

State Capitol Update – This week’s votes “Under the Dome”

Written by Jennifer Shilling, State Senator 32nd District

Friday, 15 May 2015 15:32 - Last Updated Friday, 15 May 2015 16:35



MADISON - This update is provided to help keep citizens informed about important decisions happening at the State Capitol and to stay updated on how elected officials are voting on key issues in Madison. Here are the key votes for the week of May 11-15, 2015.

Joint Finance Committee votes - May 12th and 14th

The Joint Finance Committee met on May 12 and 14 to continue voting on provisions of Governor Walker’s proposed 2015-17 State Budget. For a list of JFC committee members, [click here](#)

Student Loan Debt Refinancing (Motion #250 i.e. Higher Ed, Lower Debt)

Summary: This motion would have created the Wisconsin Student Loan Refinancing Authority and allowed Wisconsin residents to refinance student loans the same way home and auto loans can be refinanced.

How they voted: This motion was rejected by the Republican majority on a 12-4 party-line vote.

Financial Aid for Technical College Students (Motion #268)

Summary: To address the current waiting list of 37,000 technical college students who are waiting for financial aid, this motion would have fully funded the financial aid appropriation for Wisconsin’s technical college students.

How they voted: This motion was rejected by the Republican majority on a 12-4 party-line vote.

Funding for Domestic Abuse Services ([Paper #204](#))

Summary: The Governor’s budget provided \$5 million in additional funding to enhance services for victims of domestic abuse and their families.

How they voted: The committee approved the funding increase on a bipartisan 16-0 vote.

Mental Health Crisis Funding for Law Enforcement Agencies (Motion #288)

Summary: This motion would have provided \$250,000 for law enforcement agencies that respond to a high number of mental health crisis situations.

How they voted: This motion was rejected by the Republican majority on a 12-4 party-line vote.

Community-Based Services for Victims of Sex Trafficking ([Paper #205](#))

Summary: The Governor’s budget included \$2 million to provide residential and community-based services for children who are victims of sex trafficking. Services would be available to children in all geographic areas of the state, including both urban and rural communities.

How they voted: The committee approved the funding increase on a bipartisan 16-0 vote.

Audit of Dept. of Administration Information Technology (IT) Contracts (Motion #325)

Summary: This motion would have required the non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau to conduct a comprehensive audit of all IT contracts and activities overseen by the state Department of Administration. In the current budget alone, the Department is authorized to spend \$349 million on IT-related activities.

How they voted: This motion was rejected by the Republican majority on a 12-4 party-line vote.

Mental Health Crisis Services Grants ([Paper #376](#))

Summary: Gov. Walker’s budget included a number of changes regarding emergency detention procedures for individuals with mental illness, drug dependency and developmental disabilities, as well as \$1.5 million in one-time funding for mental health crisis services.

How they voted: On a bipartisan 16-0 vote, the committee approved the mental health crisis services funding but rejected the Governor’s proposed emergency detention changes.

State Assembly floor votes - May 13th

The State Assembly was in session on Wednesday, May 13.

Increase maximum speed limit to 70 MPH ([AB 27](#))

Summary: This bill will increase the maximum speed limit on certain Wisconsin freeways to 70 miles per hour.

How they voted: On a voice vote, the Assembly approved an amendment that had been adopted by the State Senate. The bill now heads to Gov. Walker.

Syttende Mai Resolution ([SJR 9](#))

Summary: This resolution would proclaim May 15, 16, and 17 2015 as Syttende Mai Weekend in Wisconsin.

How they voted: The Assembly approved this resolution on a voice vote.

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BadgerCare Expansion ([AB 101](#))

Summary: This bill would expand access to the state’s successful BadgerCare health care program and would capture federal funding to reduce costs for state taxpayers.

How they voted: The Republican majority blocked action on this bill on a party-line [vote of 62-33](#) .

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This State Capitol Update is provided by Senator Jennifer Shilling, the Minority Leader in the Wisconsin State Senate. For additional information on legislative or committee action, please email Sen.Shilling@legis.wi.gov or call 608-266-5490.