

ABILITY MONTANA

2025 Legislative Scorecard

Ability Montana is a Center for Independent Living. Our mission is to promote independence and advocate for people with disabilities. Guided by our values of empowerment, advocacy and community, we offer programs, resources and information across 14 counties in southwest Montana.



Ability Montana 2025 Legislative Session Scorecard

Our Legislative Summary

This legislative session, Ability Montana committed to showing up and speaking out on the issues that matter most to the disability community.

As one of four Centers for Independent Living in Montana, we work together to serve every part of the state through information, referral, and direct services. This session was particularly powerful because all four centers joined forces—attending hearings, meeting with lawmakers, and making sure the voices of the people we serve were heard.

We also built new relationships and deepened existing ones with other organizations advocating for aging and disability rights. Our allies this session included Disability Rights Montana, Big Sky 55+, AARP, the Area Agencies on Aging, Montana Association of the Blind, Family Outreach, and many others. Together, we formed a strong coalition committed to building a more inclusive Montana.

Ability Montana staff connected with legislators from across our 14-county region in Southwest Montana to talk about the importance of being able to live independently at home, in the community you love, with the services needed to support that choice. We also advocated for Medicaid Expansion, accessible voting, transportation presumptive Medicaid eligibility, Medicaid Buy-In for families of children with complex medical needs, and other key issues.

Throughout the session, we kept our community informed through email updates, the Montana Centers for Independent Living Action Alert System, and our Disability Voices: Get Involved podcast. We learned firsthand how critical it is to show up at the Capitol, raise your voice, and help others do the same.

You might have seen headlines and thought, “That’s not for me,” or “Will it even matter if I speak up?” If you’ve ever felt that way, we want you to know: your voice does matter. You are part of the change that makes Montana better for everyone, and we’re here to make it easier to stay informed and involved.

We’ll continue following the interim session closely and working with our incredible partners to keep showing up for the disability community. We’ll keep you in the loop as things develop. Want to get involved? Email us at disabilityvoices@abilitymt.org—we’d love to connect.

On the following pages, you’ll find our legislative scorecard. We hope it’s a useful resource. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Until next time—take up space and let your voice be heard.

Ability Montana 2025 Legislative Session Scorecard

Our Priority Bills

Key:  = favorable outcome  = disappointing outcome

HB 245: Revise the Montana HELP Act workforce development provisions and termination date; Rep. Ed Buttrey



Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Signed into law by Governor Gianforte

HB 245 removed the sunset on Montana's Medicaid Expansion Program. This makes Medicaid Expansion permanent in the state. It will allow 75,000 Montanans to keep their healthcare coverage, keeping our hard-working friends and neighbors healthy and able to work.

HB 341: Revise laws relating to brain injuries; Rep. Ed Buttrey



Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Signed into law by Governor Gianforte

HB 341 requires county treasurers to collect an automatic \$1 donation, unless the registrant chooses opt out, to support Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) education, prevention, recovery efforts, and the state's TBI advisory council. Funds are earmarked for public education on brain injury prevention and resources for those and their families affected by TBIs.

HB 395: Generally revise voting laws related to individuals of unsound mind;

Rep. Braxton Mitchell



Ability Montana Position: Oppose

Status: Passed the House; Died on Senate Floor

HB 395 would have restricted voting rights for people with mental health disabilities by classifying them as "unsound mind," changed the classification of the Montana State Hospital to a penal institution, and created new barriers to restoring voting rights after involuntary commitment.

HB 488: Allowing a disabled voter to electronically return a ballot;

Rep. Julie Darling



Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed the House; Died on Senate Floor

HB 488 proposed allowing disabled voters to securely and independently return their ballots electronically in federal elections via an encrypted system approved by the Secretary of State. This process was modeled after the system already in place for citizens living abroad and deployed military members, who are able to return their ballots electronically. This would have reduced barriers for people with disabilities to be able to participate fully in our elections.

HB 574: Authorizing implementation of the certified community behavioral health clinic model; Rep. Jane Gillette



Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Signed into law by Governor Gianforte

HB 574 directs the Department of Public Health and Human Services to establish and oversee clinics that meet the federal certified community behavioral health clinic model standards. These clinics will provide behavioral health services including crisis care, outpatient mental health and substance use treatment, and primary care coordination across the state.

HB 601: Create online portal for community assisters related to Medicaid;

Rep. SJ Howell



Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Signed into law by Governor Gianforte

HB 601 directs the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to create an online “Medicaid Community Assister Portal” by May 1, 2026. This platform will enable certified community assisters to help people apply for Medicaid and navigate eligibility, enrollment, renewals, and communications with the Office of Public Assistance. The goal was to streamline support services and improve access to Medicaid across the state, especially in rural areas.

HB 881: Revise Medicaid buy-in program to include children with disabilities;

Rep. Mary Caferro



Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Vetoed by Governor Gianforte

HB 881 would have expanded Montana’s existing Medicaid Buy-In program, which currently allows working adults with disabilities to pay a monthly premium to receive Medicaid coverage, to also include children under 19 with physical or developmental disabilities. In most cases, the family’s entire income is calculated during the eligibility process for children. This would have allowed the most vulnerable youth to have access to needed healthcare and services. This Medicaid option is available in 44 other states and has been available for 40 years.

SB 72: Provide presumptive eligibility for Medicaid coverage of home and community-based services; Sen. Mike Yakawich



Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Vetoed by Governor Gianforte; Veto override vote failed

SB 72 would have allowed individuals applying for home- and community-based services to receive presumptive Medicaid eligibility from supporting agencies, granting them immediate interim access to critical supports, such as in-home care, assisted living, or personal care, while their formal application with the Office of Public Assistance was under review. The supporting agencies would review eligibility criteria to ensure services were going to individuals that would qualify. It would have ensured that people stay in their homes and out of institutions while only waiting for paperwork to be processed.

SB 82: Establish adjustment to blindness program; Sen. Mike Yakawich

Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Signed into law by Governor Gianforte

SB 82 expands the Blind and Low Vision Services within the Department of Public Health and Human Services, to people under the age of 55. Blind and Low Vision Services are designed to help Montanans with severe visual impairments achieve independent-living goals. This program will support independence for those with low vision or blindness of all ages.



SB 300: Providing protection for service dogs and handlers;

Sen. Denley Loge

Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers; Signed into law by Governor Gianforte

SB300 enhanced legal protections for service dogs and their handlers by establishing new criminal offenses, including misdemeanor charges for harassing, harming, or unlawfully controlling a service animal, with penalties up to \$1,000 and restitution requirements for veterinary care, retraining, and lost wages. This bill will safe guard these essential working animals, ensuring the support for their handlers.



SJ 19: Joint resolution to study transportation; Sen. Andrea Olsen

Ability Montana Position: Support

Status: Passed both chambers

SJ19 called for an interim study on passenger transportation across Montana, directing the Legislative Council to convene a committee (or allocate staff) to explore improvements in public transit- including bus, rail, air travel. It emphasized addressing gaps impacting seniors, individuals with disabilities, and rural populations and requires findings and potential policy recommendations to be presented for the 70th Legislature by September 15, 2026. This resolution will lay the groundwork for future legislative action on improving transportation across the state.



Ability Montana 2025 Legislative Session Scorecard

Scorecard and Legislator Votes

Key: + = Supported our position **X** = Opposed our position **Blank** = Absent/Excused

* Rep. Ron Marshall resigned on 3/3, and was replaced by Rep. Terry Nelson on 3/10

^ All scores were recorded from the **third reading**, with the exception of the Senate Votes for HB 395 and HB 488, which both died during second reading on Senate floor.

 = Highlighted legislators represent the Ability Montana service area

Ability Montana 2025 Legislative Session Scorecard

House of Representatives

LEGISLATOR	HOUSE DISTRICT	COUNTY	PARTY	HB 245	HB 341	HB 395	HB 488	HB 574	HB 601	HB 881	SB 72	SB 82	SB 300	SJ 19	SCORE
John Fitzpatrick	HD 76	Deer Lodge	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	82%
Steve Fitzpatrick	HD 24	Cascade	R	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	45%
Mike Fox	HD 32	Blaine	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Tom France	HD 99	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	100%
Shelly Fyant	HD 91	Lake	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jane Gillette	HD 77	Gallatin	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	X	X	+	X	36%
Steve Gist	HD 25	Cascade	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	82%
Randyn Gregg	HD 78	Meagher	R	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	45%
Alanah Griffith	HD 60	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Donavon Hawk	HD 72	Silver Bow	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	100%
Caleb Hinkle	HD 68	Gallatin	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	X	X	+	X	27%
Jedediah Hinkle	HD 67	Gallatin	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	X	+	+	X	45%
SJ Howell	HD 100	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jamie Isaly	HD 58	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Llew Jones	HD 18	Pondera	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Denise Joy	HD 46	Yellowstone	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jonathan Karlen	HD 98	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Steven Kelly	HD 9	Flathead	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	+	X	+	X	45%
Connie Keogh	HD 92	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Shane Klakken	HD 37	Fergus	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	X	+	X	+	X	55%
Greg Kmetz	HD 36	Custer	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	X	+	+	X	45%
Kelly Kortum	HD 64	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Marc Lee	HD 74	Silver Bow	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Brandon Ler	HD 33	Richland	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	36%
Kathy Love	HD 85	Ravalli	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	X	X	+	X	36%
Jennifer Lynch	HD 73	Silver Bow	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	100%
Shannon Maness	HD 70	Beaverhead	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	X	X	X	+	X	45%

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Marilyn Marler	HD 94	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	100%
Ron Marshall*	HD 87	Ravalli	R	X	+		X								33%
Eric Matthews	HD 66	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Bill Mercer	HD 52	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	64%
Tom Millett	HD 2	Flathead	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	X	X	+	X	27%
Russ Miner	HD 26	Cascade	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	82%
Braxton Mitchell	HD 5	Flathead	R	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	55%
Valerie Moore	HD 29	Sheridan	R	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Luke Muszkiewicz	HD 79	Lewis and Clark	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Fiona Nave	HD 56	Stillwater	R	X	+	X	X	+	+		+	+		X	56%
Terry Nelson*	HD 87	Ravalli	R							X	+		+	X	50%
Anthony Nicastro	HD 50	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	+	X	+	+	X	64%
Nelly Nicol	HD 53	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X		+		+	56%
George Nikolakakos	HD 22	Cascade	R	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	91%
Melissa Nikolakakos	HD 20	Cascade	R	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Greg Oblander	HD 38	Yellowstone	R	+	+	X	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	73%
Greg Overstreet	HD 88	Ravalli	R	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	45%
Gary Parry	HD 35	Rosebud	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Debo Powers	HD 3	Flathead	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
James Reavis	HD 47	Yellowstone	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Amy Regier	HD 6	Flathead	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	+	X	+	X	45%
Linda Reksten	HD 13	Lake	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Melissa Romano	HD 80	Lewis and Clark	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Scott Rosenzweig	HD 57	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Tyson Running Wolf	HD 16	Glacier	D	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jerry Schillinger	HD 34	McCone	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	64%
Curtis Schomer	HD 48	Yellowstone	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	73%

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Lukas Schubert	HD 8	Flathead	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	64%
Joshua Seckinger	HD 62	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Kerri Seekins-Crowe	HD 39	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	73%
Tracy Sharp	HD 12	Lake	R	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	+	X	+	+	55%
Frank Smith	HD 31	Roosevelt	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jade Sooktis	HD 41	Rosebud	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Courtenay Sprunger	HD 7	Flathead	R	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	55%
Ed Stafman	HD 59	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Peter Strand	HD 63	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Katie Sullivan	HD 93	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Mark Thane	HD 89	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Morgan Thiel	HD 30	Richland	R	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	45%
Eric Tilleman	HD 23	Cascade	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	82%
Paul Tuss	HD 27	Hill	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Mike Vinton	HD 40	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	+	X	+	+	X	64%
Ken Walsh	HD 69	Madison	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Jane Weber	HD 19	Cascade	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Zack Wirth	HD 17	Lewis and Clark	R	X	+	X	+	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	45%
Zooey Zephyr	HD 95	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Katie Zolnikov	HD 44	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	+	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	64%

Ability Montana 2025 Legislative Session Scorecard

Senate

LEGISLATOR	SENATE DISTRICT	COUNTY	PARTY	HB 245	HB 341	HB 395^	HB 488^	HB 574	HB 601	HB 881	SB 72	SB 82	SB 300	SJ 19	SCORE
Becky Beard	SD 38	Powell	R	X	+	+	X	X	X	X	+	X	+	+	45%
Kenneth Bogner	SD 18	Custer	R	X	X	+	X	+	X	X	+	+	X	X	36%
Ellie Boldman	SD 47	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Mike Cuffe	SD 1	Lincoln	R	+	+	X	X	+	+	X	+	+	+	X	64%
Willis Curdy	SD 49	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Mary Ann Dunwell	SD 42	Lewis and Clark	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Janet Ellis	SD 41	Lewis and Clark	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jason Ellsworth	SD 43	Ravalli	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Daniel Emrich	SD 11	Cascade	R	X	X	X	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	36%
John Esp	SD 29	Sweet Grass	R	X	+	+		+	X	X	X	X	X	X	30%
Dave Fern	SD 2	Flathead	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Pat Flowers	SD 31	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
John Fuller	SD 4	Flathead	R	X	X	X	X	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	27%
Wylie Galt	SD 39	Meagher	R	X	X	+	X	+	X	X	X	+	+	+	45%
Bruce "Butch" Gillespie	SD 9	Toole	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Carl Glimm	SD 3	Flathead	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	X	X	+	X	27%
Derek Harvey	SD 37	Silver Bow	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Denise Hayman	SD 32	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Greg Hertz	SD 7	Lake	R	+	+	X	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	55%
Gregg Hunter	SD 15	Valley	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Josh Kassmier	SD 13	Chouteau	R	+	+	+	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Emma Kerr-Carpenter	SD 23	Yellowstone	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Gayle Lammers	SD 21	Big Horn	R	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Dennis Lenz	SD 25	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	+	+	+	+	X	55%
Denley Loge	SD 45	Mineral	R	+	+	X	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	82%
Forrest Mandeville	SD 28	Stillwater	R	X	+	+	X	X	X	X	+	X	+	X	36%
Theresa Manzella	SD 44	Ravalli	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	+	X	+	X	36%
Tom McGillvray	SD 26	Yellowstone	R	X	X	+	X	+	X	X	+	X	+	X	36%

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LEGISLATOR	SENATE DISTRICT	COUNTY	PARTY	HB 245	HB 341	HB 395^	HB 488^	HB 574	HB 601	HB 881	SB 72	SB 82	SB 300	SJ 19	SCORE
Wendy McKamey	SD 12	Cascade	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+		X	80%
Jacinda Morigeau	SD 46	Lake	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Shane Morigeau	SD 50	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Cora Neumann	SD 30	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Mark Noland	SD 6	Flathead	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	45%
Sara Novak	SD 36	Deer Lodge	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Andrea Olsen	SD 48	Missoula	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Bob Phalen	SD 17	Dawson	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	45%
Christopher Pope	SD 33	Gallatin	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Matt Regier	SD 5	Flathead	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	45%
Vince Ricci	SD 27	Yellowstone	R	X	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	X	73%
Laura Smith	SD 40	Lewis and Clark	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Russ Tempel	SD 14	Liberty	R	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Tony Tezak	SD 35	Madison	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	+	55%
Jeremy Trebas	SD 10	Cascade	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	X	+	+	X	36%
Barry Usher	SD 19	Yellowstone	R	X	+	X	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	45%
Shelley Vance	SD 34	Gallatin	R	+	+	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Sue Vinton	SD 20	Yellowstone	R	X	+	+	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	55%
Susan Webber	SD 8	Glacier	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jonathan Windy Boy	SD 16	Hill	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Mike Yakawich	SD 24	Yellowstone	R	+	+	X	X	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	82%
Daniel Zolnikov	SD 22	Yellowstone	R	X	X	+	X	+	X	X	+	+	+	X	45%

