

## **WEEK THREE OF THE LEGISLATURE**

February 26, 2010, Lynn Birleffi

**Your help is needed on Senate File 61, Health Insurance Reform**  
**Call or email your legislators by Monday afternoon and encourage them to support this pilot project that will help all employers.** *Citizens can contact their legislators by email, telephone or in person at <http://legisweb.state.wy.us>.*

The proposal would establish a small pilot project to demonstrate how to reduce health care costs by emphasizing preventive care and accountability. People in the pilot would pay part of the costs of their insurance and therefore have a stake in the program. *Referred to House Appropriations and then will go to the floor of the House on Monday.*

Some talking points are:

### **SF 61 promotes Work over Welfare**

The bill rewards hard work and transitions workforce members to long term productive workers. Persons who transition to work rather than relying on welfare mean millions of dollars in savings to the government and increased productivity for business.

### **SF 61 promotes Personal Responsibility**

The program is designed to place responsibility for health on the individual. If it does work, it will demonstrate that long term behavior patterns can be changed and therefore improve not only the individual but also the workforce that business depends on.

### **SF 61 promotes personal contributions to ones health care coverage**

Business is opposed to a "public option" or government run healthcare program designed to drive citizens to its ranks. This program promotes fiscal responsibility for governments and individuals. Long term this should mean significant cost savings for business and government.

## **BUDGET ISSUES**

**The budget bill has passed both the House and Senate and unresolved issues are now in a conference committee. The issues below were approved by both Houses, however, and should not be subjects for the committee except for the liquor warehouse.**

### ***Support the Governor's and the Joint Appropriations Committee Recommendations for the Wyoming Travel and Tourism budget.***

Both the WTT budget and the proposed new visitor center in Southeast Wyoming was approved by both the Governor and the JAC and passed the House and Senate! Tourism is an export industry and generates new money brought into the state. □ In addition, a successful lobbying effort from attendees at the Governors Hospitality and Tourism Conference resulted in an additional \$261,000 for the biennium for the Cowboy Marketing Program, a marketing and promotional

opportunity centered around Wyoming's professional rodeo athletes. The program puts a tangible face and a voice to the image and lure of the American cowboy. Good work everyone!

***Support the Governors Recommendation for the Wildlife Trust Fund. The budget proposal to administer the fund is the same as last biennium less the 10% reduction made July 1.***

Your association supported the Wildlife Trust Fund in legislative committees and supported successful efforts to resist further cuts to their budget. Thanks!

***Support the Workforce Development Training Fund-Dept. of Workforce Services.*** This budget was approved by both the House and Senate.

***Support the Governors and the JAC Recommendation for the Business Ready Communities/Community Facilities Program.*** This budget was approved by the House and the Senate.

#### **Liquor Warehouse Amendment Goes to Conference Committee**

The House deleted the Nicholas amendment and returned funding to the system suggested by the Governor and the Senate deleted the new liquor warehouse altogether!

#### **UPDATE ON ISSUES**

**House Bill 15, Electrical safety and fire prevention, revisions** - Sponsored by the Joint Corporations Committee, regulation provisions for additional authority for the state of Wyoming. *Referred to Senate Appropriations.*

**House Bill 29, Taxation of Digital Products** - Sponsored by the Revenue Committee, directed towards expanding the tax base and taxing the new world of digital products. *Placed on Senate floor.*

**House Bill 30, Authority of Department of Transportation** - Sponsored by the Transportation Committee, provides additional authority to purchase right of ways for safety. *Failed House introduction.*

**House Bill 40, Tax Increment Financing** - Sponsored by the Revenue Committee. *Failed in House Revenue Committee by a 4-5 vote.*

**\*\*House Bill 44, Economic Development Property Tax Reduction** - Sponsored by Rep. Illoway, a recent decision by the Wyoming Board of Equalization is forcing county assessors to assess economic development property as if it was ready to be sold tomorrow. Legislation allows commercial land only without improvements to be taxed. *Received for Senate introduction.*

**\*\*House Bill 49, Manufacturing Sales and Use Tax Exemption** - Sponsored Rep. Madden, extending sales and use tax exemption for manufacturing

equipment and repealing outdated provisions. *Passed Senate second reading.*

**House Bill 54, Creating the Wyoming Food Freedom Act** - Sponsored by Rep. Wallis – Died in the Senate Agriculture Committee.

The bill exempted certain sales from licensure, certification and inspection if they were to be sold from the seller directly to customers in venues such as farmers markets, school events and youth clubs. It destroyed the food licensing system and made it difficult to track food borne illness outbreaks. Also created some questionable unfair competition with commercial businesses. *Died in Senate Agriculture Committee.*

**House Bill 71, Workers Compensation Appeals**, Sponsored by Rep. Dan Zwonitzer, provides for direct appeal of worker's compensation small claims and contested case decisions to the supreme court. *Introduced and referred to Senate Judiciary.*

**House Bill 113, Concealed Weapon Authority** - Sponsored by Rep. Quarberg, allows concealed weapons to be carried without permits. Continues lack of restrictions and guns can be legally taken into retail stores, restaurants but not bars. *Not considered in Senate Judiciary Committee.*

**House Bill 108, Health Insurance Reform**-Sponsored by Rep. Simpson, creating the Wyoming Affordable HSA Eligible High Deductible Health Plan Act; providing a limited insurance premium tax waiver as specified; prescribing duties of the insurance commissioner; providing exceptions to the Unfair Trade Practices Act. *Laid back bill by Senate Labor Committee.*

**House Bill 128, Health Insurance, Interstate Purchase**-Sponsored by Rep. Simpson, authorizing the sale in Wyoming of health insurance by out-of-state insurers as specified; providing for more limited regulation of policies; providing for oversight by the insurance commissioner; providing for cooperation by the insurance commissioner with other states with consistent insurance laws to allow multi-state sales without duplicate regulation; specifying legislative intent to pursue a multi-state consortium to enter into reciprocal agreements to reduce health insurance costs through removal of duplicative regulation; prescribing required disclaimers; granting rulemaking authority. *Place on Senate floor.*

**Senate File 13, Economic Analysis** - Sponsored by the Agriculture Committee, providing for collecting, compiling, analyzing and distributing county economic data; providing for establishment of uniform data criteria; and providing for an effective date. *Referred to House Appropriations Committee.*

**Senate File 16, Providing for review of a property tax assessment** - Sponsored by the Revenue Committee, provides procedures for review of a property tax assessment. *Passed House second reading.*

**Senate File 18, Limited liability companies, revisions** - Sponsored by the Corporations Committee, updating and modifying statutes to comply with the revised uniform limited liability company act in part and with exceptions and changes. *Placed on House floor.*

**Senate File 21, Sales and Use Tax Exemption** - Sponsored by the Mines and Minerals Committee, to apply to oxy-combustion and advanced coal facilities. *Did not consider for introduction vote.*

**\*\*Senate File 23, Unemployment Compensation Amendments** - Sponsored by the Labor Committee, makes a number of changes to the Unemployment Compensation statutes, including bringing the state into federal compliance and several other changes affecting employers. *Placed on House floor.*

**Senate File 25, Liens** - Sponsored by the Judiciary Committee, reorganizing lien statutes as specified; generally amending and clarifying the process for filing liens; specifying time limits for filing forms; amending substantive rights under lien provisions; conforming statutes; authorizing attorney fees and costs as specified. *Introduced and referred to House Judiciary Committee.*

**\*\*Senate File 27, Government competition** - Sponsored by Sen. Case, an act relating to administration of government; providing a process for lodging concerns with and for review of competition by government entities with the private sector; requiring a report to the legislature; providing a sunset date; and providing for an effective date. *Placed on House floor.*

**Senate File 35, Tolling authority for I-80** - Sponsored by the Joint Transportation Committee, calls for a study of imposing tolls on Interstate 80 by the Wyoming Dept. of Transportation. *Did not pass House Transportation Committee.*

**Senate File 67, Pharmacy Benefit Manager** - Sponsored by Sen. Ross, regulation of pharmacy benefit managers and requiring annual registration with the insurance commission. *Died in House Corporations Committee*

**Senate File 77, Career and Technical Training Grants** - Sponsored by Sen. Hastert, establishes a career and technical training scholarship program in the department of workforce services. *Failed Senate introduction.*

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*The Wyoming Legislature holds its budget session for four weeks, from February 8 through March 5. Non-budget bills can only be introduced with a 2/3 vote of either the House or Senate during the first week. No more new bills can be introduced. Citizens can contact their legislators before and during the session by email, telephone or in person at <http://legisweb.state.wy.us>*