



Legislative Newsletter



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*An up-to-date review of Colorado government and politics especially for the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.
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**“Those who stand for nothing fall for everything”
-Alexander Hamilton**

Days Til Sine Die: 107

Leonard wins resounding vote to fill Keyser vacancy

The Colorado Statesman

Tim Leonard, an Evergreen real estate developer and former candidate for state Senate, has been officially chosen in a resounding vote by the House District 25 vacancy committee to replace outgoing state Rep. Jon Keyser. Leonard will walk into an already boisterous session of the General Assembly Monday when he takes the Keyser's seat. Keyser earlier announced his intent to formally resign the seat to run for the Republican nomination to challenge U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet.

Morgan Carroll will remain in state Senate while running for Congress

Denver Post

State Sen. Morgan Carroll said Tuesday she won't resign her seat in the statehouse to campaign full time for the U.S. House against Republican incumbent Mike Coffman.

"This is the job the voters elected me to do," Carroll said Tuesday.

"And I think it's my duty to finish it."

Carroll is the former Democratic leader in the Senate, who this year is serving on just one committee, the joint Legislative Audit Committee.

Editorial: A sensible law on teen sexting in Colorado legislature

Denver Post

If state lawmakers pass House Bill 1058, as they should, prosecutors won't have to choose between a potentially life-crippling felony charge and no charge at all when confronting teens who trade nude photos of themselves on their smartphones.

The bill, with bipartisan sponsors, would provide a new misdemeanor charge of "misuse of electronic images by a juvenile." And a conviction wouldn't label the juvenile as a sex offender.

Prosecutors have shown restraint in teen "sexting" incidents - and it may be that no charges will be appropriate in most future cases, too. But prosecutors should have an option that doesn't put the teens in the same category as consumers of true child pornography.

CDOT Director says gas taxes should be raised to pay for Colorado roads

ABC 7 Denver

The man in charge of Colorado's roads says the state needs to raise gas taxes to help cover billions in dollars of needed road repairs and improvements.

Colorado Department of Transportation Executive Director Shailen Bhatt appeared on this week's edition of Politics Unplugged on Denver7.

Bhatt told Anne Trujillo and Marshall Zelinger the 22-cents a gallon Colorado drivers pay in gas state tax and 18.6-cents in federal taxes hasn't increased since 1993.

Divide over transportation funding possible

Colorado Statesman

The Colorado Legislature this session is mired in an ideological traffic jam over budget issues that will impact funding for everything from education to Medicaid reimbursement. But for mountain-dwellers and Denver weekend warriors whose lifeline is Interstate 70, the biggest battle they care about is transportation funding.

Two lawmakers on opposite sides of the aisle whose districts overlap in the Senate and the House and include counties right along I-70 have two dramatically different approaches to solving the long-running dilemma of finding adequate funds to maintain and perhaps expand the state's deteriorating transportation infrastructure.

Denver home prices jumped about 10 percent in 2015

Denver Business Journal

Denver homes prices jumped about 10 percent in 2015 from the previous year, according to two new reports. According to data released Wednesday from Colorado-based Re/Max, the year-over-year price rise in the value of home sales was 10.4 percent, and the median closed sale was \$314,000.

Steyer allies target Republican state senator, seek control of Colorado General Assembly

January 20, 2016 12:22 PM · By Simon Lomax

San Francisco billionaire activist Tom Steyer is getting more deeply involved in Colorado politics than ever before. After spending more than \$350,000 on research and polling in the Centennial State last year, two groups aligned with Steyer are now funding political attacks on State Senator Laura Woods (R). Republicans control the Colorado State Senate by a single vote, so unseating Woods could return control of the state legislature to Democrats and reinstate one-party rule under Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) until early 2019 at least.

After Complete Colorado first reported Steyer's spending on Colorado research and polling ahead of the 2016 election, residents of State Senate District 19 stepped forward with a series of attack mailers they received from September to December last year. Among other things, the direct mail accuses Woods of being "completely out of touch with the needs of middle-class families" and siding with "the wealthy and big corporations." The mailers were sent by Fairness for Colorado, which is funded by Conservation Colorado and a national activist group called America Votes, a self-described "permanent campaign" for "building progressive power." Steyer

has forged particularly close ties with Conservation Colorado since the 2014 election, and the billionaire's political action committee NextGen Climate is a member of America Votes.

An example of the Fairness for Colorado mailers attacking State Senator Laura Woods (R).

"I was born and raised in Colorado. I am shocked when I see rich out-of-staters try to buy the state I love so much," said Woods, whose district includes the cities of Arvada and Westminster. "It's just wrong."

Steyer spent more than \$8.5 million in 2014 in a failed effort to save former U.S. Sen. Mark Udall (D). This was part of a \$74 million national campaign by the California billionaire to keep Democrats in control of the U.S. Senate, which also failed. According to Reuters, Steyer poured more money into the 2014 midterm elections "than any other single donor in both parties," and his 2016 effort will "likely be larger." The financial news agency further reports that Steyer may support U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), a self-proclaimed Democratic socialist who is challenging former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton from the left in this year's Democratic presidential primary.

During the 2014 campaign, Steyer targeted state legislative contests and some races for governor as well. A significant share of Steyer's money was donated directly to environmental groups, who then campaigned on behalf of the billionaire, most visibly in states like Washington and Oregon. Steyer also pioneered the strategy of using other issues besides the environment to criticize his opponents - the same approach used in the Fairness for Colorado mailers attacking Woods.

Conservation Colorado has hailed Steyer as a "visionary" and praised the retired hedge fund manager for getting involved in state legislative races to elect candidates who are loyal to environmental groups.

The environmental group even held an awards dinner in Steyer's honor last year, where the California billionaire called the 2016 election "critical." He also warned there is "even more at stake" this year than in 2014, when he poured millions of dollars into a botched effort to save Udall. But when the press sought details, he refused to answer questions about his 2016 plans in Colorado, including whether state lawmakers would be targeted, just as the billionaire activist has done in other states.

The emergence of a direct-mail campaign, funded by Steyer's allies, strongly suggests that the state legislature will be part of the California billionaire's political strategy for Colorado this year. This may come as a shock to some political observers, who have viewed Steyer as more of a player in the reelection effort of U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet (D), the race for the White House and Colorado's nine Electoral College votes, and possibly a statewide campaign over anti-fracking ballot measures.

In 2014, Steyer held talks with environmental activists about supporting anti-fracking ballot measures, but when those measures were abandoned, he focused his Colorado spending on the federal level in defense of Udall. Today, the California billionaire and environmental activist is delving much deeper into Colorado politics and, at the very least, his allies have control of the state legislature in their sights.

Steyer is free to support any cause or candidate he chooses, of course. And in a way, you can't blame him for staying in the shadows and letting groups like Conservation Colorado and America Votes take the lead, after the personal humiliation he suffered two years ago. But if Steyer thinks he can parachute into Colorado politics once again, without anyone noticing this time, he's got another thing coming.

Gov. Hickenlooper announces Boards and Commissions appointments

Office of the Governor

The High-Performance Transportation Enterprise actively seeks out opportunities for public-private partnerships for the purpose of completing surface transportation infrastructure projects. The Transportation

Enterprise pursues any available means of financing such surface transportation projects that will allow the efficient completion of the projects.

For a term expiring October 1, 2017:

- Janet Martin of Colorado Springs, to serve as a member who resides within the planning area of the Pikes Peak area council of governments, and who has professional expertise in transportation planning or development, local government, design-build contracting, public or private finance, engineering, environmental issues, or any other area that the Governor believes will benefit the board in the execution of its powers and performance of its duties, and occasioned by the resignation of Brenda Smith of Colorado Springs, appointed. The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Commission works with state agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, local byways organizations and public and private resources to assist in the development of byways management plans, including the interpretation, promotion and protection of distinctive byways characteristics. The Commission also helps coordinate the budgeting process and the allocation of federal, state, and private funds for the purpose of byway improvement.

For terms expiring January 1, 2019:

- Amanda Hill of Denver, to serve as an at-large member, appointed;
- Amanda Barker of Denver, to serve as a representative of land trusts and open space, appointed;
- Christopher F. Sporl of Littleton, to serve as a representative of the U.S. Forest Service, reappointed;
- Representative KC Becker of Boulder, to serve as a member of the Colorado State Legislature, reappointed;
- Roger Wilson of Glenwood Springs, to serve as an at-large member, reappointed.

The Colorado State Fair Authority Board of Commissioners directs and supervises the Colorado State Fair and Industrial Exposition. The Fair is held annually in Pueblo for the display of livestock and agricultural, horticultural, industrial, mining, recreational, educational and scientific products of the State of Colorado.

For a term expiring November 1, 2018:

- Rosemarie E. DelMonte of **Aurora**, a Democrat from the 6th Congressional District, appointed. The Eighteenth Judicial District Judicial Performance Commission evaluates the performance of county and district court judges in the eighteenth judicial district during the judge's current term of office, which is the past two years for new (provisional) judges, the past four years for county court judges, and the past six years for district court judges.

For a term expiring November 30, 2017:

- Judith McCarthy of Centennial, to serve as a non-attorney, and occasioned by the resignation of Irma Carrera of Lone Tree, appointed.

The eHealth Commission supports the implementation of the state's Health IT strategy and interoperability objectives by setting goals for Health IT programs and creating a process for developing common policies and technical solutions.

For terms expiring February 1, 2017:

- Alexis Sgouros of Greenwood Village, to serve as a consumer engaged in health care, appointed;
- James Reed Holder of Englewood, to serve as a representative of health insurance providers, appointed;
- William Frank Stevens of Littleton, to serve as the designee of the Governor's Office of Information Technology, appointed;
- Christopher Stewart Wells of Denver, to serve as the designee of the Department of Public Health and Environment, appointed;
- Herb Wilson of Westminster, to serve as the designee of the Department of Human Services, appointed;

For terms expiring February 1, 2018:

- Gregory Charles Reicks of Grand Junction, to serve as a representative of primary health care providers, appointed;

- Dana Eugene Moore of Greenwood Village, to serve as a representative of health care facilities, appointed;
- Marc Lassaux of Clifton of Clifton, to serve as a representative of non-profit, health IT related community organizations, appointed;
- Kendall Paul Alexander of Greeley, to serve as a representative of behavioral health, appointed;
- Morgan Gray Honea of Colorado Springs, to serve as a member with expertise in operability and data exchange, appointed;

For terms expiring February 1, 2019:

- Jason Greer of Boulder, to serve as a member with expertise in health care quality measures, appointed;
- Mary Anne Leach of Castle Rock, to serve as a member with expertise in digital health, appointed;
- Michelle Mills of Parker, to serve as a representative of primary health care providers, appointed;
- Chris Underwood of Evergreen, to serve as the designee of the Department of Health Care Policy and Finance, appointed.

The Colorado Dental Board makes rules and regulations, examines and licenses dentists and dental hygienists, and conducts hearings regarding the suspension or revocation of licenses.

For terms expiring January 1, 2020:

- Lisa Mehelich Fox, DDS of the City of Castle Pines, to serve as a dentist, reappointed;
- David B. Thurgood, DDS, MS of Fort Collins, to serve as a dentist, reappointed.

The State Housing Board works to establish uniform construction and maintenance standards for hotels, motels, multiple dwellings and factory-built housing. The Board also develops for submittal to the General Assembly and units of local government recommendations for uniform housing standards and building codes.

For a term expiring January 31, 2020:

- Britta E.M. Fisher of Wheat Ridge, to serve as a member from the Seventh Congressional District and as an Unaffiliated, reappointed.

The Calculator

House Bills Introduced: 148

Senate Bills Introduced: 82

Number of Bills PI'd: 1

Bills Signed by the Governor: 0