



Idaho Legislative Update for November 15 – 19, 2021

This week the Idaho Legislature resumed the longest session in Idaho history with the continuation of the Sixty-Sixth Idaho Legislature's First Regular Session with Monday marking the 309th legislative day. Despite the Senate adjourning in late May, the Attorney General advised the Senate that they were still in session because the House of Representatives did not adjourn, but rather chose to recess. This process is something legislators have never done, beyond the traditional three days. Using a recess for an extended period has created a new normal that has led to a full-time year-round legislature in 2021. As a result of the Speaker of the House calling the House members back this week, all 105 legislators returned to the Capitol to continue the session in a legally ambiguous and unprecedented continuation of legislative session that ended abruptly Wednesday afternoon with both the House and Senate adjourning "Sine Die" on day 311.

Early Monday morning the House Ways and Means Committee voted unanimously to introduce 29 different bills mostly pertaining to vaccines, mandates, and federal overreach pertaining to the Covid -19 pandemic. The Senate State Affairs Committee also introduced 7 bills unanimously Monday morning. With 36 new pieces of legislation in hand, the halls of the Capitol this week were bustling. There has been very little compromise on these policies with many legislators having their version of a "fix" and numerous efforts to address the nuances of the issues facing vaccinations, businesses, employees, students, teachers, healthcare privacy and more.

Monday also brought the removal of all bills on the House Reading Calendars with the house returning bills left from May back to committee and ending their progress for the year. Similarly, the Senate majority leader noted they would not be taking up issues on their calendars other than those introduced this week.

After a fast paced three days that began early in the morning and lasted long into the night, and with a lot of discussion on many of the policies, ultimately the House and Senate passed [SJM105](#), a memorial sent to Congress and the Federal Delegation for Idaho noting the *"Idaho Legislature strongly opposes vaccine mandates for federal workers and contractors, as well as proposed requirements for large employers and health care employers to require vaccination and testing"*. All other bills introduced this week failed to make their way through the process. Some of the policy ideas discussed this week will return when the Legislature is back in seven weeks to begin again on January 10, 2022.

Also, this week, the House voted 49-19 to adopt the Ethics Committee report and recommendations against Rep. Pricilla Giddings (R- District 7) for "Conduct Unbecoming of a Legislator". Subsequently Rep. Giddings is formally censured and removed from her committee assignment in House Commerce and Human Resources.

With the end of the longest and most contentious legislative session in Idaho history now behind us, there is little time for us to prepare for January. As we continue to work to achieve goals and support policies that will enable you to be successful in Idaho, rest assured we remain committed to you and promise to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and diligence on your behalf. It should also be noted that all 105 legislators are working to serve their constituents and even if we disagree with them, there is always things we can find common ground on. This process is fascinating, challenging and often emotional but when we work together to achieve goals and better the lives of Idahoans, we can all win.