



# Member assists proving helpful in the Capitol

Session is on a roll. Bill hearings are in full force, substantive legislation is being debated on the floor, and the halls are full of protesters and children. This

## Legislative Update

week was mostly taken up by the lobbying team touching base with friendly legislators in the House on medical malpractice caps and the insurance reservation of rights bill.

### Insurance

The lobbying team and MATA Links program's efforts to get out the word about the insurance bill seems to have paid off. Republicans who have never voted with us are expressing reservations about the bill, and some have committed to vote against it. After a bill has been heard in committee and before it can be debated on the House floor it has to be vetted by the Rules Committee. Generally, the Rules Committee is a rubber stamp for whatever the issue committee decided. We were able to get enough votes in committee that we could vote down the House bill, HB 1344. Unfortunately, word got out that there were not enough votes to send it to the floor, and the Chair of the committee decided not to hold the vote.

### Medical Malpractice and Healthcare

The Senate med mal bill, SB 589, was voted out of committee this week. The bill was combined with the insurance bill, the contingency fee bill, and the elimination of joint and several bill. Keep an eye out for action alerts.

The House med mal bill, HB 1173 was voted out of the Rules Committee. This bill will likely be debated on the House floor next week, although they could also wait until March 5 which is White Coat Rally Day.

### Workers' Compensation

Three bills were heard this week regarding workers' compensation, HB 1609, HB 1642 and HB 1663. Fred Bryant was fortuitously scheduled to be the lobbyist for a day on the day of the hearing and testified on all three bills. HB 1609 allows



## This week in the Capitol

Thanks to MATA Governors Fred Bryant and Craig Ortwerth; President-Elect Ken Vuylsteke, Todd Hendrickson and Roger Johnson for your work with the MATA Lobbying Team.

### RSVP for Lobby Days!

Wed., Feb. 26

New Lawyers' Lobby Day

Wed., March 26

Employment Lobby Day

Thurs., April 10

MRACJ Lobby Day

Rep. Rory Ellinger, standing, listens as MATA members Roger Johnson, Ken Vuylsteke and Todd Hendrickson discuss medical malpractice caps with members of the House Democratic Caucus.

construction industry employers with less than 5 employees to opt-out of the workers' compensation system. HB 1642 changes the rules regarding classification of employees as independent contractors. HB 1663 is a good bill that would make the penalty for safety violations 25% regardless of whether the employer or employee was responsible for the violation. None of these bills are a priority for the House and Senate leadership; so they may never receive floor debate.

### Other

We had great help from members this week. Having an "attorney

of the day" has proven very helpful when making rounds in the capitol. A big thank-you to those of you who are in the MATA Links program and have reached out to legislators over the last week.

We appreciate and encourage our members to visit the Capitol and spend a day lobbying with the MATA lobbying team.

Please see the list of MATA's positions and [bill tracking](#) for information on other issues. If you have questions about any of the legislation being considered, contact Sharon Jones or Leanna Hagenhoff in the MATA office, 573-635-5215.