)	Sidney	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	44%
Rick Ripley (R)	Wolf Creek	W	W	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	44%
Debby Barrett (R)	Dillon	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	39%
Roy Brown (R)	Billings	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	39%
Ralph Heinert (R)	Libby	W	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	39%
Michael Lange (R)	Billings	W	W	R	R	R	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	R	39%
Jack Ross (R)	Absarokee	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	39%
Karl Waitschies (R)	Peerless	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	39%
John Witt (R)	Carter	E	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	35%
Joan Andersen (R)	Fromberg	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	33%
Dennis Himmelberger (R)	Billings	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	33%
Harry Klock (R)	Harlowton	W	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	33%
Rick Maedje (R)	Fortine	W	W	R	W	R	R	W	R	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	33%
Tom McGillvray (R)	Billings	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	R	33%
Don Roberts (R)	Billings	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	R	R	33%
Ron Stoker (R)	Hamilton	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	33%
Janna Taylor (R)	Dayton	W	W	R	W	A	W	W	W	W	R	W	R	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	33%
Bob Lake (R)	Hamilton	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	R	28%
Penny Morgan (R)	Billings	W	R	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	28%
Pat Wagman (R)	Livingston	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	W	W	28%
Dee Brown (R)	H. Horse	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	22%
Bruce Malcolm (R)	Emigrant	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	W	22%
John Ward (R)	Helena	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	22%
John Balyeat (R)	Bozeman	W	R	R	E	A	E	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	19%
Ed Butcher (R)	Winifred	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	R	W	W	17%
Scott Mendenhall (R)	Clancy	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	17%
Wayne Stahl (R)	Saco	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	R	W	17%
Ray Hawk (R)	Florence	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	11%
Diane Rice (R)	Harrison	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	11%
John Sinrud (R)	Bozeman	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	11%
Jon Sonju (R)	Kalispell	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	11%
Roger Koopman (R)	Bozeman	W	W	W	W	A	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	E	W	6%
Verdell Jackson (R)	Kalispell	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	6%
Jack Wells (R)	Bozeman	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	R	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	6%
George Everett (R)	Kalispell	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Scott Sales (R)	Bozeman	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	0%
Total Votes With MEA-MFT Position		51	22	74	51	40	76	68	62	54	91	51	64	51	50	79	93	68	73		