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## 2024 Legislative Session Overview

Following the contentious approval of a transportation budget on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Idaho lawmakers took a recess until Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, aiming to address any potential late-session vetoes from Governor Brad Little. The Idaho Senate concluded its session for the year just before 2:45 p.m. on April 10<sup>th</sup>, with the Idaho House of Representatives adjourning a few minutes later, at 2:49 p.m.

Little permitted two of the most contentious bills from the late session to pass into law just prior to the adjournment of both bodies. He signed [House Bill 710](#), mandating libraries to relocate materials deemed harmful to minors upon request or risk legal action. Additionally, Little let [HB 770](#), concerning the transportation services budget and the revocation of the state's authority to proceed with the \$51 million sale of the former Boise headquarters of the Idaho Transportation Department on State Street, become [law without his signature](#). Furthermore, [HB 726](#), a corresponding budget bill for the Department of Administration, also became law without Little's signature.

During the week-long recess, Governor Little exercised his veto power on two bills: [Senate Bill 1323](#) concerning the jurisdiction of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission, and [SB 1314](#) granting the State Treasurer authority to retain a portion of state funds in physical gold and silver. The Idaho Senate attempted to override Little's veto of SB 1323 but failed to garner the required 23 votes.

The Legislature missed their adjournment target twice due to internal conflicts and undisclosed debates, significantly delaying legislative proceedings originally slated to conclude on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The House of Representative's [unprecedented removal of former House Majority Leader Megan Blanksma](#) (replaced by new Majority Leader Jason Monks) as well as [contentious budget talks](#) pushed progress back by over two weeks. The legislature advancing well into April in a primary year is unusual, consistent with the overall temperament of this year's session.

Bill introductions surpassed the last five years with a whopping 979 pieces of legislation prepared, up 118 bills drafted from just the year previous. Ultimately, in 2024 there were 636 bills and 82 resolutions/memorials/proclamations introduced, 37 of those were adopted. Of the introduced bills, 332 were passed, 328 of those were signed by the Governor, two were vetoed, and two became law without signature.

As we predicted, much of the focus this session was geared at social issues. We refer to election years as "litmus test" years. In a Republican dominated state, election year sessions are often used to campaign as a way of demonstrating one's allegiance to the purity of the party platform. We entered the session knowing that materials harmful to minors, gender affirming care, open carry, immigration, mandatory minimum sentencing, access to healthcare for women, and Medicaid would be center stage. We saw a litany of accompanying legislation but the largest target this year was without a doubt the Medicaid program, even though polling of Republican voters shows strong support for the program.

### Medicaid

Proposals that threatened Medicaid seemed to pop up nearly weekly as the conversation centered around cost containment, expansion repeal, and the potential to move to managed care. While surprisingly a bill on managed care was never introduced, we anticipate it to be a prevalent topic over the interim and in 2025.

There were a few bright spots for the program, in addition to the legislature funding Medicaid by a wider margin than in years past, there were two positive pieces of legislation impacting Idaho, one extending post-partum coverage and one that created a stabilization fund for the program. Below are some of the proposals the legislature has under its consideration.

[HB 398](#) – Legislative Approval for Medicaid SPAs – (this legislation is still under legal review and could require a special session to address its impacts)

[HB 419](#) – Medicaid Repeal

[HB 577](#) – State Directed Payments from Medicaid for Behavioral Health Hospitals

[HB 633](#) – Postpartum coverage extension

[HB 685](#) – Medicaid Budget Stabilization Fund

[HB 750](#) – Trailer to HB 633

[SB 1355](#) – Medicaid Legislative Review Panel

[SB 1456](#) – SFY 24 and 25 Medicaid Budget

### Bills of Note that Passed

[HB 389](#) – Provides property tax relief and limits the ability of local taxing districts to increase budgets

[HB 399](#) – Authorizes the Board of Medicine to collect and report data on maternal mortality rates

[HB 406](#) – Creates a mandatory minimum sentence for fentanyl trafficking

[HB 421](#) – Defines "sex" and "gender" as the same by definition in state statute

[HB 521](#) – Dedicates \$125M to the School Modernization Facilities Fund, increases School District Facility Fund, reduces income taxes by 0.105%

[HB 538](#) – Prohibits government entities in Idaho from compelling public employees to communicate preferred pronouns

[HB 585](#) – Creates provisions around crypto mining and prevents central bank digital currencies

[HB 596](#) – Increases regulation and oversight of Pharmacy Benefit Managers

[HB 599](#) – Prohibits "ballot harvesting"

[HB 617](#) – Removes the Syringe and Needle Exchange Act

[HB 633](#) – Provides Medicaid coverage for pregnant women up to 12 months postpartum

[HB 685](#) – Creates the Medicaid Budget Stabilization Fund

[HB 710](#) – Prohibits certain materials from being accessible to minors in public and school libraries

[HB 722](#) – Appropriation for the Workforce Development Council to continue funding Idaho LAUNCH

[HB 770](#) – Idaho Transportation Department appropriation; also revokes the sale of ITD's Boise headquarters

### Bills of Note that Did Not Pass

[HB 753](#) – Prohibits illegal entry into the state, creating criminal offenses for violators

[HJR 4](#) – Provides that in all partisan primary and general elections, there would be one round of voting; would block Ranked-Choice Voting

[SB 1296](#) – Establishes Distributed Ledger Technology Act

[SB 1416](#) – Transfers the Emergency Medical Services Bureau from the Department of Health and Welfare to the Office of Emergency Management

[SB 1445](#) – Department of Health and Welfare enhancement budget: appropriation for summer EBT program, childcare subsidies, and additional 2% CEC

### More to Note

This year, two high-controversy topics among the Legislature went untouched: despite multiple being introduced, no school choice bills passed, and no abortion bills regarding the health of the mother were properly introduced.

### Coming Up

The primary election will take place May 21<sup>st</sup>. We are eager to see how this election plays out.

As always, we are immensely appreciative for the opportunity to represent you in Idaho. We look forward to working with you over the interim and strategizing for a successful 2025 session.