



MONTANANS FOR CHOICE TAKE ACTION

Gender Equality, Reproductive Rights, & Healthcare Access

2025 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

JUNE 2025



The 2025 Montana Legislative Session

From January 6th to April 30th Montana legislators gathered to introduce, debate, and vote on 1,759 bills. From day one, Montanans for Choice Take Action (MT4CTA) closely followed proposed and pending legislation. We collaborated with partner organizations, including members of the Montana Sexual & Reproductive Health Collective, to interpret, strategize around, and inform Montana constituents about proposed legislation. We worked hard to bring you timely and relevant information about bills affecting your bodily autonomy. Together with Montanans across the state, we opposed bills that restricted our rights and supported bills that expanded access to vital healthcare services.

In total, we tracked 48 bills related to abortion, gender equality, LGBTQ2S+ rights, bodily autonomy, and/or access to healthcare and health education. Only 15 (31%) of these bills were considered favorable, primarily for the opportunity they presented to protect or expand access to healthcare, including insurance coverage for vital reproductive health services such as in-vitro fertilization and expanded access to doula services. Along with many organizations in the Healthy Montana Coalition, we celebrated bills intended to sustain Medicaid expansion or improve Medicaid coverage or quality.

Though there were several positive bills to support, there were many more harmful bills that sought to limit rights, restrict access to lifesaving health care, and target some of the most vulnerable Montanans. In total, MT4CTA opposed 33 bills. We mounted some of our strongest opposition to bills that attempted to limit access to abortion or exploited loopholes left by CI-128.

We were disturbed to see many Montana legislators follow the extremist national trend of targeting or seeking to erase transgender and nonbinary individuals. This session alone, lawmakers introduced more than a dozen bills that limited access to transgender healthcare, promoted discrimination and harassment of gender expansive individuals, or generally ostracized and isolated individuals that don't conform to conventional gender norms. And while some of our biggest wins were in the passage of bills to increase healthcare access, many legislators made it known they'd prefer to eliminate vital programs like expanded Medicaid.

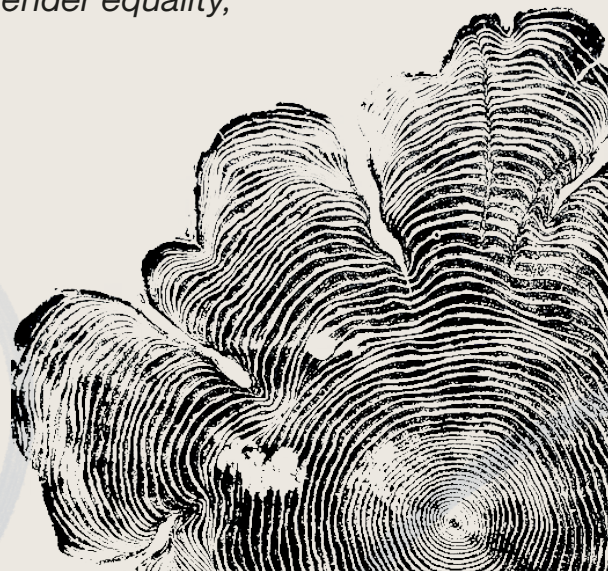
Lawmakers focused on restricting peoples' rights while ignoring the critical needs of everyday Montanans. Our elected representatives failed to adequately address the rising cost of living, increase affordable housing, or ensure quality education for all families including early childhood education and childcare.

The following sections detail our work in three key issue areas: Abortion & Reproductive Rights, Gender Equality & LGBTQ2S+ Rights, and Access to Healthcare. Below, we describe the many bills we engaged with, wins worth celebrating, and issues that will require ongoing advocacy.

We are so grateful for all those who took action with us. You can be certain we'll continue to offer ways for you to engage with us in the future!

In 2025, Montana lawmakers introduced 1,759 bills including...

-  *9 bills that sought to restrict access to abortion and spread harmful disinformation*
-  *17 bills targeting transgender and LGBTQ2S+ individuals*
-  *7 bills to limit healthcare coverage, availability of services, and/or accurate health information*
-  *15 bills to strengthen reproductive rights, affirm gender equality, or expand access to healthcare*





Abortion Access & Reproductive Rights

This session, lawmakers introduced 16 bills related to reproductive health & rights, more than half of which we opposed. Of the seven good bills, only two (HB475 and SB319) were signed and enacted into law. HB475 (Rep. Reavis) ends the practice of shackling pregnant prisoners during childbirth, aligning Montana with 41 states that already limit or ban shackling. SB319 (Sen. Neumann) expands access to doula care by creating a licensure system so that doulas can bill Medicaid for their work. Both victories were hard won, and the bills were passed with bi-partisan support - meaningfully improving future birthing experiences for Montanans throughout the state.

We were disappointed to see several positive and protective bills fail, including bills to mandate insurance coverage for Assisted Reproductive Technology (such as in vitro fertilization or IVF) and bills to research and regulate pre- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) (e.g., forever chemicals), which may be associated with several negative reproductive health outcomes. MT4CTA enthusiastically supported these good bills with written and oral testimony and calls to action to encourage others to share their stories and support. Unfortunately, far more of our time was devoted to opposing bills that actively sought to restrict access to abortion and harm people who have abortions.

Despite voters' majority support for CI-128, Republican lawmakers continued their efforts to give rights to embryos and fetuses (known as fetal personhood), while taking away a pregnant person's rights to make decisions about their life, health, and future. HB288 (Rep. Sprunger) tried to mandate child support payments before birth, a thinly veiled attempt to establish fetal personhood. If the underlying agenda to ban all abortion care and control our bodies wasn't bad enough, patient advocates, including attorneys and social workers, pointed out all the ways this bill would harm pregnant people, especially those experiencing domestic abuse. Fortunately, HB288 died after its first committee hearing.

HB316 (Rep. Deming) represented a more blatant effort to undo CI-128, with the sponsor questioning voters' intelligence. According to Deming, "I'm not sure that the people who voted on CI-128 really understood what they were voting for." Thanks to the work of many reproductive freedom advocates, this attempt to completely ban abortion failed to muster the 100 votes needed to put a new constitutional amendment before the voters in 2026.

We also saw several bills attempt to exploit the loopholes left by CI-128. HB555 (Rep. Seekins-Crowe) would have restricted access to medication abortion by essentially banning telehealth appointments and mandating that patients collect and return their pregnancy-related medical waste to their healthcare provider. The premise of the bill was based on sham science claiming medication abortion is “polluting our water.” In a show of true hypocrisy, the same lawmakers’ supporting HB555 opposed bills to research and regulate actual chemicals (PFAs) known to be present in our waterways.

The first attempted “wastewater bill” was tabled in the House Judiciary committee after compelling public testimony. However, the same week, an identical bill, SB479, was introduced in the Senate. Proponents of SB479, including sponsoring Sen. Manzella, claimed they weren’t changing the legality of abortion but were simply protecting health and the environment. They made absurd and unfounded statements including, “We all are drinking other peoples’ abortions.” After a heated floor debate, including several lawmakers’ sharing their personal pregnancy stories, SB479 died with a tied vote, making it **the first anti-abortion bill to be killed on the Montana Senate floor in over 25 years!**

Another particularly cruel bill, HB609 (Rep. Seekins-Crowe), would have created a new felony for “abortion trafficking.” **This bill was the most extreme abortion travel ban ever proposed in the U.S. to-date.** It would have criminalized a pregnant person who travels, within Montana or out-of-state, to receive abortion care that is “illegal in Montana,” which means abortions that occur after viability. The felony charge would’ve applied to both the pregnant person and any person(s) who aided in the transportation of the pregnant person. This means someone’s spouse or parent who travels with them, or even a friend who gives gas money, could have been charged with a felony. The bill received strong public opposition, with many Montanans providing powerful testimony. Ultimately, Republican Representative Tracy Sharp motioned to table the bill stating, “...some of these [abortion] bills that we’ve been bringing up here, I just have to admit, I’m really uncomfortable with.”



Although opponents were able to kill most bills that sought to limit abortion rights, a few anti-abortion bills were passed and enacted into law. HB723 (Rep. Deming) and SB154 (Sen. Emrich) are two bills that have seemingly no impact on abortion care, but were justified as “necessary” based on stigmatizing disinformation. HB723 mandates reporting of infants born alive following an abortion. Abortions are already reported to the State of Montana Vital Statistics, and the rare instances that require an abortion by induction (sometimes resulting in a live birth) take place at the hospital under heartbreaking circumstances. These families deserve the right to say goodbye to their infant without worrying about how their private medical information will be used by the state government. Meanwhile, SB154 prohibits the sale of human tissue, including tissue from an induced abortion. This bill is unnecessary and redundant as this practice is already illegal under federal law.

Finally, we were disappointed to see the passage of HB388, prohibiting state and local regulation of so-called “pregnancy centers.” These unregulated pregnancy centers (UPCs) have no protections for client privacy or regulations about what personal medical information they can share with others. We’re seeing these UPCs being used as the surveillance arm of the anti-abortion movement. Sen. Neumann attempted to amend the bill to include strong privacy protections for pregnant Montanans who visit UPCs. But after lies from lawmakers and national lobbying groups, including Alliance Defending Freedom (a national anti-abortion organization), the amendment was dropped and the bill was passed. UPCs will be able to continue their deceptive practices with no protections for client privacy.



Montana Lawmakers by Montana Free Press

Abortion & Reproductive Rights Bills That Passed

| MT4CTA POSITION | NUMBER | NAME | SPONSOR | STATUS |
|--------------------|--------|---|--------------|----------------------------|
| Oppose | HB388 | Create pregnancy center autonomy and rights of expression act | Rep. Regier | Signed/Enacted/ Adopted |
| Support | HB475 | Regulate restraints on women while giving childbirth | Rep. Reavis | Signed/Enacted/ Adopted |
| Oppose | HB723 | Establish annual reporting requirements of infants born alive | Rep. Deming | Signed/Enacted/ Adopted |
| Oppose | SB154 | Revise prohibition on sale or purchase of human body parts under the revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act. | Sen. Emrich | Signed/Enacted/ Adopted |
| Support | SB319 | Generally revise health care laws related to doulas | Sen. Neumann | Signed/Enacted/ Adopted |

For more information on current abortion access in Montana, viability bans, or UPCs visit mtchoice.org/initiatives/education/



Gender Equality & LGBTQ2S+ Rights

So far in 2025, nearly 600 anti-LGBTQ2S+ bills have been proposed throughout the U.S., and Montana is one of 12 states that introduced 16 or more anti-LGBTQ2S+ bills.

Numerous bills make public places less safe for gender expansive individuals. This includes two bills HB121 (Rep. Seekins-Crowe) and HB446 (Rep. J. Hinkle) which make public spaces including bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing rooms potential sites for harassment based on gender. Several bills challenge schools' ability to create safe and welcoming spaces for all students. For example, HB300 and HJ10 (Rep. Seekins-Crowe) ban transgender athletes' participation in team sports. HB400 (Rep. Mitchell), HB471 (Rep. J. Hinkle), HB734 (Rep. Schubert), and SB299 (Sen. Fuller) restrict schools' abilities to create inclusive policies and curriculums. HB675 (Rep. J. Hinkle) was a rehash of a 2023 bill (HB359) which is currently blocked by a US District Court. Both bills attempted to discourage drag performances and threatened events like community sanctioned Pride parades. The 2025 iteration failed on the house floor with bi-partisan opposition.

Several bills that passed limit the provision of transgender healthcare, including HB682 (Rep. Kmetz) and SB218 (Sen. Fuller). Other bills, several of which passed, threatened adults who would support young people seeking age-appropriate transgender healthcare, often characterizing such care as child abuse. This includes HB690 (Rep. Mercer), HB730, HB754 (Rep. Schubert), and SB164 (Sen. Fuller). Finally, SB437 (Sen. Glimm) denies the existence of intersex and other gender expansive individuals by creating a strict binary definition of sex.

MT4CTA stood in strong opposition to these bills because we believe all Montanans should be empowered to exist as their authentic selves, free from gender-based discrimination. We recognize that efforts to police the bodies of non-binary individuals reinforce narrowly defined gender roles that harm us all, including cisgender individuals. Further, history tells us that authoritarian governments initially target the most vulnerable populations to see what they can get away with before persecuting more and more people.



Trans Day of Visibility2 by KTVH

In total, we tracked 17 bills targeting LGBTQ2S+ communities. Each of these bills necessitated that LGBTQ2S+ individuals and their allies give vulnerable public testimony. Two House Representatives, Rep SJ Howell and Rep Zooey Zephyr, repeatedly spoke out about their lived experiences and the harms of these bills. In part due to their compelling testimony, several of the worst bills were defeated or amended. Unfortunately, ten bills still passed, nine of which have been signed into law.

In a particularly troubling turn of events, the Governor returned two bills to the legislature with requests to remove favorable amendments to HB446 and SB218. Although the Governor's attempt to update SB218 was unsuccessful, HB446 was changed back to an earlier version of the bill that threatens to criminalize transgender individuals simply for existing in public spaces.

In the face of so much adversity, we applaud Rep. Zephyr for introducing the only bill intended to protect LGBTQ2S+ rights. HB798 would have allowed Montanans to vote on a constitutional amendment to strike down an existing ban on gay marriage. Although this ban is not being enforced, Montana's constitution and Montana Code still defines marriage as between a man and a woman. Unfortunately, the bill was tabled in the House Judiciary committee.

It is likely that many of these harmful bills violate our constitutional rights. After the anti-trans bathroom bill, HB121, was signed and enacted, it was quickly blocked by a Missoula County District Court. And as more bills take effect, we anticipate more legal challenges to defend our constitutional rights. In many cases, the courts (also known as the judicial branch, or the judiciary) are our last line of defense against extremist attacks on our rights. So it's not surprising that many extremist MT lawmakers also introduced or supported legislation to limit the power of our courts or make them more political.

Passed Bills Targeting LGBTQ2S+ Communities

| MT4CTA POSITION | NUMBER | NAME | SPONSOR | STATUS |
|--------------------|--------|--|--------------------|---|
| Oppose | HB121 | Provide privacy in certain restrooms, changing rooms, and sleeping quarters | Rep. Seekins-Crowe | Blocked by a prelim. injunction in Perkins v. State |
| Oppose | HB300 | Generally revise laws related to discrimination in education | Rep. Seekins-Crowe | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | HB400 | Enact the “Free to Speak Act” | Rep. Mitchell | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | HB446 | Revise indecent exposure laws | Rep. J. Hinkle | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | HB471 | Revise education laws related to human sexuality and identity instruction | Rep. J. Hinkle | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | HB682 | Generally revise laws regarding gender transition treatment | Rep. Kmetz | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | HB690 | Generally revise laws related to child protection | Rep. Mercer | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | HJ10 | Resolution on sports laws | Rep. Seekins-Crowe | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | SB218 | Provide for private right of action for injuries caused by certain medical interventions to treat gender dysphoria | Sen. Fuller | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | SB437 | Revise definition of sex in Montana law | Sen. Glimm | Passed, not yet signed |



Access to Healthcare

Bills to protect or expand healthcare services and health insurance proved to be one of the more encouraging aspects of the legislative session. In addition to the reproductive and transgender healthcare bills described above, MT4CTA tracked 14 other bills related to healthcare - seven were helpful and seven were harmful.

Of the seven harmful bills, all but one failed. Early in the session, SB62 (Sen. Glimm), which sought to phase out the expanded Medicaid program, was defeated on the Senate floor with bi-partisan opposition. Generally, legislators seemed reluctant to support bills that limited access to Medicaid. The only harmful bill that passed was one increasing the maximum age for expanded Medicaid participants who are required to participate in community engagement activities (from age 55 to age 62).

In addition to defeating numerous harmful bills, we're celebrating the passage of five positive bills. Most notably, HB245 (Rep. Buttrey) eliminated the termination date of the expanded Medicaid program. In a significant win for Montanans, the program is now approved indefinitely. Unfortunately, another bill to stabilize funding for Medicaid, HB880 (Rep. Caferro), was vetoed by Governor Gianforte. This veto is particularly concerning as federal lawmakers consider a budget that would gut federal funding for expanded Medicaid.

We were also disappointed by the Governor's veto of HB850, which would have created a licensure system and Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers (similar to the doula bill). This bill sought to increase access to much needed services for low-income and rural communities across the state; the Governor vetoed it citing budget concerns. There is currently an effort to override the veto. A mail-in veto poll is due June 27, 2025.

Despite several big wins for healthcare access this session, we are vigilantly monitoring the actions of the federal government and readying ourselves for a potential special legislative session in Montana, should the federal government pass legislation making substantial cuts to Medicaid.

Healthcare Access Bills That Passed

| MT4CTA POSITION | NUMBER | NAME | SPONSOR | STATUS |
|--------------------|--------|--|----------------|---|
| Support | HB245 | Revise the Montana HELP Act workforce development provisions and termination date | Rep. Buttrey | Blocked by a prelim. injunction in Perkins v. State |
| Support | HB601 | Create online portal for community assisters related to Medicaid | Rep. Howell | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Oppose | HB687 | Revise age of expanded Medicaid participants required to engage in community engagement activities | Rep. Mercer | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |
| Support | HB850 | Provide licensing and regulation of community health workers | Rep. Buttrey | Vetoed, Override Vote Mail Poll in Progress |
| Support | HB880 | Establish a stabilization fund for medicaid | Rep. Caferro | Vetoed |
| Support | SB170 | Eliminate termination date of community health aide program | Sen. Windy Boy | Signed/Enacted/Adopted |

To see a full list of all the bills Montanans for Choice Take Action tracked this session visit <https://bit.ly/MT4CAAction2025Bills>



Strategy & Big Picture Wins

MT4CTA used a variety of tactics to advocate for the health and rights of Montanans this legislative session. Through a combination of research, knowledge translation, public education, relationship building, and community activation, we were able to raise awareness and influence legislative votes, helping good bills pass and bad bills fail. Our work this session included the following actions:

- ✦ **Tracked more than 50 bills**, monitoring their status including the timing of key hearings and votes.
- ✦ **Disseminated 14 Legislative Updates** and/or Action Alerts via email to our constituents.
- ✦ **Created two new social media channels** to share timely action alerts. Find MT4CTA now on Instagram (@mt4choice_action) and Bluesky (@mt4choice-action.bsky.social).
- ✦ **Developed in-depth research reports on policy relevant topics** including unregulated pregnancy centers and so-called ‘abortion reversal.’
- ✦ **Delivered oral and written testimony on over 35 bills** impacting our bodily autonomy and access to healthcare.
- ✦ **Recruited expert testimony** from medical providers on key bills.
- ✦ **Provided research and talking points to lawmakers** to support constructive hearings and floor debates.
- ✦ **Engaged with Montana journalists** to share key background information ahead of hearings, including publicly available junkie files.
- ✦ **Partnered with other advocates throughout the state** to mobilize Montanans to give testimony, contact their representatives, and to make their opinions known.

Together with our partners and Montanans throughout the state, we advocated for expanded access to healthcare services and the rights of LGBTQ2S+ individuals, while maintaining legal abortion care and exposing attempts to deceive the public. We're celebrating several significant wins:

- ✦ **7 bills passed to expand access to and improve healthcare**, including important reproductive healthcare like doula support.
- ✦ **7 harmful bills tabled after their first committee hearing.**
- ✦ **12 harmful bills defeated on the House or Senate floor**, including the first anti-abortion bill to die on the Senate floor in over 25 years.
- ✦ **8 harmful bills that were requested or drafted but were never introduced** in the face of political opposition.
- ✦ **Increased public awareness of anti-abortion tactics** including travel bans, pregnancy surveillance, unregulated pregnancy centers, so-called 'abortion reversal,' and attempts to codify rights of an embryo or a fetus, known as fetal personhood.
- ✦ **Increased knowledge and political will among legislators** to oppose abortion bans, including changes in voting behavior of anti-abortion Republicans.

The shift in political will regarding anti-abortion policies can be seen in committee and floor votes and in the words of lawmakers themselves. Speaking in regard to the cruel travel ban, HB609, known anti-abortion extremist, Republican Representative Braxton Mitchell from Columbia Falls repeated MT4CTA talking points and stated, "We just simply didn't support the bill. The penalties on the mother were too egregious."



Take Action with Us!

With the 2025 legislative session behind us, we need you to continue taking action to protect our freedoms. We have a lot of wins to celebrate, but many of the bills that passed, especially those targeting vulnerable communities, prove that there is still work to be done.

There are many ways you can get involved:



Hold lawmakers accountable for their votes

- ✦ House Representatives have 2-year terms and many will run for re-election in 2026, along with about half of all state Senators.
- ✦ Check out our 2025 Legislative Scorecard to see how lawmakers voted in the three issue areas described in this report.



Help elect lawmakers that support your rights

- ✦ Think your Representative or Senator needs to be replaced? Help us identify someone in your district who would be a great leader/legislator – maybe it's you!
- ✦ Found a candidate you believe in? Work or volunteer for their campaign.



Promote our work at MT4CTA

- ✦ Help more folks connect to MT4CTA by sharing our reports, emails, and social media posts with friends, family, and colleagues.
- ✦ Donate to MT4CTA to bolster our efforts.

Treasured Partnerships

We couldn't do this work without many incredible partners and issue area experts. We're especially grateful to our organizational partners from the Montana Sexual & Reproductive Health Collective who co-created strategies, shared knowledge, and disseminated many calls to action to influence state lawmakers. We also benefited from shared knowledge with advocacy organizations and providers in other states who were battling similar bad bills. We are powerful together!



MONTANANS FOR CHOICE

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