

**BUSINESS REPORT**

**MONTANA SENATE  
64th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

**SENATE EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Date:** Monday, January 19, 2015  
**Place:** Capitol

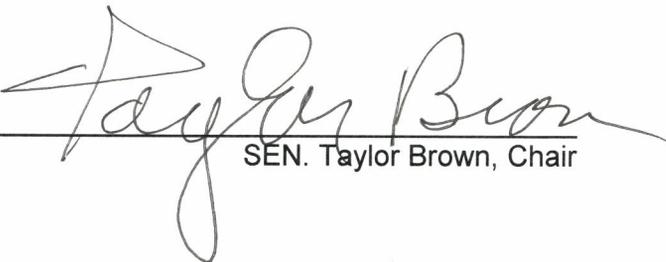
**Time:** 3:00 PM  
**Room:** 422

**BILLS and RESOLUTIONS HEARD:**

SB 107 - Revise K-12 school district expansion laws - Sen. Taylor Brown

**EXECUTIVE ACTION TAKEN:**

**Comments:**

  
SEN. Taylor Brown, Chair



**MONTANA STATE SENATE**  
**Visitors Register**  
**SENATE EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Monday, January 19, 2015

SB 107 - Revise K-12 school district expansion laws

Sponsor: Sen. Taylor Brown

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Name	Representing	Support	Oppose	Info
JOE BORGSTROM	LOCKWOOD	X		
GORDON KLASNA	Lockwood	X		
Jesse Swanke	lockwood	X		
Kane Hickes	Lockwood	X		
RYSON HICKES	LOCKWOOD	X		
Tim Sathen	Lockwood	X		
Tobin Novasio	Lockwood	X		
NOUG REISIG	HELLGATE ELEMENTARY	X		
Kit Johnson	EAST Helena	X		
Nikita Pratt	EAST Helena	X		
Amy Marie Thompson	" "	X		
Jon Read	lockwood	X		
Ron Whitworne	East Helena	X		
DAVE PUYERL	MRTA	X		
Melanie Charlson	MEA-MFT		X	
Karen Goldsberry	East Helena	X		
Glenn Goldsberry	East Helena	X		
JT Lingenfelter	East Helena	X		
MARK DIEHL	EAST HELENA	X		
Sarah Diehl	East Helena	X		
Leo Hudetz	Billings PS		X	
Patricia Hubbard	Billings PS		X	

Please leave prepared testimony with Secretary. Witness Statement forms are available if you care to submit written testimony.

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**SB 107** - Revise K-12 school district expansion laws

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Name	Representing	Support	Oppose	Info
Terry Bouck	Billings Public Schools		X	
CONRAD SIROBE	INDIVIDUAL	X		
Dallon Short	East Helena	X		
Valerie Short	East Helena	X		
Kate Walker	Hellgate E. Msla	X		
Tom McLaughlin	Hellgate E MSLA	X		
Patti Thompson	Self	X		
Heather Inland	East Helena	X		
Jim Harris	Helena SD #1		X	
Kert Kultgen	Helena SD #1		X	
Hatton Littman	Missoula SD #1			X
Natalie Jaeger	Missoula SD #1			X
Noreen Anderson	Hellgate Dem-Msla	X		
John "Jack" BABAU	HELLGATE ELEM-MSLA	X		
Dana Schatz	Hellgate Elem Msla	X		
Jeff Covee	HEA Helena		X	
Scott McElroy	Billings Education Assoc		X	
Michelle Lingenfelter	East Helena SD.	X		
Jane Shoun	Helena SD #1		X	
Joe Cohen	Self	X		
Raige Belstad	Helena SD #1		X	
Scotty Tilton	Helena SD #1		X	

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Name	Representing	Support	Oppose	Info
RON STROMANN	myself	✓		
Amy R. Apostle	Missoula County Public Schools		✓	
Pat McHugh	Missoula County Public Schools			X
Taylor Blossom	Helena School District 1		X	
Carleen Hathaway	Missoula County Public Schools		X	
Billi Steber	E Helena	✗		
Dawn Anderson	E Helena	✓		
Diane Beck	Nellgate Elem	✓		
JAMES SCHELL	CITY OF EAST HELENA	✓		
SCOTT WALTER	EAST HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	X		
Chris Herfoel	EAST HELENA TAXPAYER		X	
Marcia Holland	MCPS Missoula		X	
Take West	Helena School Dist.		X	
Sue Vinton	Lockwood	✓		
Allen Cormany	self - Helena	<del>✓</del>	<del>✗</del>	
Bob Riehl	Lockwood	X		
KD Jones	E. Helena	✓		
Dan Rispens	E Helena	✓		
Dianne Purcell	Helena		X	
Aaron Rudio	D.A. Davidson			X
Greg Upham	Helena Middle Schools		✓	
Keri Upham	Helena High		X	

Please leave prepared testimony with Secretary. Witness Statement forms are available if you care to submit written testimony.

**MONTANA STATE SENATE  
Visitors Register**

Education & Cultural Resources Committee

Date 1/19

Bill No. 107 Sponsor(s) T Brown

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Name and Address	Representing	Support	Oppose	Inf.
Shawn Green Lockwood	Lockwood	X		
Karry Hauck 1310	LeGrande Cannon Four Georgians		✓	
Courtney Hauck 1310 LeGrande			✓	
CHAD HANSON	LOCKWOOD	✓		
Doug Shenke	self		✓	
Joshyn Davidson	Helena Public Sch		✓	
Barbara Rullquist	self		✓	
Tephanie Thennis	Helena Pub Sch.		✓	
Keri E Bokovoy	East Helena #9	X		
Pat Boles	HPS		X	
Marcia Ellenmeyer	EHPS	X		
Joe Nye	East Helena	X		
<del>Ethan Holmes</del>	<del>Helena</del>		<del>X</del>	
Brandon Uhl East Helena	East Helena	X		
Jessica Buboltz	Self/MCPS		X	
Michael J. Fasbender	Self	X		
Alex Fasbender	Self	X		
Ayden Fasbender	Self	X		
Margaret Bentwood	self		✓	
Summer Diegel	self/CHS		X	

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Date 1/19/

Bill No. 107 Sponsor(s) T BROWN

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Name and Address	Representing	Support	Oppose	Inf.
STEVE THOMPSON 512 1/2 W. Mr. CLANCY	HHS		X	
Jill Putnam 414 So. Dulles	Helena Put self		X	
Heather Bode 305 W. Custer	self		X	
Madison McLaughlin	HHS		X	
BILL RASOR	SELF		X	
Rhannon Lindsay	EHP&SELF	X		
Aura Feist	SELF	X		
MARTIN BAUKAR	SELF	X		
Dan Semners	Dorsey & Whitely Ltd			X
Bob Story	MOA Tax		X	
DARRELL JAMES	Self		X	
Paul Taylor	OPT			X

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Chairman Brown, Vice Chair Jones and members of the committee. Thank you Senator Brown for sponsoring this bill.

This is a community driven bill intended to allow East Helena to be given the choice on whether to expand its current K-8 school district into K-12. Today I'd like to talk to you about population issues and ideal school size, which are just some of the many good reasons why this bill should pass.

First some information about population - Helena High School currently has a little over 1,600 students. Approximately 500 of those students are from East Helena, and they make the long commute into Helena each day to attend Helena High School.

Much of the area growth during the last several decades has been happening on the East and Southeast side of Lewis and Clark County outside of the Helena city limits. Data from the 2009 U.S. Census shows that growth in East Helena has averaged 30% per decade over the last twenty years, which is more than double that of Helena. Assuming this trend continues, the East Helena school district will have more than 800 high school grade students by year 2030.

Also, there are many new subdivisions currently under development on the east side that are impacting East Helena student populations now. One example is Mountain View Meadows out on Hwy 12 east. Although it is located in the Helena city limits, it's actually part of the East Helena School District. They are scheduled to build 1,800 homes in this housing development. The Long Term Infrastructure Committee from our school board recently completed a census in East Helena that showed we have an average of approximately .40 students per household. This means that when this subdivision is complete sometime in the next 5 – 10 years, there could be more than 750 additional students in the East Helena School District from this one subdivision alone, and approx. 25% of these students, or around 200 would be high school grades. This is in addition to the growth predicted from US Census data.

Helena High School is already overcrowded with little or no room to expand, and there is realistically no way that they could support this additional number of students. We need to have a high school located in the community where the students live and where the growth is happening! This bill helps solve the problems for the both the East Helena and Helena School Districts.

**Population Summary of Average Decade and Average Annual Percentage Changes**

Geographic Area	99-Year Average % Change per decade 1890 - 2009	49-Year Average % Change per decade 1960 - 2009	% Change July 1, 1990- July 1, 1999	Average annual % change 1990-1999	% Change July 1, 2000- July 1, 2009	Average annual % change 2000-2009
Montana	19.26%	8.79%	7.90%	0.11%	8.10%	0.01%
Lewis and Clark County	13.29%	16.80%	10.90%	1.44%	11.20%	1.15%
Helena city	7.21%	8.70%	13.60%	0.17%	16.10%	1.43%
East Helena town	9.79%	10.32%	28.70%	0.36%	30.00%	2.98%
Unincorp. L & C Co	19.88%	35.74%	7.20%	0.34%	5.60%	0.17%

Source: Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233

I'd now like to talk about optimal school size - based on studies and data from the U.S. Department of Education, there is a large body of evidence to suggest that smaller schools may have advantages over large schools. Many experts believe that the ideal number is 600 – 900 students, which would be the approximate size of a high school in East Helena. (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hs/schoolsize.html>).

Current research findings include:

1. Large high schools, particularly those serving low-income students, have disproportionately lower achievement and higher incidences of violence than smaller schools serving similar student populations.
2. In small schools, students tend to be more satisfied, more academically productive, more likely to participate in school activities, better behaved, and less likely to drop out than students in large schools.
3. The size of high schools may have an indirect effect on student learning. Essentially, more moderately sized schools, i.e. those with 900 or fewer students likely improve the climate and conditions for student success. Also, teachers tend to feel more connected and effective in a smaller school setting.

4. Smaller schools also may be safer because students feel less alienated, more nurtured and more connected to caring adults, and teachers feel that they have more opportunity to get to know and support their students.

5. While small schools might have a slightly higher cost per pupil than large schools, they actually have a **lower cost per graduate** since they tend to have lower dropout rates. Also, the higher percentage of dropouts from large schools carries additional societal costs.

(<http://www.ruraledu.org/site/c.beJMIZOCirH/b.1389103/apps/s/content.asp?ct=1166347>).

**In summary** – this bill embraces the recommendations of our School Board and our community. It promotes the option and **choice** for local voters to provide a quality education for our high school students located in our own community. We need to have schools located where the student population is based, and where most of the growth is happening. I respectfully urge your support and ask that you vote to pass this important bill.

AUTHOR  
UNKNOWN