



Week One Idaho Legislative Update for January 6-January 10, 2025

The Governor has delivered the State of the State Address. Freshmen legislators have wrapped orientation activities. Budget analysts have drilled into the details of Idaho's expenses, spending priorities and revenue forecasts for the benefit of legislative budget writers. The halls of the Capitol are bustling with activity and the sound of dress shoes crackling across marble floors. And, this time of year, you'd be hard pressed to find a prettier site than the lit capitol dome silhouetted against the sun rising behind the Boise Foothills.

Yes, folks, the First Regular Session of the 68th Idaho Legislature is up and running, and we couldn't be more excited.

While the business of introducing bills and debating rules has gotten off to a slow start (very much typical for a first week), we've been busy. We've met with House and Senate leadership, spent time with committee chairmen and checked in with agency heads. We've been gathering intel on upcoming bills, gaging the priority differences between legislative leadership and the Governor's Office and tracking how it could impact your priorities.

We've also been getting to know the incoming class of freshmen, their interests and goals. At this point, it's safe to say they are still getting the lay of the land, but we can report they are professional, cordial if not a wee bit overwhelmed by everything going on around them. It's one thing to be told what to expect, but quite another to experience it in real time.

We summarized some of Gov. Little's *Keeping Promises* [address](#) and [Budget](#) package Monday. But a few specifics that emerged this week worth pointing out. The Governor is recommending \$10 million for Cybersecurity improvements, \$15 million for infrastructure to increase capacity for in-demand workforce programs and \$311 million for state and local transportation projects. He is also recommending \$30 million for essential water infrastructure and projects and \$100 million for wildfire management and \$5 million for early detection tools.

The Joint Finance Appropriations Committee got down to business on Tuesday, starting with FY26 spending and revenue presentations from executive and legislative branch analysts. At least one JFAC member wondered why the Governor isn't seeking four times as much in tax relief than he promoted in his SOS, which is to say that tax relief is very much on the table again this year. Over the next two weeks, JFAC will hold multiple hearings on budget recommendations from various executive offices and agencies. Next week marks the start of setting statewide budgets and maintenance budgets, a process we'll be keenly tracking. The interesting JFAC dynamic this year is the number of committee newcomers, all of whom are facing a complex and challenging learning curve.

So far, just a handful of bills have been introduced, meaning committees are still getting organized and familiar with each chairman's rules and approach to conducting business. The introduction of proposed legislation will gain momentum next week, as will the process of discussion and consideration of rules. Multiple committee chairs have already signaled that the majority of time the next two weeks will be devoted to rules. As for other committee housekeeping, keep in mind that Senate members have one (1) week to introduce personal bills while House members have an additional week for personal bills. Personal bills do not move through the normal process, are not granted committee hearings and are often just read and filed away. We don't update our reports with these bills except in the rare case it gains some traction.

All bills for the 2025 session can be found on the [Idaho State Legislative website](#). Interested in finding your legislator? Visit [HERE](#). Daily reading calendars and agendas are found [HERE](#). Finally, don't hesitate to reach out. It's the busy season and there's no time for any hurkle-durkle for the next several months.



Policies

This is where policies of interest will appear as introduced in the session.

Appropriations and Budgets

This is where appropriations and budgets of interest will appear as introduced in the session.

Rules

[HERE](#) is the link for the Index of all Pending Rules seeking legislative approval. Committees in both the House and Senate are assigned rules to approve. As a reminder, the rules docket needs to pass both the House and the Senate, they are set to go into effect but need to be enacted by legislation or executive order. Once a pending rule is approved, a (+) symbol will appear in front of the docket number. If a pending rule is not approved by the Legislature a (-) will appear in front of the docket number.

Department of Health and Welfare

[16-0309-2401](#) – Medicaid Basic Plan Benefits (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) – Proposed Rule