



## Legislative Update: Week 14 - Sine Die

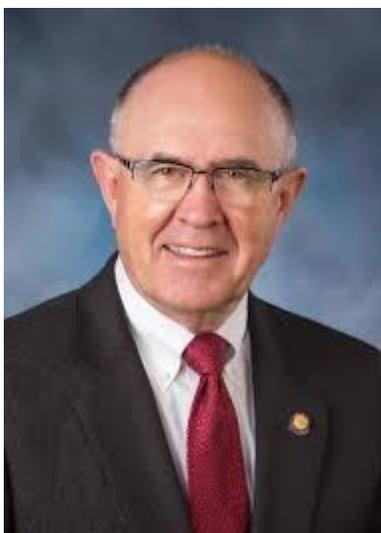
### Good morning, Public Health Champions!

Hi all! Welcome to the final weekly recap of Idaho's 65th legislative session. If you're just joining us, my name is Maija Baehr and I'm the policy intern for the IPHA and ICA this session.



This year's session came in like a lamb & out like a... mangy, three-legged, rabid, two-headed camel? (In case you missed it, the camel quote was [infamously uttered by Rep. Ilana Rubel](#) in the final House Health & Welfare Committee meeting of SB1204aa, before it was sent to the House floor to be further amended).

What started out on January 7th with nearly ¼ Freshmen legislators ended tied for the third longest legislative session in Idaho's history. State agencies will also be operating off temporary rules from July 1 through the next legislative session [due to a dispute between the House and Senate](#) on the administrative rules process. The Governor's Office is prepared to make sure this will impact Idahoans as little as possible, but the fact that our administrative rules couldn't be adopted sometime within the 95 legislative days our Legislature occupied this year is telling.



"This is probably one of the most unusual sessions in the 11 years I've been in the Legislature...I hope each one of us will be better legislators next year, and we can figure out our way forward." -Senate Majority Leader Chuck Winder, (R-Boise), said as the Senate prepared to adjourn for the year."

One of the most eventful hearings of the final week of the session was House State Affairs on Monday. The agenda for Monday morning's meeting was published on Friday, but was left vague with just "Ballot Initiatives" written as the agenda item. There was no RS # or other subject description indicating what it could be. The agenda was then updated shortly before 9:00 am Monday morning to include 4 new

RS#s, which would be introduced by Rep. Dixon (R-Ponderay).

The 4 proposed bills were a twist on the four main components of the vetoed [SB 1159](#), which was vetoed by Governor Little just one legislative day prior to the introduction of these new bills. This raised concerns over whether or not it's within the rules to introduce components of a bill previously vetoed in the same legislative session and caused Chairman Harris to temporarily recess to consult with the House Parliamentarian. If you weren't able to tune-in on Monday, it's another great meeting to download and listen to. Lots to learn about the legislative process in just one hearing!

As for the four RS#, they were all introduced as HB 303, HB 304, HB 305, and HB 306. None are going anywhere this year but are likely to come back to us next session.

To end our time together, I'd like to leave you with what I think is one of the most prominent takeaways from this past session: **Don't ever let anyone tell you their single vote doesn't matter.**

Here's how you can convince them their vote *does* matter, and can have a very real impact on what does or doesn't become law.

Let's go back to the race for the District 15 Senate seat last year. This was when incumbent Fred Martin outran his opponent, Democratic challenger Jim Bratnober by six votes. SIX VOTES.

Legislative District 15				
		Total	Plurality	Percent
<b>State Senator</b>				
DEM	<a href="#">Jim Bratnober</a>	8,942		50.0%
REP	<a href="#">Fred S. Martin</a>	8,948	6	50.0%
<b>State Representative, Position A</b>				
DEM	<a href="#">Steve Berch</a>	9,845	1,620	54.5%
REP	<a href="#">Lynn M. Luker</a>	8,225		45.5%
<b>State Representative, Position B</b>				
DEM	<a href="#">Jake Ellis</a>	9,089	320	50.9%
REP	<a href="#">Patrick McDonald</a>	8,769		49.1%

Martin then became Chairman of the Senate Health & Welfare Committee where he then had the capacity to dictate which bills could have public hearings and which couldn't. While the power of the Committee Chairman is somewhat unique to Idaho, it cannot be understated and this is critically important to remember (and remind others of) when it comes time to vote. Two of the most potentially impactful bills Sen. Martin held were [HB 133 "Immunization Exemptions"](#) which would require schools to send out information educating parents on their rights not to vaccinate their children, and [SB 1100](#), one of the first bills targeting Medicaid expansion.

The point of this is not to say that six votes could have changed the party representing District 15, nor is it to make it political at all. The point is that all Idahoans should understand just how much of an influence their one vote can have, and they should feel eager to participate in their representative democracy.

If you need a refresher on Idaho's rules & regulations on voter registration and voting, check out the [Secretary of State's Citizen Guide to voting](#).

Thank you all for joining me this session and for all you do to serve the public health and caregiving needs of Idahoans. I hope to see you at the Capitol for a committee meeting or two next year!

Best of Health,

Maija

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