



Legislative Newsletter



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*An up-to-date review of Colorado government and politics especially for the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.
Compiled and edited by Axiom Strategies, Inc.*

"Business should be like religion and science; it should know neither love nor hate." - Samuel Butler

Money pours into legislative races as construction defects debate rages

Denver Post

Millions of dollars have flowed into state legislators' campaigns in recent years from both sides of the contentious construction defects debate, even as opposing camps managed to reach a key compromise last week on what has proved to be an intractable issue.

State budget cuts could cost rural Colorado hospitals millions, cause service reductions, layoffs

Denver Post

From his modest office at Lincoln Community Hospital, an hour and a half east of Denver, Kevin Stansbury views the state budget from a different lens.

At the Capitol, the debate is focused on balancing \$26.8 billion. In Hugo, population 750, the dollar signs are people. "This community is very invested in this hospital," said Stansbury, the hospital's chief executive officer. "And it all starts with family."

HB17-1279 Passes House Unanimously

HB17-1279 Construction Defects passed the House this morning 64-0 with 1 excused and added 53 co-sponsors. The bill now proceeds to the Senate.

Colorado's unemployment rate drops to 2.6 percent, lowest in four decades

Colorado Statesman

Colorado's unemployment rate dropped to 2.6 percent in March, making it the lowest in the country, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment reported Friday. It was also the lowest rate the state has recorded since 1976, when officials started keeping track.

The rate dropped 0.3 percentage points from February's 2.9 percent unemployment rate, reflecting 19,500 more Coloradans considering themselves employed, according to the department's monthly survey of households.

The national unemployment rate was 4.5 percent in March, 0.2 percent lower than the month before, the U.S. Department of Labor said. Arkansas, Maine and Oregon also reported their lowest rates since 1976.

After hours of pained testimony, homeless 'right to rest' bill fails on bipartisan vote

Colorado Statesman

State House Democrats joined Republicans late last Wednesday night to vote down a bill that has made waves in various versions the last three years for championing the civil rights of the state's homeless population.

After nearly six hours of emotional testimony, the "Right to Rest Act," House Bill 1314, sponsored by state Democratic Reps. Joe Salazar from Thornton and Jovan Melton from Aurora, fell short in the House Local Government committee. The 8-5 vote came around midnight, Democrats Paul Rosenthal from Denver and Matt Gray from Broomfield joining Republicans in opposition.

Governors of marijuana states urge Trump administration to maintain "hands off" marijuana policies

Colorado Statesman

The governors of the first four states to legalize recreational marijuana have displayed solidarity by co-signing a letter that discourages the Trump administration from interfering with marijuana laws in their states.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper signed the letter along with Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and Alaska Gov. Bill Walker.

Addressed to Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, the governors' letter urged the Trump administration to uphold federal guidelines put into place by the Obama administration and to consult with the states that have legalized marijuana before implementing any policy changes.

Littleton Republican Justin 'Neverett' Everett launches campaign for state treasurer in 2018

Colorado Statesman

State Rep. Justin Everett, a Littleton Republican, announced last Tuesday morning that he's running for state treasurer in next year's election.

"We need a chief financial officer of the state who is willing to make tough decisions and weigh in on policy, whether it's federal block grants or school finance or PERA [the state's Public Employees' Retirement Association] or even tax increases for funding for transportation, which are completely unnecessary, by the way," Everett told The Colorado Statesman in an interview on Monday. "That's why we're announcing on tax day - the No. 1 job of the treasurer is to protect taxpayers, and I'm not afraid to make tough decisions that affect taxpayers on policy."

Just how serious is the Independence Institute about its highway-funding ballot issue?

ColoradoPolitics.com

That's essentially the question the Colorado Statesman's John Tomasic puts to the libertarian-leaning think tank's longtime director, Jon Caldara, in a story this week. The upshot is in the headline: "For what it's worth, Caldara says he's going forward on transportation initiative."

Troubled Colorado transportation funding bill faces roadblocks

ColoradoPolitics.com

A proposal to raise money for transportation infrastructure appears to have crashed in the legislature as supporters scramble to secure the votes needed to keep the bill moving.

Senate President Kevin Grantham, R-Canon City, a sponsor of the centerpiece transportation funding effort, acknowledged that he has struggled to convince his caucus to support the measure.

"The reality is at this point we can't count to three," Grantham said, highlighting the votes needed in the Republican-controlled Senate to advance the measure out of the Senate Finance Committee.

Lawmakers signal an impasse over Hospital Provider Fee negotiations

ColoradoPolitics.com

The legislature has hit an impasse on a proposal to restructure the Hospital Provider Fee, with frustration driving much of the process.

What started as a bipartisan effort to break a three-year stalemate on the Hospital Provider Fee has morphed into partisan attacks from both sides over an unwillingness to compromise. At the beginning of the session in January, legislative leaders in both chambers from both sides of the aisle made the two issues a priority.

During a meeting with reporters on Thursday morning, Sen. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling, who has been leading provider fee talks for Republicans, declared that he is finished negotiating. "I'm done!" he said.

Colorado Senate OKs legislation expanding workers comp to cover PTSD

ColoradoPolitics.com

Democrats cheered the Senate's passage last Tuesday of a bipartisan plan to extend workers-compensation coverage to on-the-job victims of post-traumatic stress disorder.

House Bill 1229 theoretically could apply to any line of work but is especially aimed at cops, firefighters, paramedics and other first-responders whose duties routinely expose them to high levels of stress, danger, violence, and even the death of comrades, crime and accident victims, and others.

Legislative session erupts into shouts and accusations over negotiations on major bills

The Colorado Independent

The state Capitol erupted last Tuesday morning into a loud and sometimes profane blame game over the state budget, a bill to ask voters to pony up more in sales taxes for transportation and the measure that would free up millions for hospitals, rural roads and rural schools.

With the legislative session scheduled to end May 10, Senate President Kevin Grantham of Cañon City, the transportation bill's co-sponsor, admitted he doesn't have the votes from the Senate Finance Committee's Republicans to get the bill to the Senate floor. The finance committee is scheduled to hear the bill next Tuesday. "We've worked on this for five months and we have five days to figure this out," he said.

Gov. Hickenlooper Announces Boards and Commission Appointments

Office of the Governor

Monday, April 17, 2017 - Gov. John Hickenlooper announced Boards and Commissions appointments to the Colorado Coroners Standards and Training Board and Advisory Committee on Governmental Accounting.

The Colorado Coroners Standards and Training Board develops a curriculum for a training course for new coroners and approves the qualifications of the instructors who teach the course; approves training providers to certify coroners in basic medical-legal death investigation; and approves training providers and programs used to fulfill the annual in-service training requirement.

For a term expiring March 1, 2019:

- Brett D. Barkey of Steamboat Springs, a district attorney from a judicial district in this state, reappointed;

For terms expiring March 1, 2020:

- James Louis Caruso, M.D. of Castle Rock, a forensic pathologist who is actively engaged in performing postmortem examinations for a county in this state and who is a member of the Colorado Medical Society, reappointed;
- Honorable Gary Gibson of Olney Springs, a county commissioner of a county with a population of less than fifty thousand (50,000), reappointed.

The Advisory Committee on Governmental Accounting assists the auditor in formulating and prescribing a classification of accounts which are uniform for every level of local government with exceptions (population, etc).

Effective May 18, 2017 for terms expiring May 18, 2021:

- Neil Andrew Copland of Parker, a finance officer representing county government, reappointed;
- Alta Joanne Gosselink of Brush, a finance officer representing city and town government, reappointed;
- Gina Marie Lanier of **Aurora**, a finance officer representing school and junior college districts, appointed.

Thursday, April 20, 2017 - Gov. John Hickenlooper announced Boards and Commissions appointments to the State Board of Licensed Professional Counselor Examiners.

The State Board of Licensed Professional Counselor Examiners adopts rules and regulations, conducts examinations and grants or denies licenses.

For a term expiring Aug. 31, 2018:

- Cindy Corsaro of Colorado Springs, to serve as a member of the general public, and occasioned by the resignation of Nancy Berg, PA-C, MHHS of Westminster, appointed;

For a term expiring Aug. 31, 2020:

- Mark A. Schumacher, CPA of **Centennial**, to serve as a member of the general public and occasioned by the resignation of Ramey Kandice Johnson of Lakewood, appointed.

Calculator

Days Left to Sine Die: 16

House Bills Introduced: 340

Senate Bills Introduced: 296

Dead Bills: 146

Governor Signed: 159