



Week 3 Idaho Legislative Update for January 22-29, 2021

The third week of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-Sixth Idaho Legislature brings a continued increase in committee activity meetings and hearings. All committees have met at least once and are working through their obligations with rules, appointments, presentations, bill introductions, and hearings in a mixed fashion. Tensions remain high between the House and Senate as well as between the legislature and the Governor. The Capitol remains open but with heavy restrictions and increased law enforcement. COVID -19 tests are available each week to those of us working in the Capitol, and we continue to remain healthy and safe while working to support your goals and plans.

As the session continues, the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) members continue working with departments and agencies on approval of budget requests. Other committees are also reviewing the policy implications, especially for the Governor's recommendations for [BUILDING IDAHOS FUTURE](#). The change in the process this year has resulted in legislative bills being heard earlier than normal, resulting in many policies being discussed much earlier in the session. This can be both beneficial and dangerous, depending on the issues at hand. It has also allowed freshmen legislators who are still learning the process, to engage and get bills introduced ahead of larger issues such as transportation funding, taxes, and more.

This session started with legislation aimed to limit the executive branch's power. Last week, the Governor held a press conference defending his actions in handling COVID-19 through Idaho's emergency and disaster declarations. This promoted the House and Senate to take another in-depth look at the current proposed legislation and resolutions. While this process continues, the conversations among leadership have intensified on these issues and others. Simultaneously, a house member has also drafted articles of impeachment, which will serve to increase tensions in the Capitol but likely not move forward. The focus on these issues has slowed the progress on other fronts and many other policy issues have not yet been introduced.

On Thursday, January 28, 2021, Governor Brad Little held another press conference. This time he announced the signing of an Executive Order to "speed up safe vaccine rollout and promote transparency in vaccine administration." The Governor's new executive order outlines the new requirements for the allocation of vaccinations in the state. The Governor's "Transparency in the Administration of the COVID-19 Vaccine" executive order is [AVAILABLE HERE](#).

While the atmosphere in the building continues to be contentious and non-traditional, legislators are working on policies and are finding ways to safely communicate and engage with us on your issues. We will continue to advance your priorities and work to prevent policies that would negatively impact you. In addition to the comments and tracking of bills we are focused on, all bills from the session can be tracked [HERE](#). We monitor this daily and will be on the lookout for anything that may be of relevance.



Policy Update

[SJR101](#) – Anti-legalization Constitutional Amendment – **Senate Floor Vote Next Week.**

Senator Grow presented SJR 101, a constitutional amendment that would stop Idaho from legalizing-controlled substances. This bill would add a code reference to the Idaho constitution. As Idaho Code is updated, the Idaho Constitution would refer to that section of the code.

[House Bill 33](#) –District Board of Health – **House Health and Welfare Committee**

House Bill 33 was introduced by House Health and Welfare. This bill would allow review and override of Public Health District Actions, Orders & Decisions by County Commissioners. The bill would also make public health violations an infraction for the first two offenses and a misdemeanor for a third offense, also includes specified fines.

[House Bill 34](#) - Health Ordinances, City Limits - **House Health and Welfare Committee**

House Bill 34 was introduced by the committee and was presented by Representative Brandon Mitchell (D5). This bill would remove authorization in Idaho code, Chapters 53-04 and 56-06 allowing city jurisdiction during public health emergency to 5 miles outside city limits to be compliant with Idaho Constitution Article 12, Section 2.

[House Bill 36](#) - Vital Statistics Records – **House Health and Welfare Committee**

House Bill 36 was introduced in House Health and Welfare by James Aydelotte, Bureau Vital Statistics. The Bill would Repeals a reporting requirement for artificial insemination that requires written husband and wife consent to be filed with the Bureau of Vital Statistics.

[House Bill 42](#) Idaho Patient Act – Medical Debt Collection Extension – **Passed by committee – House Floor**

The Idaho Patient Act was passed in 2020. It sets requirements for medical debt collection. The act requires hospitals and other medical providers to give advance notice to patients and meet strict timelines before pursuing medical debt collections. The act specified July 1, 2020, as a deadline for providers to have systems in place to meet the requirements of the law. Due to COVID-19 and difficulty adjusting electronic medical records, provider have been unable to meet the July 2020 deadline. This bill extends the deadline to July 1, 2021 and allows for collection activities to continue prior to July 1, 2021. All other provisions of the Act remain unchanged.

Rules

[HERE](#) are the rule dockets that were approved by the Senate Health and Welfare Committee. As a reminder, if the rules pass either the House or the Senate, they are set to go into effect. If the legislature fails to pass the “go home bill” that enacts the rules, the Governor will likely sign an executive order enacting all the rules as temporary for one year as he has the past few years.

- [41-0101-2000](#) Rules of Idaho Public Health District #1 - **Approved**



- 16-0000-2000F Department of Health & Welfare (Omnibus) – **Approved**
 - Allows for on-line training for staff of Certified Family Homes. Adds to list of prouder disqualifications for criminal offenses.
- 16-0307-2001 Home Health Agencies - **Approved**
 - Allows independent practitioners (NP's, CNS, PA's) in addition to physicians to order home health services.