



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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**"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past."
-Thomas Jefferson**

Days Til Sine Die: 100

Sen. Ray Scott says he's considering a run for governor in '18

Denver Post

Sen. Ray Scott is considering a run for governor in 2018 and would look to bring down the expenses of government to invest in such priorities as transportation, higher education and rural broadband Internet, the Mesa County Republican said Saturday. If he gets in the race and wins, Scott would be the first Western Slope candidate to win the governor's office in 64 years.

Scott, a fiscal conservative, points to "a lot of fat" in state spending, citing the growing costs of Medicaid to a state budget that needs to be managed more conservatively, he said. Scott also would boost the state's economy by supporting responsible energy development. He said he has middle-of-the-road positions on the divisive issues of abortion and state access to federal public lands.

Cadman: Senate Republican goals for the 2016 legislative session

Colorado Springs Gazette

In the 2015 session, Democrats joined Republicans to pass 367 bills to help Coloradans move forward in difficult times. Despite it being an election year, our constituents expect us to continue looking for common ground and working for bipartisan answers to the problems confronting the state.

Today we face a different budget situation than we had a year ago. We see a slowdown in the economy and thus in revenues, and we see some dark clouds on the horizon. Yet, our job as legislators remains the same. We must sort out the many claims on the public treasury and set priorities.

Hickenlooper: Polling shows people would reject move of hospital tax off-budget

Complete Colorado

On January 6, Governor John Hickenlooper spoke to the well-heeled and highly influential political organization 'Colorado Forum.' But the governor, his staff, and members of Colorado Forum barred three reporters who showed up from joining the meeting.

Complete Colorado obtained recordings of the remarks and the question and answer session which followed after filing a Colorado Open Records Act request with the governor's office on the same day seeking audio recordings of the governor. The wide ranging discussion touched on the governor's new water plan, the battle over the "hospital provider fee," immigration, oil and gas initiatives, and even the impact driverless cars could someday have on the state.

Colorado's road problems collide at Capitol

Denver Post

The state's transportation problems all collide in one place: the Capitol. And the impact is pushing the perennial issue of state transportation funding to the top of the 2016 legislative to-do list.

Gov. John Hickenlooper and lawmakers are mostly united this session in a mission to find more money for road building and maintenance, but what is less universal is the solution.

Democrats and Republicans are moving in opposite directions and struggling to reach consensus on how to find more money - an impasse that is complicated by a state budget crunch.

Bill would gut state funding for mass transit in Colorado

Colorado Springs Gazette

The Colorado Senate is expected to hear the second reading Monday of a bill that would remove up to \$5 million from the state transit and rail fund.

If Senate Bill 16-011 eventually becomes law, it would repeal the portion of the Funding Advancements for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery Act (FASTER) that provides grants to local transit agencies like Colorado Springs' Mountain Metropolitan Transit as well as several nonprofits.

Oil under \$30 a barrel carries dangers for Colorado economy

Denver Post

The collapse this month in oil prices can't help but unleash some primal fears for anyone who was in Colorado during the mid-1980s.

That's when the state suffered a recession so severe that it hollowed out downtown office buildings, triggered the failure of savings and loans and drove thousands to leave for better opportunities elsewhere.

Energy-producing states such as Colorado and Texas lagged other parts of the country as the aftermath of depressed prices played out for years.

Oil's price swoon is drilling hard into Colorado schools, communities

Denver Post

Gavin Amen is getting squeezed twice by cratering oil prices.

The 17-year-old junior at Platte Valley High School in Kersey is in the family business, Amen Oilfield Service, which has keenly felt the sharp decline in the price of a barrel of oil. The company's yard is filled with equipment that used to be out in the field, setting tanks and cutting pipe for well operations.

"It's affecting us pretty hard," said Amen, who sent sparks cascading across the floor as he sliced pipe with a blowtorch flame in his school's shop room last week.

Budget panel offers a bit of extra cash for schools

Chalkbeat Colorado

Colorado schools would receive an additional \$18 per student under mid-year budget adjustments approved January 27th by the Joint Budget Committee.

Statewide average funding per pupil would be set at \$7,312, compared to the \$7,294 in the 2015-16 school funding law passed last spring.

Colorado's traction law used 143 times on Colorado mountain roads

Denver Post

Colorado's traction law was in effect 143 times at various locations on the state's mountain highways between Oct. 22 and Jan. 20 as part of a campaign to unclog traffic through the high country.

The traction law is called into play when snow and ice on the highway make traveling hazardous in the mountains. The traction law requires that motorists use snow tires, tires with the mud/snow designation or a four-wheel/all-wheel drive vehicle to travel. All tires must have a minimum one-eighth-inch tread.

Public money for Colorado kids with disabilities goes toward lobbying

Denver Post

Nearly \$600,000 in public funds for people with developmental disabilities instead goes to a trade association whose lobbying at the state Capitol has resulted in a contentious relationship with parents of children with disabilities.

Parents whose young or adult children have developmental and intellectual delays have simmered for years knowing that lobbyists receive a portion of government funds dispensed for therapy, respite care, wheelchair ramps and bathroom renovations.

Gov. Hickenlooper announces Boards and Commissions appointments

Office of the Governor

The Skilled Worker Outreach, Recruitment and Key Training Grant Review Committee establish criteria for ranking eligible applications for matching grants awards under the Skilled Worker Outreach, Recruitment and Key Training Grant Program. The Committee also makes recommendations to the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Higher Education and the Office of Economic Development and International Trade about which eligible applicants should be awarded matching grants and the amounts of the matching grants.

For terms expiring May 31, 2019:

- * William B. Dowling of Denver, to serve as a representative of the Department of Labor and Employment and as Chair, appointed;
- * Lorna Anne Candler of Golden, to serve as a representative of the Department of Higher Education, appointed;
- * Meridith Marshall of Denver, to serve as a representative of the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, appointed;
- * Sarah Marie Heath of Denver, to serve as a representative of an institution that offers state-accredited career and technical education, appointed;

- * Andrew Dorsey of Louisville, to serve as a representative of an institution that offers state-accredited career and technical education, appointed;
- * Samuel Tawney Gilchrist of Castle Rock, to serve as a representative of labor organizations representing industries with specific workforce needs as identified in the annual Colorado Talent Report, appointed;
- * Joel B. Buchanan of Pueblo, to serve as a representative of labor organizations representing industries with specific workforce needs as identified in the annual Colorado Talent Report, appointed;
- * Rebecca Miles Whittington of Broomfield, to serve as a representative of apprenticeship programs, appointed;
- * John Fleck of Highlands Ranch, to serve as a representative of apprenticeship programs, appointed;
- * Kendra Marie Sandoval of Denver, to serve as a representative of business, trade or professional organizations representing industries with specific workforce needs as identified in the annual Colorado Talent Report, appointed;
- * Rita Neiderheiser of Green Mountain, to serve as a representative of subcontractors' trade organizations, appointed;
- * Lidria E. Romero of Centennial, to serve as a representative of the Workforce Development Council, appointed.

The Physical Therapy Board regulates individual physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. The Board approves license and certification applications and enforces the rules, regulations and practice acts that govern the profession. It also investigates complaints about physical therapists and physical therapist assistants and takes disciplinary action against those who have violated the Physical Therapy Practice Act.

For terms expiring January 1, 2020:

- * Ann Elizabeth Dinsmore of Fort Collins, to serve as a physical therapist;
- * Tamara Sue Struessel of Denver, to serve as a physical therapist, reappointed;
- * Bau Phuoc Tran of Castle Rock, to serve as a member of the public, appointed.

The Sickle Cell Anemia Advisory Committee, in coordination with the existing staff and facilities of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, works to establish programs and conduct research for the care and treatment of persons suffering from sickle cell anemia.

For a term expiring January 31, 2019:

- * Nicole Dawn Franklin of Englewood, to serve as a member of the general public, appointed;

For terms expiring January 31, 2020:

- * Wanda Gail Foster of Colorado Springs, to serve as a representative of voluntary agencies interested in sickle cell anemia, reappointed;
- * Olga Polanco Copeland of Colorado Springs, to serve as a representative of voluntary agencies interested in sickle cell anemia, reappointed.

The Juvenile Parole Board grants, denies, modifies, suspends, or revokes, and specifies conditions of, parole for all juvenile delinquents committed to the Department of Human Services. The Board also determines the conditions of parole for those youth who completed their commitment in placement and are subject to mandatory parole.

For a term expiring November 15, 2018:

- Gretchen Jaime Russo, RN, BSN, JD of Denver, to serve as a representative from the Colorado Department of Human Services, and occasioned by the resignation of Dennis Raymond Desparrois of Denver, appointed.

The Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice engages in an evidence-based analysis of the criminal justice system in Colorado, with a focus on recidivism reduction initiatives and the expenditure of criminal justice funds. The Commission annually reports to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court.

For a term expiring June 30, 2016:

- Jessica Eve Jones, of Denver, to serve as an expert in juvenile justice issues, and occasioned by the resignation of Jeff W. McDonald of Evergreen, appointed.

The Calculator

House Bills Introduced: 167

Senate Bills Introduced: 113

Number of Bills PI'd: 6

Bills Signed by the Governor: 0