



Exciting Times for Senate Pages!

The second week of February, when former Lockwood student Hailey Muller served as a Page for Senator Taylor Brown, he took her to an evening speech at Carroll College by 89-year-old Noemi Ban, one of the last living holocaust survivors of World War II's Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps. It was "standing room only" when Ms. Ban told of losing her mother, sister, baby brother, and grandmother to the camp's gas chambers, but she still shared a message of the importance of perseverance, hope, responsibility and freedom, saying, "I will never hate. Because if I do, then Hitler and the Nazi's win." Hailey is the youngest daughter of Steve and Tina Muller. Tina works at Lockwood School and Steve is a building contractor.



Remember, any high school Senior or Junior can apply to serve for a week as a Legislative Page. Numbers are limited, and they must be sponsored by a current Legislator in order to be selected. Please contact Senator Taylor Brown for more information!

Since Forsyth Senior Bailey Stahl is from a famous railroad town, she was thrilled to be invited to ride the "Blue Jean Special" during her Page Week in March. This special train ride for Legislators travels from Helena to Avon, and is co-sponsored by BNSF Railway and Montana Rail Link. The trip features trestles, beautiful spring scenery, and live musical entertainment. Shown here on the passenger platform at the Helena Depot are (left to right) Bailey Stahl, Mike Halligan of Montana Rail Link, Barbara Ranf, Director of Government Affairs for BNSF, and Senator Taylor Brown. Bailey's parents are Joan and Willie Duffield of Forsyth.



2011 Montana Legislative Report

In my second session as your State Senator, I was honored to be elected to serve on the Senate Leadership Team in the position of Majority Whip. Starting immediately last November, two months before the session actually convened in Helena, we began to lay out a plan to create expanded opportunity for Montanans.

In the face of high unemployment, a crippled national economy, and huge federal deficits, we still felt that Montana held a lot of advantages...and we felt that the best thing we could do was to give our families, our work force, and our employers the opportunity to succeed. Here is the plan we crafted:

Our Plan to Create Opportunity

With the help of many individuals and business leaders, our five-part plan evolved into several dozen specific pieces of legislation designed to create opportunity in the following areas:

- A. GROW JOBS AND THE ECONOMY**  
- ie., revise work comp, reduce business equipment tax, tort reform
- B. FACILITATE RESPONSIBLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**  
- ie., revise MEPA, update coal leasing, metal mine laws, eminent domain
- C. RESTORE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS**  
- ie., states rights, health insurance reform, marijuana law, second amendment rights, illegal immigration
- D. DELIVER EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**  
- ie., meet statutory funding requirements, reward performance-based education, consider charter schools
- E. LIMIT THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT**  
- ie., reduce spending, transparent budget on-line, review all statutory appropriations

This was my first time to serve on the Senate Finance Committee, where from the very start we focused on reducing government spending. Our mission was to make state government live within its means, without raising taxes. To provide the opportunity for individuals and businesses to invest in and grow our economy, we felt that one of the best things we could do was to get government out of the way.



Senate Majority Leadership Team (L-R) Sen. Chas Vincent (Libby) Whip, Sen. Jeff Essmann (Billings) Majority Leader, Sen. Jim Peterson (Buffalo) Senate President, Sen. Bruce Tutvedt (Kalispell) President Pro Tempore, Sen. Taylor Brown, (Huntley) Majority Whip.

Cutting State Spending

For the upcoming biennium, I am proud to say that our balanced budget reduced General Funds spending by over 6%, compared to 2010-11 and yet still maintained Montana's most essential state services.

These were actual cuts in the budget, not just reductions from the recent Federal Stimulus infusion. It is also important to note that these were not equal across-the-board cuts; but instead every program was examined and evaluated, including those that receive ongoing statutory funds set by law. Some programs took larger cuts, while some like K-12 Education only felt about a 1% cut...but almost every state-funded program shared in the reductions.

We finished our work in 88 days (two less than the law allows) and though I was personally disappointed that we were not able to advance more in areas such as medical malpractice tort reform, transparency in making the state's checkbook available on-line, health care reform, and others, I will say that we made much more progress than we did in my first session in 2009.

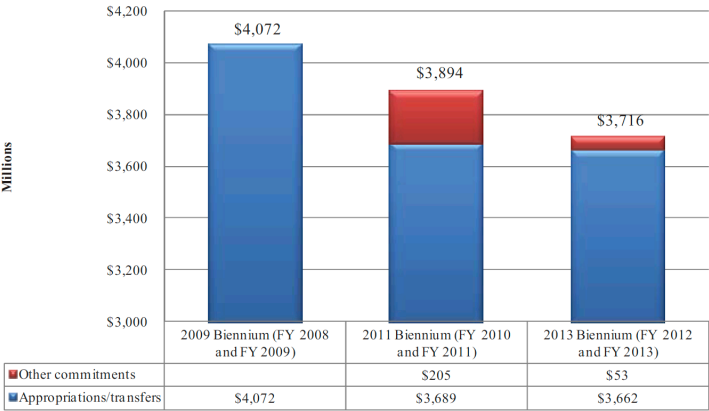
It was frustrating to work at passing some good bi-partisan bills and then have to watch those efforts die with a Governor's veto, but all-in-all I am proud to report that we did make some solid gains on the priorities that are important to our part of southeastern Montana!

Taylor



(Above) Senate President Jim Peterson and Majority Whip Taylor Brown confer during an important Senate floor session.

General Fund Spending Commitments



Total general fund spending has decreased for the past two biennia, though skewed by temporary other commitments such as federal stimulus funds

Back-to-School Bringing civics to the classroom!

The Montana Legislators Back-to-School Program was created in 2000 to help young citizens gain a better understanding of the value and concepts of representative democracy. The Legislators who volunteer to participate in the program give civics a personal touch, allowing students a chance to talk face-to-face with the state legislators who represent them.

(Left) Senator Taylor Brown entertains Lockwood School 5th graders, reading and discussing American history as part of the Lockwood Schools "I Love to Read" Month.



(Right) At the Dedication Ceremony for their new Freedom Shrine at the Lockwood Junior High School, the Exchange Clubs of Billings invited Senator Taylor Brown to keynote the event with a stirring presentation to Lockwood 8th Graders. Brown brought several of the documents to life with a colorful and patriotic speech about their importance to the history of our country.





## Successful Bills Introduced by Senator Taylor Brown

A total of 1179 Bills were introduced in the 62nd Legislature and of those, 602 were killed in either the House or the Senate. A record number of bills, 79 in all, were vetoed by the Governor either outright or by amendatory veto. Following are some of the successful bills that Senator Brown introduced:

### INCREASED PENALTIES FOR REPEAT OFFENSES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

SB152 - The new law punishes repeat offenders with enhanced penalties; allows judges to protect the public through longer jail sentences for serious repeat offenders; and provides more effective sex offender treatment through longer periods of probation.

### UPDATE POSTAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSED CITIES AND TOWNS

SB91 - This bill amended Montana law to eliminate the outdated requirement that a proposed municipality must have a U.S. Post Office. The reality today is that the USPS often provides postal services through a Contract Postal Unit rather than a traditional Post Office.

### AUTHORIZE SELF-INSURED STUDENT HEALTH PLAN

SB280 - This law now allows the Commissioner of Higher Education to create a self-insured student health plan for enrolled students of the University System and community colleges, and their dependents. This will lead directly to reduced costs for health care coverage for Montana college students, and requires no state appropriations. (See photo below.)

### REVISE AUTHORITY OF MT BOARD OF HORSE RACING

SB16 - Allows the Montana Board of Horse Racing to contract with a Simulcast Network Provider instead of only granting a license as in the past, and allows the Board the option of operating as the Network Provider of the state simulcast network. This bill is of tremendous benefit to Montana's horse racing industry, and to the cities and the fairs that benefit from horse racing in their economy.



In a special ceremony in the Governor's office, leaders from the Montana University System enjoy watching Governor Brian Schweitzer sign Senate Bill 280. Sponsored by Senator Taylor Brown of Huntley, this bill allows the state to develop a self-insured student health plan that will lower student health insurance costs.

(Back L-R) **Jim Mitchell**, Director of MSU Student Health Center; **Michael Dills**, ASMSU student lobbyist; **Blake Robertson**, MSU-Billings student lobbyist; **Janelle Booth**, MAS student lobbyist; **Sheila Stearns**, Montana Commissioner of Higher Education (Front L-R) **State Senator Taylor Brown SD22**, **Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer**

## Significant Legislation Supported by Senator Taylor Brown

### ★ WORKERS COMPENSATION REFORM

HB334 (Reichner) reformed many of the cost drivers that cause Montana to have the highest workers compensation premiums in the nation. This should make Montana more competitive with other states, and result in over 20% reduction in work comp premiums for employers.

### ★ LOWER BUSINESS EQUIPMENT TAX

SB372 (Tutvedt) Lowers the tax rate from 3% to 2% for every business on their first \$2 million of equipment. Additionally, if tax collections exceed a trigger level in years ahead, the rate will drop to 1.5%, providing savings that can be used to increase wages and expand operations.

### ★ REFORM MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

SB233 (Keane) restricts what government departments can evaluate during environmental reviews, and keeps courts from pulling a company's permit and delaying projects during lawsuits over the adequacy of an agency's MEPA review.

### ★ MARIJUANA REFORM

SB423 (Essmann) Following the Governor's veto of HB161 which proposed to completely repeal the current medical marijuana law, SB423 was passed to eliminate the "business of cultivating, selling, or distributing marijuana", yet allow small providers to serve a limited number of patients. SB423 tightens up the provisions for physician certification and allows local governments to regulate providers and prohibit storefront businesses.



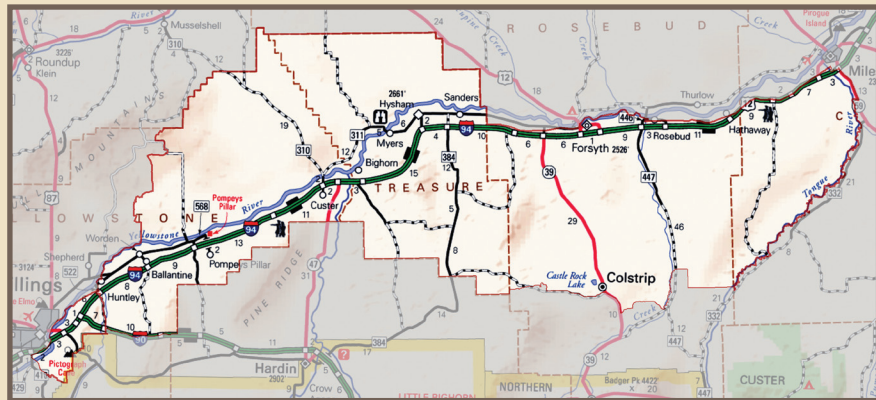
To read the text, or see more history and details on these bills or any other piece of legislation, just go to our website and click on the link to "Montana Legislature".

[www.SenatorTaylorBrown.com](http://www.SenatorTaylorBrown.com)



## Representing our Local District

Pictured here at his desk on the House Floor, State Representative Jonathan McNiven (HD44) works closely with Senator Taylor Brown on issues important to Lockwood, Briarwood, and Huntley...communities that both these of legislators represent in Helena.



Senate District 22 stretches across four counties, along the Yellowstone River from Billings to Miles City.

## Ballot Referendums in YOUR Future

The 62nd Legislature voted to place several significant Referendums on the ballot before Montana Voters in 2012. Now, all of Montana will soon have the chance to cast their own vote on the following issues:

- » REQUIRE MONTANA SUPREME COURT JUSTICES TO BE ELECTED FROM SEVEN REGIONAL DISTRICTS, instead of statewide as they are now. (SB268)
- » REQUIRE MINORS 15 YEARS OR YOUNGER TO NOTIFY THEIR PARENT or seek a waiver from a judge before having an abortion. (HB627)
- » DENY CERTAIN STATE SERVICES TO ILLEGAL ALIENS, requiring proof of citizenship in order to receive taxpayer-funded services such as jobless benefits, tuition assistance or employment with state agencies. (HB638)
- » PROVIDE REFUNDS OF ANY SURPLUS GENERAL FUND BALANCE TO TAXPAYERS through an income tax credit based upon property and individual income taxes paid, if Montana's tax collections exceed the budgeted revenue estimate by more than 106 percent. (SB426)
- » PROHIBIT THE STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM MANDATING THE PURCHASE OF HEALTH INSURANCE or imposing penalties for decisions related to purchasing health insurance. (SB418)