



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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**“After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, and so on - have found that none of these finally satisfy, or permanently wear - what remains? Nature remains.”
-Walt Whitman**

The First Regular Session of the Seventy-second General Assembly convened on Jan. 4, 2019. As of today, there have been 335 bills in the House and 263 bills in the Senate introduced. Expect weekly newsletters from Axiom during the legislative session, and your Capitol Watch bill tracker URL will be sent every Friday.

-Team Axiom-

With 5 days to go, here's what's still on the Colorado legislature's plate

Colorado Politics

The list of major bills awaiting final action from the Colorado General Assembly has changed little in three weeks.

Out of the 561 bills introduced in the 2019 General Assembly session, 296 are still awaiting actions by lawmakers as of 8 a.m. Monday, with a final deadline of midnight Friday.

That's more than the number awaiting action — 271 — just last Wednesday.

According to the daily tally from the Office of Legislative Legal Services, 168 bills are pending in the House, 128 in the Senate.

Many are non-controversial. But Democratic lawmakers, who hold both chambers, now have to decide what they're willing to let go of before the midnight bell on Friday.

While bills like red flag, oil and gas, and National Popular Vote have made it all the way to the governor's desk — and he's signed them — there are plenty of issues dividing the parties that will keep lawmakers up late at night for the next five days.

A glimpse at major bills awaiting action this week:

- Immunizations: House Bill 1312 won final passage in the House during a rare Saturday session this past weekend. The bill is now awaiting its first hearing in the Senate.
- Sex education: House Bill 1032, specifying a comprehensive curriculum for public schools teaching sex ed, won approval from the Senate Appropriations Committee last week but now awaits what's expected to be a lengthy debate in the Senate. The measure was amended by the Senate Health & Human Services Committee on Feb. 28 (yes, it's been awaiting final action for more than two months now), which means it will have to head back to the House for agreement on amendments. However, the bill is on the list of measures targeted by Senate Republicans for delay and/or killing.

- Climate change: House Bill 1261 sets a goal of reducing 2005-level greenhouse-gas emissions by 50% in 2013 and 90% in 2050. The bill cleared the House on April 16 and is awaiting Senate debate.
- Family medical leave: Senate Bill 188, known as FAMLI, was rewritten to turn the measure on paid family leave into an implementation study, and is now awaiting House debate.
- Equal pay: Senate Bill 85 would allow workers to sue employers over alleged wage discrimination based on gender. The bill won final approval from the House on Saturday and now heads back to the Senate for agreement on amendments.
- TABOR refunds: Referred to by some as "Son of Ref C," legislation would ask voters to grant the state authority to retain excess revenues that would otherwise be refunded to taxpayers under the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights. House Bill 1257 and its companion measure, House Bill 1258, are both awaiting action from the Senate.
- Free full-day kindergarten: Gov. Jared Polis' top legislative priority, House Bill 1262, is awaiting a decision from the House regarding Senate amendments.
- Imported drugs: Senate Bill 5 would allow Coloradans to buy cheaper prescription drugs from Canada, but Big Pharma is not happy. The measure was approved by the House Health & Insurance Committee on April 24 and now awaits action from the House Appropriations Committee.
- The annual School Finance Act (Senate Bill 246) was introduced on April 16 and is now awaiting debate in the House.

What has cleared the calendar:

- Drivers licenses for undocumented residents: Senate Bill 139 would expand the number of offices available for appointments under the state's driver's license program for immigrants in the country illegally. It is awaiting the governor's signature.
- The 2019-20 state budget: Contained in Senate Bill 207, it is the only bill the General Assembly is required to pass by the Colorado Constitution. It was signed by Polis on April 18.
- Driving with cellphones: Senate Bill 12 would ban holding mobile phones while driving, but the House Judiciary Committee didn't go for it. It killed the bill on April 16.
- Winter traction: House Bill 1207 would require that vehicles traveling Interstate 70 from Morrison to Dotsero be equipped with suitable tires or other traction gear for winter conditions from Sept. 1 to May 31. It's awaiting the governor's signature.
- Insurance co-ops: Senate Bill 4 would create a pilot program aimed at helping Coloradans band together to negotiate cheaper health care rates directly with providers. It also awaits the governor's signature.

What's been added in the last several weeks:

- Sports betting: House Bill 1327 would allow Coloradans to place bets on sporting events. That measure seeks voter approval under the state constitution and was heard by the Senate Finance Committee last Friday. As of press time, it has a date with the Senate Appropriations Committee.

• And if you think they're done introducing bills: There could be at least one more, from Speaker of the House KC Becker, that would overturn the decisions made by the 2018 General Assembly regarding transportation funding and as contained in Senate Bill 18-001.

That 2018 measure requires the General Assembly to send an initiative to the November ballot to set in motion bonding for transportation projects. Becker has said throughout the session she has been considering such a measure to cancel out Senate Bill 1.

Colorado lawmakers won't finish their calendar. Now Democrats have to decide which bills to let die.

Colorado Sun

If the state Senate worked 24 hours a day for the final week, it probably still wouldn't get through the remaining list of bills before adjournment.

"There will be some bills that simply die on the calendar," said state Sen. Jeff Bridges, a Greenwood Village Democrat. "We just don't have time."

The reality became clear to Bridges at the end of last week. In a room just off the Senate floor, he calculated the math problem for the final push. With more than 200 bills remaining — and new ones introduced Saturday — there's less than an hour to debate each one before session ends Friday by midnight.

"It is mathematically highly unlikely that we will get through everything that we have to get through," Bridges said.

The zero hour comes as tensions are once again rising at the Capitol, and the Boulder triumvirate that runs the chambers and the governor's office are facing increased pressure.

Entering the final week: Gov. Jared Polis is suggesting he would veto a bill to improve vaccination rates in Colorado. A lawmaker made a public announcement about a threat regarding legislation without offering details. And Democratic lawmakers are becoming increasingly frustrated that they may squander their majority and hard work.

Republicans are working to slow the lawmaking process, only extending the backlog of legislation. The question now facing Democratic leaders: What bills are must-pass priorities and which will die on the calendar?

A rare weekend lawmaking session Saturday helped make progress, but lawmakers didn't clear the dozens of key measures that still hang in the balance, from regulating how Colorado colleges and universities respond to campus sexual assaults to a proposal to ask voters to enact a nicotine tax and a measure to allow local governments to put rent control policies in place. Many of the bills are expected to generate hours of debate.

Polis' agenda is part of the scrum, particularly his health care proposals. A major climate bill sponsored by House Speaker KC Becker, D-Boulder, also awaits final action. And dozens of other Democratic-led bills are in jeopardy of not making it to the finish line, as well as some Republicans want to see approved.

The legislation that faces the toughest road is a late effort to put an increase in nicotine and tobacco taxes on the 2019 ballot for voter approval. Polis and Democratic lawmakers introduced the bill with 10 days left in the session, but time is not the only hurdle — the measure is drawing opposition from Democrats and may struggle to pass.

"We're on track with 'Game of Thrones'," said Sen. Brittany Pettersen, a Lakewood Democrat. "Everything's at risk of dying."

How this year compares to others:

The logjam started to come into focus with two weeks to go in the 120-day session. The legislature's productivity rate — as measured by action on introduced legislation — is the slowest in five years, according to an analysis of legislative statistics released April 22.

The pileup is largest in the Senate, where Democrats hold a 19-16 majority. Senate Majority leader Steve Fenberg, D-Boulder, acknowledges some Democratic bills will not make it. The priorities, he said, are measures "that are core to our economic security agenda, to our health care affordability agenda and to our education agenda."

"There are plenty of bills on the calendar that are important, that are core values for our caucus, ... but they may not be do-or-die," he said in an interview Saturday.

The slow progress is partly by design. The Republicans in the Senate minority are spending more time than usual discussing legislation, part of an effort to use the clock to their advantage in the hopes they can defeat certain bills.

"We're witnessing weapons of mass discussion," said Sen. Bob Rankin, a Carbondale Republican.

"The commodity we are dealing with is time," said Senate Minority Leader Chris Holbert, a Parker Republican. "The reality right now is that there have been fewer bills introduced this session than last, and yet we are much further behind where we were (at this point) last year."

Holbert said if Democrats bring the GOP's least favorite measures to a vote — including bills to make vaccination exemptions more difficult, raise tobacco taxes, revamp sex education in schools and limit immigration authority — they should be prepared for lengthy debate.

"We've identified a list of bills we consider particularly bad, potentially overreach," said Holbert said, who declined to share what's on that list. "... What do you want to do Mr. President? What do you want to do Mr. Majority Leader? At midnight Friday, May 3, the crystal carriage turns back into a pumpkin and we're just regular, old citizens again."

Fenberg suggested the GOP stall tactics are counterproductive and only designed to appeal to the party's base. "The bills that they absolutely want to make sure they delay as much as possible in order for us to not accomplish anything on are actually ones that, generally speaking, voters are on our side," he said. "Does that mean it backfires? I don't know."

Capitol Business Preview: A look at major business bills being debated in the final week of Colorado's legislative session

Denver Business Journal

Though the Colorado Legislature must adjourn at 11:59 p.m. Friday, it still has an immense amount to do in the next five days. And at this point, there are legitimate questions about whether everything on its to-do list actually can get done.

Here then are the biggest issues remaining for businesses that will be debated this week:

Workplace regulations

Senate Bill 188, the bill to create a state-run insurance system to offer partially paid family and medical leave, got bumped back to a study last week, but the bill to proceed with that study still must pass the House. House Bill 1210 to allow cities and counties to raise their minimum wages above the state's level continues to be negotiated as it sits on the calendar for debate in the Senate. And the Senate must decide whether to concur with a more business-friendly version of SB 85, the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, or fight for its version that allows workers to file lawsuits without having to go through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment first.

Transportation

The Senate stands poised to pass HB 1257, which would ask voters in November to allow the state to keep all future revenues above the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights cap and put them to transportation and education, and send it to Gov. Jared Polis' desk over Republican objections. But the biggest fight this week will be over whether Republicans agree to remove from the November ballot a separate initiative for a \$2.3 billion bonding initiative, as House Speaker K.C. Becker and transportation advocates are asking them to do.

Sales tax

Polis already has signed a bill to create a system through which Colorado merchants can find out easily the local tax rate of residents to whom they are shipping products and then remit those sales taxes to the state rather than to each city, county and special district. But the Senate continues to debate HB 1240, which would delay a current May 31 requirement for in-state businesses to have to pay sales taxes on a district-by-district basis until that system is in place sometime next year.

Health-care costs

Major fights await on HB 1168, a bill that is headed to the Senate Finance Committee that would use a complex set of fees to create a reinsurance system designed to help insurers with their highest-cost claims and bring down individual-market health-insurance premiums between 5 and 20 percent. The Senate also still must vote on HB 1174, which would seek to hold patients harmless for surprise bills given to them by out-of-network physicians and create a specific amount of reimbursement that out-of-network doctors must accept from insurers.

Pharmaceutical costs

House Bill 1296, a bill that would require more pricing transparency for pharmaceutical companies and require that 100 percent of drug discounts be passed along to consumers, has yet to be scheduled for its hearing in the House Appropriations Committee and has a good chance of not making it through the Legislature this year. But the House this week is expected to debate Senate Bill 5, which would allow Colorado to import cheaper non-specialty drugs from Canada if given a waiver by the federal government.

Affordable housing

The Senate is scheduled to take a critical vote Monday on SB 225, which would allow cities and counties to impose rent-control or other rent-stabilization policies. Meanwhile, a swell of other bills on the subject continue to move through the two chambers, including HB 1322, which would create a new fund to build affordable housing using \$30 million a year from the Unclaimed Property Fund in the state treasurer's office.

Energy

While Polis already has signed a bill to allow local governments broad regulatory authority over oil and gas operations, several bills seeking to reduce carbon emissions continue to move through the Legislature. Those include HB 1261, which requires a 90 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050, and HB 1313, which sets goals for investor-owned utilities such as Xcel to have zero carbon-dioxide emissions by 2050.

Electric vehicles

The Senate Finance Committee will debate HB 1159, which would extend and expand tax credits for electric vehicles that were expected to expire after 2021. And a conference committee will consider how to work out House and Senate differences in Senate Bill 77, which allows utilities to recoup the costs of installation of electric-vehicle charging stations through the rates they charge to all customers.

Colorado Senate approves plan to study paid family leave

Denver Post

The Colorado Senate gave final approval on a party-line vote Thursday to a bill that lays the groundwork for the state to establish a paid leave insurance program.

The legislation, which originally included specific details on how the program would work, was the subject of intense scrutiny from chambers of commerce, other business associations and local governments. The Democratic sponsors rewrote the bill to study the issue and establish a committee that will present recommendations to lawmakers next year on how the program should work.

State Sen. Faith Winter, who has championed the issue for five years, spoke through tears during a floor debate Wednesday night.

"We knew all these people wanted help," she said referring to the approximately 88 percent of Coloradans who don't have paid leave. "But we couldn't agree on the math. So, we're saying let's do the math first."

The House, which is also controlled by Democrats, must also approve the plan before it goes to Gov. Jared Polis' desk. Winter and other supporters of the bill vowed to return next year to see the program put in place.

Colorado business leaders gear up for next family-leave battle as sponsors pledge 'homework up front'

Denver Business Journal

While business groups may have celebrated briefly Wednesday that they had won this year's battle over the establishment of a mandatory paid-family-leave program for all private-sector workers in Colorado, they immediately began girding for the next fight — the creation of a task force that will recommend whether a proposal expected to be brought forward next year looks any different than this year's controversial version.

Sponsoring Democratic Sens. Faith Winter of Westminster and Angela Williams of Denver pulled back heavily on their Senate Bill 188 Wednesday, turning it from a mandate to implement a \$1 billion program over the next 4-1/2 years to an implementation plan that calls for discussion and study of the idea in anticipation of proposing another bill in 2020 but does not require the state to move forward on anything other than a number of studies. The move was necessary, Winter explained tearfully on the Senate floor, because too many people questioned the fiscal solvency of the bill to pass it out of the Democratic-majority Senate, even as individuals asked her to help them balance their jobs with their new babies or their cancer treatment.

Business leaders, who had led the fight against SB 188 over a tense month-and-a-half of hearings, expressed both surprise and gratitude at the move Wednesday, saying that they believed a groundswell of opposition led by locally run and small businesses taking their concerns about the burdens of the bill directly to their legislators temporarily grounded a program many had seen as a sure thing to pass at the beginning of this session. A recent study from the Common Sense Policy Roundtable and a legislative memo laying out scenarios for funding difficulties if more people than expected took advantage of the program seemed to turn the conversation critically from “What does this bill mean for businesses” to “What does this bill mean for the state’s ability to offer a massive insurance program without it going broke and causing other financial problems?”

“A lot had to do with the fiscal impact of the bill and legislators having to go back to their constituents to defend it,” said Tony Gagliardi, state director for the National Federation of Independent Business. “If it didn’t work, they would have to go back to the districts and say, ‘I supported a bill that put us \$500 million into debt.’ Would you want to be that elected official?”

SB 188 seeks to create a state-run system funded by fees on both employers and employees that will allow workers to take as many as 12 weeks of partially paid leave to care for a new child, an ailing family member or themselves. The bill in its most recent form called for anyone who has paid into it for 17 weeks at any job to be eligible for benefits, which begin in 2024, and to have their same job waiting for them when their leave ends.

But while the change to SB 188, approved by acclamation on the Senate floor late Wednesday, means businesses and their workers don’t face mandates to fund a new system yet, Williams and Winter emphasized that they acceded to the idea of additional study because they believe it will back their ideas of how a system should be run and will allow them to come back next year with a similar version that has many similarities to this year’s version. The senators made about two-dozen changes to the bill to try to work with business critics in the past month, and while they said that some made the bill better — including a narrower definition of family and an allowance for companies with plans offering similar or stronger benefits to opt out of the state system — they also said they believe the studies required to be undertaken this year can allow them to pass the bill without so much compromise of their vision for universal, portable care.

One thing that Winter emphasized in explaining Wednesday’s amendment in an interview was that she would not compromise on the bill applying to all workers, despite calls from NFIB and some other groups to exempt the smallest businesses who have the hardest time missing employees for extended periods of time. That comes despite Gagliardi saying he wants to continue talking about small-business exemptions and Kevin Bommer, executive director of the Colorado Municipal League, saying Thursday that the first thing the task force should consider is whether this should involve universal coverage.

The makeup of the task force also raised concerns Wednesday, as it is set to include 15 members, but only three who specifically are representatives of private businesses. The rest of the group would consist of workers, organized labor, state government representatives, a health-policy advocate and a private insurer, among others. No local-government representatives are slated to serve on the panel.

“I’d like to see a little more business expertise,” said Rachel Beck, vice president of government affairs for the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corp. “And I’d like to see a little more expertise on these types of programs.”

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis' mission to cut health care costs hangs in balance as session nears end

Denver Post

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis stood outside of Denver Health Medical Center almost a month ago laying out his "roadmap" to save people money on health care.

As the Boulder Democrat ticked off his list of plans, both short term and long term, it quickly became apparent that most of the governor's ideas to lower health care costs in Colorado weren't possible unless state lawmakers passed a series of bills.

Democrats and Republicans have come together to create the beginnings of a public option health plan and make hospitals turn over more of their financial data. But with a week left in the 2019 session, several items on the governor's list still haven't passed and the big question remaining is whether there's enough time, money and political will to get the rest of them across the finish line.

Reinsurance

A high-priority bill that might not make it through in the final days of session is one that has lowered people's premiums in other states by essentially providing an insurance plan for health insurance companies to help offset the costs of their most expensive patients.

It's called reinsurance, and its sponsors basically rewrote House Bill 1168 for a third time Thursday afternoon.

"It's always been an issue of how to pay for it," said Sen. Bob Rankin, R-Carbondale, as he presented the latest changes to a Senate committee.

Colorado wants to get matching dollars from the federal government for its reinsurance program. The first version of the bill was unlikely to win approval from the Trump administration, and the funding mechanism on the second jeopardized other federal dollars.

Rankin and Sen. Kerry Donovan, D-Vail, were frank with their colleagues that the new way to fund the program isn't ideal, but Donovan said it's the best way they could find with time running out on the 2019 legislative session.

The new plan is to have Colorado hospitals contribute \$40 million, take \$26 million from a premium tax that would otherwise go into the general fund and potentially take another \$15 million to \$40 million from a fee that was originally meant to raise money for affordable housing.

"We don't want the program to die," Rankin said. "We want to use every possible avenue to get this program moving."

Reinsurance is waiting on a vote by the full Senate.

Prescription drugs from Canada

Polis and other Democratic lawmakers see our neighbors to the north as a potential cure for the high drug prices Coloradans pay every day.

That's why Democrats introduced Senate Bill 005 on the first day of the 2019 session. It directs the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to create a program to buy prescription drugs from licensed Canadian suppliers and then distribute them to pharmacies and hospitals across the Centennial State.

The bill passed the Senate a month ago, but it has yet to clear the House.

Colorado would need a waiver from the federal government to legally bring those drugs across the border, and it's unclear whether the White House would allow that. Both the Bush and Obama administrations rejected requests from other states.

Prescription drug transparency

Another bill aimed at lowering the price people pay at the pharmacy is running out of time.

House Bill 1296 would authorize the state Department of Insurance to collect data from every part of the prescription drug supply chain, analyze it and report annually to lawmakers on ways to reduce costs. It also would require drug companies to publish certain price increases on the DOI's website 30 days before they go into effect.

The bill has yet to get a vote from either chamber.

Out-of-network billing

Two different bills — one from each chamber — would limit how much money patients can be charged for out-of-network services they likely unknowingly received during an in-network hospital visit.

They're called surprise or balance bills, and this is the fifth time lawmakers have tried to pass some kind of legislation to address them. House Bill 1174 appears to be on its way to becoming law; it's awaiting a final vote in the Senate.

Colorado reinsurance program effort gets 3rd and most complicated financing system

Denver Business Journal

Colorado's effort to establish a reinsurance program that would bring down the soaring costs of the individual health-insurance market took another turn on Thursday, as sponsors of a bill to launch the effort had to come up with a complex system of funding that relies on sources such as vendor fees currently going to retail businesses after a second unique funding source proved to be unfeasible.

The idea behind reinsurance, which is being debated for the third straight legislative session at the Colorado Capitol, is that the state government can create a pool of money that can pay for a significant portion of the most high-cost individual claims — think major accidents or potentially fatal diseases — after those costs reach a certain level. In exchange, insurers can bring down the cost of premiums on the individual market — costs that not only are higher than group markets because one person can exceed actuarial expectations so massively with their claims but that have risen an average of 82 percent statewide over the past four years, said Andrea Stojavljevic, policy manager with the group Healthier Colorado.

Seven other states have instituted reinsurance programs after receiving federal waivers to do so, and every one of them have funded these nine-figure efforts through means such as assessments on other insurance policies or even set-asides in the state budget. But Colorado Insurance Commissioner Michael Conway and the authors of House Bill 1168 decided that they wanted to get a significant portion of the expenses paid for by hospitals that are viewed as one of the biggest cost drivers in the health system currently, and they've attempted, in fits and starts to try to craft a unique formula that does not place the burden for paying for the program on employers who provide insurance to their workers.

First they tried to establish a first-of-its-kind limitation on what hospitals could charge to individually insured patients in certain cases in an effort to use the savings to fund reinsurance, but they gave that up when they realized the federal government would not grant a waiver for a system that employs government cost controls. Then they decided to just charge a fee to hospitals to fund the program before a hospital attorney discovered that such a plan, in combination with the state's existing hospital provider fee that helps to expand Medicaid eligibility for childless adults, would violate a federal-government limitation on the amount of fees that can be placed on hospitals in an effort to draw federal matching funds.

So, on Thursday, Conway and sponsoring Sens. Kerry Donovan, D-Vail, and Bob Rankin, R-Carbondale, unveiled their third option for generating some \$120 million a year when the program is running at full speed. It involves a combination of putting just \$40 million a year in new fees on hospitals rather than the \$500 million they originally

intended to mandate, redirecting rising tax revenues from insurance-premium taxes to the program and capping the state's vendor fee given to merchants and putting the money that otherwise would be given in refunds to reinsurance.

The vendor-fee cap is the most controversial aspect of the proposal. Retailers now get to keep 3.3 percent of the sales taxes that they owe to the state as a fee for calculating and remitting sales taxes to Colorado government. Another bill that passed the House this week on a largely Democratic-led partisan vote would raise the fee to 4 percent but cap the amount at \$1,000 per month — taking money away from the largest merchants in Colorado in order to direct some \$40 million a year to affordable housing — and the newest version of HB 1168 would take most of that money away from affordable housing and put it toward the reinsurance program.

Conway acknowledged the complexity of the funding mechanism Thursday in testimony before the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, but he said that the proceeds, combined with federal matching funds, likely would reduce individual premiums by about 20 percent in the highest-cost counties throughout the mountains and Western Slope and 5 to 10 percent in other parts of Colorado. And with costs for some of the roughly 165,000 individual plans in Colorado running as high as \$2,500 a month, such immediate relief — it could be reflected in premium costs beginning in January — is desperately needed, supporters said.

Colorado is set to invest more in affordable housing than ever before. And it nearly spent even more.

Colorado Sun

Colorado's set to make what could be the largest ongoing investments in affordable housing in the state's history. And yet, some housing advocates will walk away a little disappointed about what might have been.

Just days ago, a package of bills moving through the state legislature would have invested more than \$600 million in affordable housing over the next seven years, with ongoing funding of about \$50 million a year thereafter. But in a span of 48 hours last week, one measure got slashed by \$190 million. And another was cut by about \$53 million over the next two years, after lawmakers tapped its funding source to pay for a health care program instead.

In some ways it was *deja vu* all over again. Colorado's housing affordability crisis has been top of mind for the state's residents for years now, but has struggled to emerge as a top spending priority at the state Capitol, consistently taking a back seat to roads, schools and health care.

Still, if the bills are adopted — even in their scaled back form — they would represent a staggering sum in a state that has typically spent less than \$10 million a year on housing grants. And, assuming lawmakers don't divert its revenue stream again in the future, Colorado for the first time would have a dedicated funding mechanism for housing, fulfilling a long-standing goal of affordable housing advocates and their Democratic allies.

The bills have to clear several hurdles before they become law. And a lot still could change.

"The need is obvious"

When Cathy Alderman talks to policymakers about housing, she never has to convince anyone of the need.

"We've hardly had to talk about the housing crisis," said Alderman, the vice president of communications and public policy for the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. "Everyone knows we're in one. The need is obvious."

The stats are eye-opening. One out of every four renters spends more than 50% of their income on housing, according to Housing Colorado. It would take a minimum wage worker 74 hours a week to afford the typical one-bedroom rental home at fair-market rent, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

The poor have been hit the hardest — leaving many homeless — but the cost crunch has been felt throughout the middle class and all across the state.

"If you're spending that much on housing, you're not spending it on health care, you're not spending it on a gym membership, you're not investing it in your kids' activities," said Elena Wilken, the executive director of Housing Colorado, a nonprofit advocacy group. "...It's exacerbated at lower income levels and we're starting to see it at higher incomes as well."

The causes are complicated, but the problem is pretty simple. There's not enough supply to meet the demand, and that has made rents and home prices skyrocket, from the least expensive apartments to high-end homes.

Not only has the private market not kept pace with demand, the public sector hasn't either. The primary funding source for subsidized housing — the federal government — has not kept up with construction costs or population growth. The two largest federal housing grants are the Community Development Block Grant program and HOME, and since 2000 their funding has fallen by 57% and 64%, respectively, according to an analysis by the left-leaning Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

But where other states have stepped in, Colorado has largely left cities to fund solutions on their own. In the current 2018-19 budget year, the federal government spent \$426 million on housing in Colorado, while cities allocated \$97 million. The state chipped in \$35 million, but the bulk of that was one-time money that was diverted to transitional housing for ex-offenders and homeless people struggling with mental health problems.

Since the Great Recession, the state has typically spent \$9 million or less per year on housing development grants, and \$5 million annually on tax credits to incentivize private development.

Opinion: Rent control is a nice idea. But its impact likely is opposite what was intended.

Colorado Sun

The cost of housing — not just in Denver, but statewide — continues to be one of the most pressing issues facing Colorado. On balance it is a case of both a scarcity of affordable housing for low-income residents as well as ballooning housing costs for the middle class. The two problems are very much related. They are rooted in the common concern of the state's population growth which is far outpacing existing housing supply.

According to March 2019 data from Zillow, four Colorado cities are among the top 30 U.S. markets with the highest monthly median rent: No. 4 Edwards at \$3,500 per month; No. 7 Breckenridge at \$3,225 per month; No. 23 Boulder at \$2,200 per month; and No. 28 Denver at \$2,100/month. Clearly, something needs to be done.

Lawmakers in Colorado are rightly seeking solutions, but they are wrongly focused on a concept that would only exacerbate housing costs: rent control. If passed, Senate Bill 225 would allow local governments to impose potentially draconian rent control price caps on private residential properties. While the concept of rent control may sound appealing, countless economic analyses over the years have demonstrated that it has not worked. Such controls have often had an effect counter to its stated intentions of aiding those in need of affordable housing.

In an oft-cited New York Times column, writer and economist Paul Krugman summarized, "Almost every freshman-level textbook contains a case study on rent control, using its known adverse side effects to illustrate the principles of supply and demand."

Colorado can look east and west for case studies that expose the downsides of government-imposed rent limits, that is, rent controls. In San Francisco and New York, two cities which famously (or perhaps infamously) impose rent control, the consequences have been clear. Rent control has benefitted those fortunate enough to live in an apartment covered under the law.

The problem is that those residents are not necessarily the ones in greatest need of relief. They are merely the lucky ones that have found and rented a rent-controlled unit. Given the low rent, they typically stay for years, if not decades,

freezing the mobility that is necessary in a growing city. Truly low-income residents will find it very difficult to find an affordable home.

In many instances, the existing occupant of a rent-controlled unit undertakes “agreements” with others to sublease or contract for the favorably priced unit. This action is often undertaken to improperly and illegally retain control over the below market, rental unit.

The larger issue with rent control is that builders and owners are unable to recoup their costs and a reasonable return. If their property is no longer profitable, they are forced to make changes. Those may include one or more of the following: they will be forced to increase rents for those not living in controlled apartments; they will convert rental units into condos; they will, financially, be unable and unwilling to make upgrades; and they will decide not to build new housing. In total, these outcomes translate into less housing supply and an even tighter housing market.

It is easy for economists to pick apart rent control laws, but we must also offer solutions. It’s not a mystery; we need new construction of all types of housing at a variety of price points. New single-family homes, townhouses and apartments are part of the equation, as is the construction of affordable housing. To reach this goal for housing, state lawmakers should instead consider other measures, e.g., ease onerous or outdated zoning laws, increase permitting efficiency and incentivize construction near transit and job centers. These are just a few, sensible solutions to the housing crisis.

Economists are not politicians, yet they do often disagree with one another. They might be labeled either conservative or liberal. Regardless of their designation, most economists agree that rent control does not work. Instead, economists turn to the age-old principles of supply versus demand. Creating balance between housing availability and housing needs is the simplest and most effective way to drive down costs for Coloradans. Rent controls have the opposite impact: They increase the cost of housing.

Bill To Increase Cigarette Tax By 300% Moves Forward In State House (VIDEO)

CBS 4 Denver

DENVER (CBS4)— A bill to impose a 62 percent tax on vaping products passed the state House committee on Friday. The measure would also raise the cigarette tax by 300 percent.

Gov. Jared Polis called for the tax increase earlier this week.

If it’s approved by the state Legislature, it would be sent back to the voters to decide. Supporters hope it will keep teens from smoking and vaping.

The measure heads to the full House next week.

Colorado education legislation roundup: One week to go

Chalkbeat Colorado

The Senate this week celebrated what many in the education world are looking forward to: a significant funding increase for the first time in nearly a decade and the ability of all districts to offer full-day kindergarten.

There are still a few steps left for those measures.

The House must approve Senate amendments to the full-day kindergarten bill, which includes \$175 million in funding. Then it will head to Gov. Jared Polis, where it’s likely there will be a celebratory signing ceremony.

It’s worth noting that the Senate approved the measure unanimously, with Republicans joining Democrats to sing its praises. In the House, 11 Republicans voted against the bill. They included three Republicans who voted for the bill in the House Education Committee.

Meanwhile, the Senate passed a bill Saturday that will increase money for K-12 capital construction, including \$25 million for facilities for full-day kindergarten. That bill goes to Polis for his signature.

Then there's the Public School Finance Act, which awaits action in the House. The Senate also gave unanimous approval to Senate Bill 246. It includes a \$100 million buydown of money owed to districts since the recession, \$20 million for rural schools and \$22 million for special needs students.

Technically, the school finance bill is the only remaining item that lawmakers must accomplish before the May 3 adjournment.

But with lots of priority bills for Democrats and Polis awaiting action, it's possible we may have to wait a while for school finance to hit the House floor.

"Slowing the roll" might as well be the 2019 General Assembly theme for Republicans. They've insisted entire bills be read at length in both houses, and extended debate more than usual, including on bills that in other times might not be that controversial.

Because of that, both the House and the Senate met Saturday.

If the school finance act passes the House and heads to the governor, the GOP might be even more filibuster-emboldened. And that could endanger measures such as asking voters to triple the cigarette tax, asking voters to let the state keep money over TABOR limits for roads and schools, and plenty more.

Other key education measures still awaiting action:

- A measure to allow 12- and 13-year-olds to receive at least a few sessions of mental health counseling before their parents are notified. The bill awaits Senate floor action, where Republicans are expected to resist, as they have every step of the way.
- A controversial bill to strengthen reporting on whether children are vaccinated. The House debated the bill until 3:30 a.m. Wednesday. It passed 39-20 on Saturday after lengthy debate, and now heads to the Senate.
- A bill that puts new money into dropout prevention programs passed the House and is on its way to the Senate. The programs focus on helping ninth graders get a good start.
- The Senate unanimously approved revisions to a program at improving an early elementary reading program. It's likely to get quick House action.
- The Senate also signed off on a bill that creates a grant program to support experiments with local accountability pilot programs. It needs House approval but has drawn broad bipartisan support.
- A bill to create a pilot program to put more social workers in a few elementary schools passed the House Friday. It still needs Senate approval.
- The Senate began debating a bill expanding civics education to include Asian-Americans, LGBTQ people and all religions Thursday, but set it aside after heated opposition from Republicans. Right now, it's scheduled to resume on Monday.

Colorado equal pay bill passes General Assembly after years of trying

Denver Post

Wendy Rockwell, the sole provider for her family of four in Highlands Ranch, was in the middle of a successful career in the biopharmaceutical industry – top awards, a promotion to manager – when she discovered she was earning as little as 57 cents on the dollar compared to some male managers in her company.

"My peers were appalled," she told the Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee. "I had no way of rectifying this within my company. I tried to through the proper channels."

Rockwell was testifying in favor of Senate Bill 85 — equal pay legislation that, after being amended several times in compromises with business groups, is one step closer to Gov. Jared Polis' desk. The state House on Saturday gave its final approval to the bill. Now the Senate must vote on the House's changes before the bill goes to the governor.

It would compensate underpaid employees like Rockwell and punish companies that are deliberately paying one gender less than another.

Equal pay legislation has gained momentum as Democratic numbers have increased in the Capitol, further evidence of what Democratic control of the Colorado Senate means. In 2016, there was an equal pay bill that only would have applied to companies of more than 50 employees that receive state contracts. It passed the House on a narrow vote but died in the Senate. So, too, did an equal pay bill introduced last year. Both times, Republicans controlled the upper chamber.

"I have daughters," Rep. Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez, a Denver Democrat and sponsor of the latest bill, told reporters this week. "And we're really hopeful we're not having this conversation in another 30 years when they're my age. We're doing this for our future generations."

The bill allows employees who believe they are being paid less due to their gender to file a civil lawsuit within two years. Employers found to have paid someone less due to their gender must pay the amount of money the employee would have made the past three years if there had not been discrimination.

The bill also prevents employers from asking job applicants for their salary history.

"It's not so much of a woman thing," said Rep. Perry Buck, a Windsor Republican and opponent of the bill, during House debate Friday. "I don't believe in the women as being victims. You look at how many are graduating with degrees. Women are on a movement and look at the legislature. There is absolutely, definitely equal pay here."

Buck and business groups say they fear frivolous lawsuits will increase, costing companies even when they've done nothing wrong. The National Federation of Independent Business opposed the bill, saying most Colorado small businesses don't have a legal department and could be bankrupted by a lawsuit. Plus, it says, salary history is a necessary tool for determining qualified applicants.

Republican amendments would have allowed companies to be reimbursed legal fees by an employee whose discrimination claim was found to be baseless and allowed for voluntary disclosure of salary history, but those amendments failed in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"Guess what? I have equality," said Republican Rep. Kim Ransom on the House floor Friday. "I had it 30 years ago, I have it now and I was able to get pay raises by working hard, by going to school and getting yet another degree, by putting in the extra mile at work. ... I used to get raises and promotions all the time based on my ability, not based on some arbitrary rule."

Has time run out for Colorado's immunization bill? Perhaps, some Republicans say

Colorado Politics

Has time run out for Colorado House Bill 1312, which would require parents who want to exempt their children from vaccinations to obtain a state form?

It's not about the bill's content so much as the time it could take to get through the Senate, which, as of 11 a.m. Monday, had about 109 hours left in the 2019 session.

The bill, as approved by the House on Saturday, is intended to discourage Coloradans from opting their children out of vaccinations. It still allows those who have medical reasons to opt out, as well as those who object to vaccinations for

religious reasons. Those who believe that the government shouldn't have any say in parents' decisions involving their children also still have that right to opt out via a personal exemption.

Gov. Jared Polis has concerns about the bill, most notably that the measure requires parents to visit a local health department or the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to obtain a form for exempting their children from vaccinations.

Sen. Minority Leader Chris Holbert of Parker told Colorado Politics on Monday that suggested to the Senate Democratic leadership that the bill be postponed in its first committee hearing in order to ward off potentially hundreds of opponents showing up to testify on it.

The Senate, which on Monday still had 128 bills pending action, doesn't have 20 hours or more to spend on one bill in a committee hearing, plus floor debate, Holbert said.

That's what happened on April 15, when the measure was heard by the House Health & Insurance Committee. About 575 people, mostly affiliated with the anti-vaccine group Colorado Health Choice Alliance, packed the committee hearing, which took 14 hours. Sources have told Colorado Politics the group hopes that even more people will show up for the Senate committee hearing.

That's time the Senate just doesn't have. With 128 bills on the calendar, that's about 15 minutes per bill, according to Democratic Sen. Jeff Bridges of Greenwood Village, and that's down from 22 minutes per bill on third reading as of last Friday.

But the bill's Senate sponsor — Republican Sen. Kevin Priola of Henderson — told Colorado Politics he hadn't heard of that argument.

Senate Majority Leader Steve Fenberg of Boulder said Monday that "we don't make decisions based on threats."

The bill could be assigned to any committee, he added, although the calendar shows only four out of 10 committees — State, Veterans and Military Affairs; Judiciary; Finance; and Appropriations — are still scheduled to meet this week.

"If there's a bill coming over from the House, it'll get its due time," Fenberg explained.
Would the Senate spend 20 hours on one bill?

"If that's what it takes," Fenberg said.

Joint Rule 23 requires that a bill be introduced in the next chamber within three days of receipt; the Senate received the bill on Saturday, according to Holbert.

When the Senate convened on Monday, Republicans began making their point about time, with a lengthy (or, at least more than 15 minutes) debate on a bill reauthorizing professional review committees within the Department of Regulatory Agencies. Seven Republicans got up to speak on the bill, every one of them in favor of it.

After 20 minutes of discussion, Fenberg asked that the bill be laid over until later in the morning.
On Monday morning the Senate spent 45 minutes on the first two bills on its third-reading calendar, while the House passed six bills in that amount of time.

Full-day kindergarten unanimously passes Colorado senate, headed to Polis' desk (VIDEO)

9News Denver

DENVER — The Colorado state senate unanimously voted Friday to send a bill funding universal full-day kindergarten in Colorado to Gov. Jared Polis' desk.

HB19-1262 was one of the Democrat's promises for his first year in office, and he was given \$185 million by the Joint Budget Committee to pay for it.

The plan would go into effect next fall. The idea was first floated by Rep. Jim Wilson (R-Salida) and Rep. Barbara McLachlan (D-Durango) but it failed last year.

Construction workers exploited by Colorado's underground economy want to add bite to wage theft law *Colorado Sun*

In Colorado's underground economy, where cash flows under the table and crews are lured by the promise of good wages and free housing, workers are getting ripped off.

Especially construction workers who don't speak English or aren't living here legally.

Union officials have uncovered allegations of wage theft from subcontracted workers who restored Colorado Mills Mall in Lakewood after it was pummeled by a hailstorm in 2017. From construction workers at TopGolf in Thornton. The Monarch Casino in Blackhawk. SkyHouse Denver Apartments. And the Emerson Place Apartments near downtown Denver, where a construction fire killed two workers in 2018.

That's just a few of the well-known projects mentioned at the Capitol this session as legislators attempt to strengthen law regarding wage theft and human trafficking. Formal complaints of wage theft to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment number up to 4,300 per year.

At Colorado Mills, more than 200 construction workers collected their cash from the back of a pickup truck in the parking lot, according to Angel Esparza, a field representative for the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters. He was on site to make sure the workers were getting fair wages and instead ended up being threatened by a contractor and facing charges of trespassing.

The stories are rampant, and the stacks of claims filed with the state — many of them written in Spanish and from workers housed by labor brokers in the same place — are helping piece together details of an off-the-books economy, particularly in the drywall industry. The problem is that Colorado law lacks punch — wage theft, at most, is an unclassified misdemeanor, no matter how much an employee is stiffed. That could soon change, with bipartisan support for legislation making wage theft of more than \$2,000 a felony.

"Employers are ripping off the workers and that's basically their business model," said Diego Bleifuss Prados, who helps employees try to get paid at the Wage Theft Direct Action Team at El Centro Humanitario. "Generally, they don't fear consequences for what they have done."

Here's how it works: A labor broker, also called a coyote, entices workers by offering good wages and, sometimes, housing. Many of the workers already live here, but some are from Texas and Oklahoma, according to the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, which helps workers file state claims for unpaid wages multiple times per week in its north Denver headquarters.

The labor broker is paid by a subcontractor to provide the workers for a particular job, which could last from days to months. That subcontractor is paid by a general contractor to provide the work. The tiered system means the workers are not employed by anyone but the labor broker.

And many of those workers don't get the pay they were promised, according to hundreds of pages of wage theft claims prepared at the carpenters union. The pay is short. The broker garnishes wages to pay for rent. The checks are no good.

"Things change once they get here," said Juan Arellano, a representative with the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters. "And you don't have a choice once you are here — you take it or leave it."

"There is a lot of money changing hands, and the ones who are impacted are the workers. You have hundreds of workers on these projects and they are paid in cash. Where is that cash coming from?"

Union representatives have started wearing hidden cameras on their bodies as they walk through job sites and ask workers whether they are receiving fair pay, including overtime, and whether they filled out any payroll paperwork. A video they captured this month shows a jobsite foreman at a senior living complex warning workers they should not talk to any union reps, and if the union reps show up on the jobsite, they will be arrested for trespassing.

Workers who haven't gotten paid come to the union's brick building just off Interstate 70 almost every day. And some agree to file a formal complaint.

Vaccination showdown: Lawmaker, health experts stand up to Colorado Gov. Jared Polis

Denver Post

A freshman Democratic lawmaker insists he won't back down from a bill that would make it harder for Colorado parents to get vaccine exemptions for their kids, saying it will be up to Gov. Jared Polis to veto it if it reaches his desk.

"This isn't a statement for me. It's a real issue," said Rep. Kyle Mullica, D-Northglenn. "Experts tell me it's not a matter of if but when a measles outbreak takes hold in Colorado. ... And if a kid dies, people are going to ask us why didn't you do something."

The Colorado Hospital Association and other health care experts across Colorado also responded strongly Friday to comments from the governor — first reported by Colorado Public Radio — that he didn't support the current bill, House Bill 1312, to make some vaccination exemptions more difficult for parents to get.

"On behalf of Children's Hospital Colorado, I was disappointed to see the governor's comments this morning," said Jessica Cataldi, a pediatrician who specializes in infectious diseases. "The multiple measles outbreaks across the country represent a public health crisis that must be addressed. I hope the governor will reconsider his position."

Mullica's bill would require parents to visit a state health department office and fill out a form in person the first time they request a personal or religious vaccine exemption for a child entering public school. Currently they need only provide written notice to the school district upon registration.

That in-person registration requirement is a problem for Polis.

The governor's office said in a statement that Polis is working with the bill's sponsors to remove the requirement because "he wants to ensure fairness for parents, especially those that live in rural areas that would need to drive up to an hour to get such exemption."

But Mullica told The Denver Post he's done negotiating.

His original bill would have eliminated nonmedical vaccine exemptions in Colorado. Mullica amended it after Polis made clear he wouldn't agree to that. The lawmaker said the current version of the bill is already a less aggressive and potentially less effective option.

"We made a lot of compromises," Mullica said. "Changing it like (Polis wants) kind of keeps us at status quo and doesn't accomplish the goal of formalizing that process."

The showdown over Colorado's vaccination exemption process came two days after the national Centers for Disease Control said the number of reported measles cases in the U.S. is the highest it has been since the disease was declared eliminated in 2000. The CDC has recorded 695 measles cases in 22 states this year, including one adult case in Colorado.

"This current outbreak is deeply troubling, and I call upon all health care providers to assure patients about the efficacy and safety of the measles vaccine," CDC Director Robert Redfield said in a statement. "I encourage all Americans to

adhere to CDC vaccine guidelines in order to protect themselves, their families and their communities from measles and other vaccine preventable diseases.”

The CDC ranks Colorado at the bottom for kindergarten vaccinations, with a rate of 88.7 percent. But there are schools in Boulder County that report vaccination rates to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment below 50 percent.

“We need to do more to protect our children and keep schools safe. Taking children to the doctor for vaccinations takes time and effort. Why should opting out be easier,” Community Immunity co-founder Lindsay Diamond said in a statement. “We should not wait for an outbreak where innocent people suffer because the legislature failed to act.”

Opponents of Colorado’s new oil and gas regulation law won’t try to repeal it — at least not this year

Colorado Sun

Opponents of a new Colorado oil and gas law that puts public safety ahead of production said Thursday that they will not attempt to overturn it this year, but they may try in 2020.

They had planned to ask voters in November 2019 to repeal and replace the law, but last week the Colorado secretary of state’s office rejected four versions of their proposed ballot initiative. State officials said the proposals violated a law requiring initiatives to address only one subject.

John Brackney, a former Arapahoe County commissioner and one of the leaders of the repeal effort, said the group decided not to appeal the secretary of state’s ruling and instead will wait to see how the new rules take shape before deciding whether to ask voters to overturn it.

“We opted to give it a little bit of a break,” Brackney said, but added, “I think it’s likely we will file for 2020.”

Previously, the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission was required to encourage production and make public safety and environmental protection secondary considerations.

In addition to flipping those priorities, the new law gives local governments the power to regulate the location of wells and changes the makeup of the commission to add expertise on safety and the environment.

Well location is a contentious issue in Colorado, especially in booming communities north of Denver, where development overlaps with the state’s most productive oil and gas field.

Democratic Gov. Jared Polis signed the law last week, and the Oil and Gas Conservation Commission will begin writing new rules in May. That could take months or years of hearings and painstaking negotiations with the industry and advocates for public safety and the environment.

Brackney predicted at least some cities and counties would overreach by imposing so many new restrictions on drilling that they effectively ban it. He said environmentalists would put so much pressure on local officials to impose de facto bans that they will cave for fear of losing the next election.

The other leader of the repeal effort, Weld County Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer, said they will keep close track of how the new rules come together.

In a statement posted on Facebook and emailed to The Associated Press, Kirkmeyer warned Polis and environmentalists against using the law — known as SB 19-181 — to go too far.

“If Polis & Co. use the 181 rulemaking as a hammer to kill Colorado jobs and hurt Colorado families or if extremists hijack 181 and push local bans and moratoriums across the political landscape, we will eagerly make the 2020 election a referendum on his extreme and out of touch energy policy,” she wrote.

Brackney acknowledged that if opponents wait until November 2020, the industry may have so much time and money invested in writing the new rules that there will be little appetite for starting over.

“My preference was that we would have gone in 2019, and that’s the primary reason,” he said.

These Xcel-backed bills loom large in the Colorado Legislature

Denver Business Journal

A lot is at stake for Xcel Energy in the final days of the Colorado legislature’s session, which ends Friday.

The Denver metro’s electrical utility, with 1.5 million customers, has backed a bill pushing it to slash carbon emissions — but also add a fee to customers’ bills to help pay for it — and another that would make it legal for Xcel to build electric-vehicle charging stations, which the law doesn’t currently allow.

The legislature could also allow utilities to sell bonds to pay for closing of coal-fired power plants and one funding worker retraining for those displaced from jobs by the switch to clean energy.

Opponents of the utilities carbon-reduction bill, House Bill 1313, argue it does Xcel too many favors, could risk higher utility bills for customers and allow Xcel to grow and become more profitable at the expense of other energy companies.

Xcel Energy backs it, saying it makes common-sense changes to state law for something Xcel has publicly committed to do.

“The bill holds us accountable, and we embrace that,” said Alice Jackson, president of Xcel Energy in Colorado. “It also sets up the implementation process by which we can complete that.”

Two other proposed law changes affecting electrical companies — allowing utilities to issue bonds to fund accelerated closure of coal-burning power plants and another to stop tiered summertime electrical rates — aren’t expected by Xcel to affect the company.

Xcel’s main legislative focus is House Bill 1313, which requires Xcel to cut carbon emissions by 80% from 2005 levels by 2030. It also tells the companies to try to eliminate all carbon emissions above 2005 levels by 2050 but doesn’t make that a requirement.

The measure matches the carbon emissions-free goal Minneapolis-based Xcel Energy set for itself in December.

A separate bill, House Bill 1261, sets similar carbon-reduction targets broadly across Colorado. That measure has drawn opposition from some, including the Colorado Mining Association, which predicts the law would essentially end coal mining in the state.

HB-1313, which is backed and was shaped by Xcel Energy, passed the Colorado House Friday. It moves to the Senate in the final week of the legislative session.

The law is focused on large utilities, requiring them to formally submit clean energy plans designed to meet the carbon-reduction goals and authorizing the companies to add a charge, known as a rider, to customer bills to fund some of the infrastructure investment necessary. That fee would be capped at 1.5% of a customer’s bill.

Rep. Chris Hanson, D-Denver, a cosponsor of HB-1313, argues the bill is not just necessary for the climate but makes economic sense because electricity from solar and wind projects cost half of coal-generated electricity.

“The ratepayers will see decreases,” he said. “We can do this clean energy transition ... and we can save money for customers.”

Some opponents worry the promises of cheaper energy won’t materialize.

"I worry ratepayers are going to be stuck with the bill," said Rep. Susan Beckman, R-Littleton.

Electric-vehicle push slows as Colorado Legislature rejects bill to allow sales without dealers

Denver Business Journal

The session-long push from Gov. Jared Polis and legislative Democrats to make it easier for Coloradans to buy and use electric vehicles hit its first major speed bump Wednesday, as the House voted to kill a measure that would have allowed electric-vehicle manufacturers to bypass the state's long-standing dealership regulations and sell their cars and trucks directly to the public.

More than a dozen Democrats joined with most Republicans to vote down House Bill 1325 on 35-30 count. The surprising death of the bill, sponsored by Democratic Rep. Chris Hansen of Denver and Republican Rep. Hugh McKean of Loveland, came just minutes after the House — on a fully partisan, Democratic-led vote — increased and extended through 2025 tax credits offered by the state for electric, plug-in electric and hydrogen vehicles that had been scheduled to end after 2021.

HB 1325 split electric-vehicle advocates in the Legislature, however, because it was seen as a threat to dealerships across Colorado, which have operated since 1937 under franchise rules that require auto makers to sell vehicles through them rather than straight to the public and limit the demands that can be made on the local businesses from national and international auto manufacturers. Those dealers invest an average of \$20 million per business to operate and are seen as a customer-service protection, particularly in the cases of auto makers that go out of business, said Tim Jackson, president and CEO of the Colorado Automobile Dealers Association.

Tesla (Nasdaq: TSLA), however, found a "loophole" in the rules (in the words of both proponents and opponents of HB 1325) when it began selling directly to customers, pointing to a law passed some 20 years ago for a now-defunct Lamar bus manufacturer that allowed a factory to sell vehicles directly to customers if they don't have any dealerships. McKean said HB 1325 was an effort to even the playing field for all EV makers, while Hansen described it as a way to help new companies that may arise gain some footing in this growing market.

Rep. Larry Liston, R-Colorado Springs, said, however, that the law was being written only for Rivian, a Michigan-based EV maker that recently got a \$500 million investment commitment from Ford. And Rep. Jovan Melton, an Aurora Democrat who is sponsoring a separate bill to increase penalties against cars that park in front of electric-vehicle charging stations while not using them, said that with most major car makers moving toward increasing electrification of their portfolios, the bill could set up a situation where those automotive-industry giants are put into direct competition with the less-deep-pocketed local businesses that they have to go through to sell their cars and trucks with internal-combustion engines.

Jackson said after the vote that dealerships could be forced to close if that were to happen, and he characterized the vote as a win for local employers. He also noted that Rivian or any electric-vehicle maker could use the same loophole that Tesla employs to open to sell and service their products from one location, though that limit clearly seemed to be a sticking point that led to HB 1325.

"That investment that dealers make is predicated on and committed to the stability of the market," Jackson said. "There is greater stability in the marketplace for the consumer who is making probably the second-largest purchase of their lifetime."

Polis signed an executive order shortly after his January inauguration putting more funding toward growing the state's electric-vehicle infrastructure that includes charging stations, and he's ordered departments to work together to remove barriers to electric-vehicle ownership.

And so far this session, Democrats have pushed through a bill putting more money toward the proliferation of electric-vehicle charging stations and are close to sending another bill to Polis that would allow utilities to recoup the cost of

adding EV charging stations through the rates charged to all customers. Those are in addition to the Wednesday House passage of HB 1159, which is expected to offer \$18.5 million in tax credits in the 2022-23 fiscal year for people buying or leasing electric vehicles.

Rare Saturday session on Capitol Hill brings both parties to chamber on a weekend (VIDEO)

9News Denver

Late Foster Dad Kyle Forti Honored With Bill At State Capitol (VIDEO)

CBS 4 Denver

DENVER (CBS4)— In the final hectic days of the legislative session, state lawmakers pause to remember a foster dad who fought for a bill to help kids and parents in crisis. Kyle Forti died before the bill was passed.

Now, Colorado lawmakers are naming it after him.

“Sometimes we forget about what’s really important in life,” said Rep. Jonathan Singer. “And then we have bills like this.”

Singer, a Boulder County Democrat, and Rep. Kim Ransom, a Douglas County Republican, are sponsoring the bill that gives parents, who love their kids but need some help, an option other than the foster care system.

“It’s a huge honor to be part of this bill,” said Ransom as she introduced an amendment to name the bill The Kyle Forti Act.

Forti and his wife, Hope, began pushing for the bill two years ago, to give parents in crisis with nowhere to turn a safe place to temporarily put their kids so they didn’t end up in foster care.

Last month, he died in a helicopter crash and she was left to press on alone, three months pregnant, with a five year old son, and two foster kids.

“Sometimes it is all the energy I have to put one post up, ‘Please email your legislators’, but that’s the one thing right now I would choose to do.”

She does it, she says, to help other families who don’t have the support she does.

“The reason kids are in foster care – it’s easy to stereotype – but it’s not just financial poverty, it’s relational poverty.”

The program will be run by the non-profit Safe Families. It works with churches to identify, screen and train families willing to help with temporary care. The state will oversee the program.

“It’s wonderful to have his name kind of there in history now as what’s allowing this program to run,” Hope said, but added that her husband would want it named for all the other people who helped with it.

Kyle’s mom, Ann Forti, says the bill will be part of her son’s legacy, “Kyle’s witness in all of us is to give what we can, to help when we can, so he may not be here physically but his witness in our lives is here.”

Hope and Kyle founded their own non-profit Foster Together to help support foster families and kids. Hope says she wants people to be inspired by her husband to volunteer.

Singer says Forti reminds everyone what matters most in life, “Being there is sometimes the greatest gift that we can give each other.”

The bill passed the House unanimously and heads to the Senate with one week to go in the legislative session.

Governor Polis and Hilary Glasgow of Colorado WINS release joint statement

For Immediate Release

Friday, April 26, 2019

DENVER —Joint Statement from Governor Polis and Hilary Glasgow, Executive Director Colorado WINS:

“The state employees who serve the citizens of Colorado do critical work to keep us safe, clear our roads, provide nursing care for our veterans, maintain our parks and natural resources, keep our air and water clean, respond to emergencies and so much more. We value the voices of state employees in improving public services and fostering innovation and efficiency. Since 2007, the State and Colorado WINS have worked in partnership to improve public services for all Coloradans.

To achieve our shared goal of providing the highest quality public services for Coloradans, the State of Colorado and state employees, represented by Colorado WINS, will expand our existing partnership to make the state an example of innovation in public service. Additionally, over the next 6 months we will enter into discussions to address outstanding issues surrounding House Bill 1273 and other issues affecting the state workforce and the people of Colorado that cannot be resolved in the few remaining days that exist in the legislative session. We are confident that we will successfully resolve these outstanding issues before the 2020 legislative session.

We believe we all benefit when frontline workers come together to find solutions so that Colorado is a place where all families and communities can thrive.”

Gov. Polis signs bills into law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 25, 2019

DENVER— Gov. Jared Polis signed the following bills into law.

HB19-1106

Rental Application Fees

Reps. Titone & Gonzales-Gutierrez / Sen. Pettersen

Concerning the rental application process for prospective tenants.

HB19-1238

Clarification Of Manufactured Housing Standards

Reps. Gray & Van Winkle / Sens. Winter & Priola

Concerning the authority of the division of housing to regulate factory-built structures.

HB19-1224

Free Menstrual Hygiene Products In Custody

Rep. Herod /Sen. Winter

Concerning providing free menstrual hygiene products to people in custody.

HB19-1225

No Monetary Bail For Certain Low-level Offenses

Reps. Herod & Soper / Sens. Lundeen & Lee

Concerning prohibiting the use of monetary bail for certain levels of offenses except in certain circumstances.

HB19-1206

Higher Education Supplemental Academic Instruction

Reps. Coleman & Larson / Send. Bridges & Lundeen

Concerning removing equity gaps in higher education by ensuring more students have access to supplemental academic instruction.

HB19-1087

Local Public Meeting Notices Posted On Website

Reps. Soper & Hansen / Sens. Woodward & Bridges

Concerning online notice of public meetings of a local governmental entity.

HB19-1172

Title 12 Recodification And Reorganization

Rep. Weissman / Sens. Gardner & Cooke

Concerning an organizational recodification of title 12 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, and, in connection therewith, limiting substantive changes to those that conform similar provisions to achieve uniformity, eliminate redundancy, or allow for the consolidation of common provisions or that eliminate provisions that are archaic or obsolete.

HB19-1213

Urban Drainage Flood Control District Director Compensation

Rep. Titone / Sen. Priola

Concerning the compensation payable to a member of a board of directors of an urban drainage and flood control district.

Governor Polis joins Rep. Caraveo to announce legislation giving Colorado voters choice to raise taxes on tobacco products

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

DENVER —Today, Governor Jared Polis joined Representative Yadira Caraveo, along with other public health advocates to announce legislation that would give voters the choice to tax nicotine vaping the same as cigarettes and raise the taxes on tobacco products. If passed, the referred measure would raise more than \$300 million, half of which would go toward education and half to health care.

“Colorado currently has the highest rate of teen vaping in the nation,” said Governor Jared Polis. “This isn’t a statistic we’re proud of. This measure would help keep tobacco products out of the hands of kids and put more resources toward schools, tobacco prevention and cessation efforts, and toward reducing healthcare costs.”

In Colorado, 33 percent of students use tobacco products and 26.2 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, which is twice the national average for teen vaping.

"Increasing taxes on tobacco products is an effective way to reduce tobacco use, especially for youth," said Jill Hunsaker Ryan, executive director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. "Tobacco is still the leading preventable cause of disease in our state. This measure would help prevent addiction, and save all Coloradans money on health care, whether they use tobacco or not."

“This proposal has the potential to significantly decrease the number of youths who smoke and vape,” said Robin Deterding, MD, medical director of the Breathing Institute at Children’s Hospital Colorado. “We urge the legislature to pass this measure so that Coloradans can come together this November and vote to address the teen vaping epidemic that is gripping our local communities.”

“Addiction to nicotine products is a non-partisan issue, and the tobacco and e-cigarette industries don’t get veto power over the future of our kids. We are going to come together as Coloradans to pass this measure in the interest of our health and our children,” said Jake Williams, Healthier Colorado Executive Director.

"Raising the price of tobacco is one of the most effective ways to decrease youth use. It has been over a decade since Colorado last raised its price on tobacco statewide, ranking 39th in the nation," stated Jodi Radke, the Regional Advocacy Director for the Rocky Mountains/Great Plains Region for Tobacco Free Kids. "The time is now to protect Colorado's kids and save lives."

Gov. Polis Announces Boards and Commissions Appointments

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

Chief Medical Officer at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

effective April 4, 2019 for a term expiring at the Pleasure of the Governor:

- Tista S. Ghosh, M.D., M.P.H., of Denver, Colorado, appointed.

Community Corrections Advisory Council

The Community Corrections Advisory Council advises and assists the Division of Criminal Justice by analyzing, identifying and recommending policy modifications for the community corrections programs.

effective April 11, 2019 for a term expiring February 28, 2020:

- David Michael Johnson of Aurora, Colorado, occasioned by the resignation of Melissa Bonnie Roberts of Aurora, Colorado, appointed;

effective April 11, 2019 for a term expiring February 28, 2023:

- John Thomas Draxler of Sterling, Colorado, reappointed;
- Timothy Sean Hand of Fort Collins, Colorado, reappointed;
- Honorable Katherine Rose Delgado of Broomfield, Colorado, to serve as the Chairperson of the Community Corrections Advisory Council, reappointed;
- William Clyd Cecil of Centennial, Colorado, reappointed;
- Martha Kovener, PMP of Lafayette, Colorado, reappointed;
- David Beale Tejada of Denver, Colorado, appointed;
- Angela Cifor of Denver, Colorado, appointed;
- Jason Lee Shankle, MA of Aurora, Colorado, appointed;
- Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky of Westminster, Colorado, appointed;
- Hassan Abd'al Latif of Aurora, Colorado, appointed;
- Peggy Lou Ritchie of Lakewood, Colorado, appointed;
- Alexandra Jennifer Walker of Sedalia, Colorado, appointed;
- Jacqueline Gayle McCall of Pueblo West, Colorado, appointed;
- Alison Ann George of Denver, Colorado, appointed.

Colorado Complete Count Campaign

The Campaign shall promote and advertise the 2020 Census; respond to the population's questions and concerns; focus resources on hard-to-count areas and populations; and ensure the highest participation rate possible.

for terms expiring July 31, 2020:

- Ryan John Hanschen of Lakewood, Colorado, to serve as a representative of urban governments, and occasioned by the resignation of Anthony Aragon of Denver, CO, appointed;
- Amanda Dawn DeLaRosa of Denver, Colorado, to serve as the designee for the Executive Director of the Department of Education, and occasioned by the resignation of Melissa Lou Colsman of Denver, Colorado, appointed;

Colorado Coroners Standards and Training Board

Duties include developing a curriculum for a forty-hour training course for new coroners and approving the qualifications of the instructors who teach the course; approving training providers to certify coroners in basic medical-legal death investigation pursuant to C.R.S. §30-10-601.8 (2); and approving training providers and programs used to fulfill the annual sixteen-hour in-service training requirement specified in C.R.S. §30-10-601.8 (3).

effective April 4, 2019 for a term expiring March 1, 2020

- Honorable Ronald E. Engels of Central City, Colorado, to serve as a county commissioner of a county with a population of fifty thousand or less and occasioned by the resignation of Honorable Gary Gibson of Olney Springs, Colorado, appointed.

Colorado Dental Board

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.

effective March 27, 2019 for terms expiring January 1, 2021:

- Rominder Kaur, DDS of Fort Morgan, Colorado, to serve as a professional member, and occasioned by the death of James Edward Dost, DDS of Englewood, Colorado, appointed;

Colorado Great Outdoors Trust Fund

The State Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund uses a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the State's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers and open spaces. The Board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

effective April 18, 2019 for a term expiring April 15, 2023:

- Leticia Martinez of Denver, Colorado, an Unaffiliated and resident of the First Congressional District, appointed;
- John Montepare of Breckenridge, Colorado, an Unaffiliated a resident of the Second Congressional District and West of the Continental Divide, appointed;
- David Cockrell of Pueblo, Colorado, an Unaffiliated and resident of the Third Congressional District, appointed;
- Pamela Denahy of La Junta, Colorado, a Republican and resident of the Fourth Congressional District, appointed;
- Mina Liebert of Colorado Springs, Colorado, an Unaffiliated and resident of the Fifth Congressional District, appointed;
- Morris Jay Siegel of Boulder, Colorado, a Democrat and resident of the Second Congressional District, appointed;
- Jahi Simbai of Wheatridge, Colorado, an Unaffiliated and resident of the Seventh Congressional District, appointed.

Ground Water Commission

The Commission determines the boundaries of designated groundwater basins by geographic description and considers well permit applications for persons desiring to appropriate designated groundwater for beneficial use. The Commission is responsible for the development of policies and procedures for maximum economic development, as well as the protection of the vested rights of the designated groundwater basins of the state.

effective April 18, 2019 for a term expiring May 1, 2023:

- Glen S. Frihauf of Wiggins, Colorado, to serve as a resident agriculturist from the North Kiowa-Bijou Basin, and occasioned by the removal of Daniel L. Farmer of Colorado Springs, Colorado, reappointed;
- Blake Austin Gourley of Springfield, Colorado to serve as a resident agriculturist from the Southern High Plains Basin, reappointed.

State Board of Health

The State Board of Health advises the executive director of the department on all matters relating to public health and determines policies for the department to follow in administering and enforcing the public health laws of the state.

effective March 27, 2019 for a term expiring March 1, 2023:

- Kendall Paul Alexander of Greeley, Colorado, a resident of the Fourth Congressional District, and as an Unaffiliated, to serve as a member at-large, appointed.

Judicial Nominating Commissions

There is a judicial district nominating commission for each of Colorado's 22 judicial districts that selects nominees for district and county judicial vacancies. Each district nominating commission is chaired by a justice of the Supreme Court, who is a non-voting member of the commission.

First Judicial District

effective April 11, 2019 for terms expiring December 31, 2021:

- Linza Giamo Douglas of Golden, Colorado, to serve as a non attorney and as a Democrat from Gilpin County, and occasioned by the resignation of Lynn Hirshman of Black Hawk, Colorado, appointed.

Seventh Judicial District

effective March 27, 2019 for a term expiring December 31, 2025:

- Bradley Ray Harding of Paonia, Colorado, to serve as a non attorney and as a Republican from Delta County, appointed.

Eighth Judicial District

effective March 27, 2019 for a term expiring December 31, 2025:

- Robert Lee Bacon of Fort Collins, Colorado, to serve as a non attorney and as a Democrat from Larimer County, appointed.
- Jill L. Honnecke of Coalmont, Colorado, to serve as a non attorney and as an Unaffiliated from Jackson County, appointed

Eleventh Judicial District

effective April 11, 2019 for a term expiring December 31, 2025:

- Marianne Stein Wancura of Salida, Colorado, to serve as a non attorney and as a Democrat from Chaffee County, appointed.

Judicial Performance Commissions

District Commissions evaluate the performance of county and district court judges in their 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.

Twenty-Second Judicial District

effective April 11, 2019 for terms expiring November 30, 2021:

- Prislenna Nightstarr of Towaoc, Colorado, to serve as a non attorney, appointed;
- Eric Stiasny of Dove Creek, Colorado, to serve as a non attorney, appointed.

Juvenile Parole Board

The Colorado Juvenile Parole Board, one of six in the country, grants, denies, modifies, suspends or revokes parole for juvenile delinquents committed to the Department of Human Services.

effective March 27, 2019 for terms expiring November 15, 2021:

- Kim Branham of Thornton, Colorado, to serve as a representative of the Colorado Department of Public Safety, appointed;
- Kaye Lynn Hotsenpiller of Montrose, Colorado, to serve as a public at-large member from the Western Slope, appointed;
- Bradford Louis Geiger of Highlands Ranch, Colorado, to serve as a public member, appointed;
- James A. Newby, MA, LPC, CWDP of Aurora, Colorado, to serve as a representative from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, appointed;

effective March 27, 2019 for terms expiring November 15, 2022:

- Gretchen Jaime Russo, RN, BSN, JD of Denver, Colorado, to serve as a representative from the Colorado Department of Human Services, reappointed;
- Rachael Victoria Lovendahl of Westminster, Colorado, to serve as a representative of the Colorado Department of Education, reappointed;
- Margaret Brewington Wright, PhD, MFA of Pueblo, Colorado, to serve as a public member/not employed by state government, reappointed;
- Michael Anthony Rodriguez of Aurora, Colorado to serve as a public member/not employed by state government, appointed.

Colorado Lottery Commission

The Colorado Lottery Commission governs the operation of the lottery and conducts hearings on granting or suspending licenses for lottery sales.

effective April 4, 2019 for a term expiring July 1, 2019:

- William John Clayton of Littleton, Colorado, to serve as a representative of law enforcement and as an Unaffiliated and occasioned by the death of Kevin Scott Knierim of Englewood, Colorado, appointed.

effective April 4, 2019 for terms expiring July 1, 2022:

- Stanley Henry Podolski III, CPA of Fort Collins, Colorado, a Republican, and certified public accountant who has practiced accountancy in Colorado for at least five years, appointed;
- Jim Bensberg of Colorado Springs, Colorado, to serve as a public member and as a Republican, reappointed.

Medical Services Board

The Medical Services Board adopts the rules and regulations that govern the operation of the Colorado Medicaid Program and Colorado Indigent Care Program. The Regulations adopted by the board will direct the efforts of the State in defining eligibility and the benefits for these programs, the rights and obligations of clients receiving benefits, and the payment of vendors providing health care services. The Board will also provide advice and consultation to the State Board of Human Services in connection with the administration of the Old Age Pension Health and Medical Fund.

effective April 4, 2019 for a term expiring July 1, 2021

- Patricia L. Givens, DHA, EdM, BN, RN of Denver, Colorado, an Unaffiliated from the First Congressional District, with knowledge of medical assistance programs, reappointed;

effective April 4, 2019 for a term expiring July 1, 2022:

- Amanda Ann Moorer of Westminster, Colorado, a Republican from the Seventh Congressional District with knowledge of medical assistance programs, reappointed.

State Board of Nursing

The State Board of Nursing examines and licenses registered and practical nurses. It approves nursing programs and standards, and investigates complaints filed against nurses.

effective March 27, 2019 for terms expiring July 1, 2022:

- Tavia Drummond, DNP, MSN, RN of Colorado Springs, Colorado to serve as a licensed professional nurse engaged in home health care, and occasioned by the resignation of Susan J. Brown, RN, MSN of Whitewater, Colorado appointed;

Real Estate Commission

The Real Estate Commission regulates the licensing and conduct of real estate brokers and salespeople and pre-owned home warranty service companies.

effective April 18, 2019 for a term expiring April 12, 2022:

- Michelle Christina Espinoza of Henderson, Colorado, to serve as a public member, appointed.

StudyColorado

StudyColorado was created in 2012 with the mission of attracting international students to Colorado through the unified outreach efforts of state government, higher education and the business community. The goals of StudyColorado are: to support the international enrollment goals of the state's institutions of higher education; to create new economic opportunities for Colorado businesses through the influx of international students and their families; to create a more diverse learning environment to help Colorado students be more competitive in a global workplace; and to foster lasting relationships between international students and Colorado that will benefit international trade and investment. StudyColorado is developing a unique statewide higher education brand and integrating it into key messaging for state leaders to promote Colorado higher education internationally, while providing a forum for the exchange of information related to international education and also helping to create a welcoming culture for international students and visitors.

effective April 18, 2019 for terms expiring February 1, 2020:

- Suzanne Leduc of Denver, Colorado, to serve as a representative of the business community, appointed;
- David Wagner of Denver, Colorado, to serve as a representative of the business community, appointed;
- Nozomu Higashide of Aurora, Colorado, to serve as a representative of the business community, appointed.
- Sandra Lynn Moilanen of Denver, Colorado, to serve as a representative of the business community, appointed

Underground Damage Prevention Safety Commission

The Safety Commission shall advise the notification association and other state agencies, the general assembly and local governments on: best practices and training to prevent damage to underground utilities; policies to enhance public safety, including the establishment and periodic updating of industry best standards, including marking and documentation best practices and technology advancements; and policies and practices to improve efficiency and cost savings to the 811 program, including the review, establishment and periodic updating of industry best standards to ensure the highest level of productivity and service for the benefit of both excavators and owners and operators.

effective April 18, 2019 for a term expiring January 1, 2022:

- Thomas Daniel Sturmer of Aurora, Colorado, to serve as a representative of telecommunications and broadband sectors, appointed.

Gov. Polis signs bills into law

DENVER— Gov. Jared Polis signed the following bills into law.

SB19-144

Motorcyclist And Malfunctioning Traffic Signals

Sen. Zenzinger/ Rep. Roberts

Concerning allowing a driver of a motorcycle to proceed past a malfunctioning traffic control signal

SB19-091

Support Peace Officers Involved In Use Of Force

Sens. Fields & Cooke/ Rep. Singer

Concerning support of peace officers involved in a use of force incident

SB19-063

Infant And Family Child Care Action Plan

Sens. Priola & Story/ Reps. Buentello, A. Valdez

Concerning a strategic action plan to address infant and family child care home shortages in Colorado

Carr Tapped as New Executive Director for the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs

For Immediate Release

Monday, April 22, 2019

DENVER —Lt. Gov. Dianne Primavera today announced Gwen Carr as the new executive director of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs.

“We are thrilled to have Gwen join our team,” said Lieutenant Governor Dianne Primavera. “Her incredible experience and knowledge will be critical for continuing the State of Colorado’s important government-to-government relationships with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and the other 46 historic tribes of Colorado as well as urban American Indian/Alaska Natives.”

Carr has more than 30 years of experience working with Tribal, state, and federal governments. She is an enrolled member of the Cayuga Nation of New York, Heron Clan.

Carr’s career has been dedicated to advocating for American Indians and social justice. She founded the Wisconsin American Indian Democratic Caucus, worked in Intergovernmental Affairs at the White House during the Clinton Administration, was the first National Political Director for American Indians at the Democratic National Committee in Washington D.C., served as the Deputy Secretary for the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission, and was the first Tribal Liaison for the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Gwen’s artistic vision created the national award winning Lake Butte de Morts Causeway project, the largest Native American designed, engineered and built transportation project in the United States. She served as the Business Development and Outreach Director for the US 41 Project, a \$1.6 billion transportation project in Northeast Wisconsin.

Carr is an alumni of the Interlochen Arts Academy, the Art Institute of Chicago, and Northwestern University.

Gov. Polis signs bills into law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 18, 2019

DENVER— Gov. Jared Polis signed the following bills into law.

SB19-207

FY 2019-20 Long Bill

Sen. Moreno/Rep. Esgar

Concerning the provision for payment of the expenses of the executive, legislative, and judicial departments of the state of Colorado, and of its agencies and institutions, for and during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, except as otherwise noted.

HB19-1166

Name-based Criminal History Record Checks

Reps. Singer, Larson/ Sen. Zenzinger

Concerning name-based criminal history record checks, and, in connection therewith, requiring certain persons and entities to submit to a name-based criminal history record check as a condition of employment, appointment, registration, licensure, or certification.

Governor Polis’ statement on the credible threat against Colorado schools

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

DENVER —Governor Jared Polis released the following statement:

"We know that there is a lot of anxiety right now in Colorado. We want to reassure you that federal, state, and local law enforcement are working together and dedicating all of their resources to locate this dangerous individual. The most

important thing that we can do to assist law enforcement is to continue to share the photograph of the suspect and report any information. Coloradans have a history of coming together in times of need and now is no different. Our biggest priority is keeping our children safe. We thank you for your patience while we deal with this threat."

Colorado files comments on proposed waters of the U.S. rule

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 16, 2018

DENVER - The State of Colorado filed comments with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today expressing concerns about the proposed rule concerning waters of the United States (WOTUS). This proposed rule would remove protections for a number of Colorado streams and wetlands.

"Colorado places the highest priority on the protection of the State's land, air, and water, and relies on a combination of federal and state regulations to ensure that protection," the comments read. "The headwaters of Colorado provide a water supply to 19 states and Mexico, providing millions of people with water for drinking, agriculture, industries, and recreation and are critical to the survival of numerous species of concern."

"If enacted, the Proposed Rule will remove huge swaths of Colorado's waters from federal jurisdiction. In doing so, the Proposed Rule will impose significant burdens upon the State of Colorado's government," the comments explained.

These comments are the result of a collaborative effort by a number of state agencies and the lawyers in the Attorney General's Office who represent them. "In Colorado, we work together to develop innovative solutions and address our challenges, such as protecting our land, air, and water. Exemplifying the Colorado way, our comments do not simply reflect what we believe needs to be changed in the proposed rule, we propose solutions that reflect the range of concerns related to how we protect water quality, providing a roadmap for the federal government," said Governor Jared Polis.

"I am proud of how a range of agencies and the lawyers who represent them worked together so effectively on a complex issue. At this time in our history, we need to demonstrate leadership based on listening to a range of concerns and developing thoughtful solutions. Thanks to everyone involved for working hard to do just that," said Attorney General Phil Weiser. "As this process goes forward, we will continue to operate in this manner."

Gov. Polis signs bills into law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

DENVER— Gov. Jared Polis signed the following bills into law.

HB19-1086

Plumbing Inspections Ensure Compliance

Rep. Duran/Sen. Pettersen

Concerning the conduct of plumbing inspections to ensure compliance with the plumbing law.

SB19-088

Revised Uniform Unclaimed Property Act

Reps. Tipper & McKean/Sen. Gardner

Concerning the adoption of the "Revised Uniform Unclaimed Property Act".

HB19-1029

Republican River Water Conservation District

Rep. Arndt/Sen. Crowder

Concerning the Republican river water conservation district, and, in connection therewith, expanding the boundaries of the district and adjusting the meeting schedule of the district's board of directors.

HB19-1150

Recreate Consumer Insurance Council

Rep. Titone/Sen. Danielson

Concerning the recreation of the consumer insurance council as an advisory body to the commissioner of insurance.

HB19-1069

Sign Language Interpreters Title Certification

Rep. Jackson/Sen. Danielson

Concerning the certification of sign language interpreters for the purpose of title protection, and, in connection therewith, making an appropriation.

SB19-183

Alternate Procedure To Reorganize School Districts

Reps. Michaelson-Jenet & Wilson /Sens. Priola & Todd

Concerning creation of a voluntary alternate process for dissolution and annexation of the territory of a school district under specified circumstances.

HB19-1038

Dental Services For Pregnant Women On Children's Basic Health Plan Plus

Reps. Duran & Lontine/Sens. Ginal & Story

Concerning dental services for pregnant women covered under the children's basic health plan, and, in connection therewith, making an appropriation.

SB19-097

Area Technical College Grant Program

Reps. McCluskie & Soper/Sens. Story & Coram

Concerning a grant program for area technical colleges.

SB19-138

Bond Requirements For Public Projects Using Private Financing

Sens. Priola & Winter /Rep. Bird

Concerning bonding requirements for contractors that are a party to certain public-private initiatives.

SB19-210

Juvenile Detention Beds

Rep. Ransom / Sen. Moreno

Concerning juvenile detention beds, and, in connection therewith, reducing appropriations.

SB19-211

Mental Health Criminal Diversion Program

Rep. Esgar / Sen. Moreno

Concerning changes to the mental health criminal justice diversion programs, and, in connection therewith, making an appropriation.

SB19-181

Protect Public Welfare Oil And Gas Operations

Sens. Fenberg & Foote /Reps. Becker & Caraveo

Concerning additional public welfare protections regarding the conduct of oil and gas operations, and, in connection therewith, making an appropriation.

Gov. Polis orders flags lowered to honor former Colorado legislator Don Sandoval

For Immediate Release

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

DENVER — Gov. Jared Polis today ordered the United States and Colorado flags be lowered to half-staff statewide on all public buildings from sunrise to sunset tomorrow, Wednesday, April 17, 2019, to honor former Colorado State Senator Don Sandoval.

Sandoval passed on April 7, 2019 in his Denver home.

Services will be held on Wednesday, April 17 at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Denver at 10:00 a.m.

Serve Colorado Now Accepting AmeriCorps Planning Grant Applications

DENVER— Monday, April 15, 2019 — Serve Colorado is now accepting applications for the 2019-2020 AmeriCorps state planning grant funding in support of community partnerships that will engage AmeriCorps members to meet state and local challenges through service and volunteer action.

“Serve Colorado is committed to helping communities with the power and talent of AmeriCorps members,” said Antonio Mendez, Executive Director of Serve Colorado. “This new round of federal planning grant funding will allow organizations to create new and innovative AmeriCorps programs to address challenges within their communities.”

AmeriCorps planning grants provide funding to design and develop new AmeriCorps programs that can address community problems and demonstrate significant impacts. A one-year planning grant can support staffing costs, travel, materials, and other costs necessary to conduct a community needs assessment, bring together community partners to help design appropriate service activities to address community needs identified, develop financial plans to support cost share, and develop high-quality plans for managing program implementation.

Applications are due to Serve Colorado on May 17, 2019 at 4:59 pm MT.

For more information, please visit www.colorado.gov/servecolorado and click the “2019-20 Planning Grant Request for Applications” link under “Funding Opportunities”.

Gov. Polis signs bills into law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 12, 2019

DENVER— Gov. Jared Polis signed the following bills into law.

HB19-1177

Extreme Risk Protection Orders

Reps. Sullivan & Garnett/Sens. Court & Pettersen

Concerning the creation of an extreme risk protection order, and, in connection therewith, making an appropriation.

HB19-1119

Peace Officer Internal Investigation Open Records

Rep. Coleman / Sen. Foote

Concerning public disclosure of a completed peace officer internal investigation file.

HB19-1035

Remove Fee Cap Electrical Inspection Local Government

Higher Education

Reps. Rich & Roberts / Sens. Woodward & Ginal

Concerning an increase in the flexibility to set fees for electrical inspections that are not conducted by the state.

HB19-1065

Public Hospital Boards Of Trustees

Reps. Soper & Roberts / Sen. Rankin

Concerning public hospital boards of trustees, and, in connection therewith, eliminating the restriction that a board may not include more than four local residents and allowing a board to unilaterally acquire real or personal property by lease if the board has designated the public hospital as an enterprise.

HB19-1007

Contribution Limits For County Offices

Rep. Sirota / Sen. Zenzinger

Concerning the establishment of contribution limits under the "Fair Campaign Practices Act" for candidates for county offices, and, in connection therewith, making an appropriation.

HB19-1201

Board Of Education Executive Session Negotiations Strategy

Reps. Kipp & Wilson / Sens. Coram & Story

Concerning the ability of a board of education of a school district to meet in executive session to discuss the district's strategy in conducting negotiations relating to certain employment-related agreements.

HB19-1078

Landowner Consent Listing National Register

Reps. Lewis / Sens. Marble & Garcia

Concerning a requirement that consent of the owner of real property be obtained before the property may be listed on the national register of historic places.

HB19-1197

Protect Social Workers Personal Information on Internet

Reps. Carver & Singer / Sens. Lee & Gardner

Concerning restrictions on making public the personal information of government employees whose official duties involve child abuse and neglect cases.

SB19-147

Sunset Seed Potato Grower Regulation

Sens. Hisey & Sonnenburg / Reps. Valdez & Catlin

Concerning the continuation of the seed potato act, and, in connection therewith, implementing the recommendations contained in the 2018 sunset report by the department of regulatory agencies.

SB19-148

Sunset Process Seed Potato Advisory Committee

Sens. Hisey & Sonnenburg / Reps. Valdez & Catlin

Concerning the continuation of the seed potato advisory committee, and, in connection therewith, implementing the recommendations contained in the 2018 sunset report by the department of regulatory agencies.

SB19-076

CDOT Colorado Department Of Transportation Consulting Engineer Contracts

Sen. Scott / Reps. Rich & Valdez

Concerning the procurement of consulting engineer services for department of transportation construction projects.

HB19-1186

School Employment Background Check Clarification

Reps. McLachlan & Exum / Sens. Bridges & Cooke

Concerning fingerprinting options for background checks for school employees.

SB19-151

Sunset Emergency Planning Subcommittee

Sen. Bridges / Rep. Exum

Concerning the continuation of the emergency planning subcommittee, and, in connection therewith, implementing the recommendations contained in the 2018 sunset report by the department of regulatory agencies.

SB19-129

Regulation of Online Schools

Sen. Story / Rep. Froelich

Concerning the regulation of online schools.

SB19-006

Electronic Sales And Use Tax Simplification System

Sen. Williams / Reps. Kraft-Tharp & Van Winkle

Concerning an electronic sales and use tax simplification system, and, in connection therewith, requiring the office of information technology to conduct a sourcing method for the development of the system and requiring the department of revenue to establish the implementation of the system for the acceptance of returns and processing of payments for the sales and use tax levied by the state and any local taxing jurisdictions, and making an appropriation.

SB19-152

Sunset Public Safety Communications Subcommittee

Sen. Williams / Reps. Duran & Arndt

Concerning the continuation of the public safety communications subcommittee, and, in connection therewith, implementing the recommendations contained in the 2018 sunset report by the department of regulatory agencies.

HB19-1191

Allow Farm Stands On Any Size Principal Use Site

Rep. Arndt / Sen. Donovan

Concerning the ability of a farm stand to be operated on a principal use site of any sized land area regardless of whether the site has been zoned by a local government for agricultural operations.

HB19-1135

Clarify Income Tax Credit For Retrofitting A Home

Reps. Gray / Sens. Tate & Winter

Concerning a clarification that the income tax credit for retrofitting a residence to increase a residence's accessibility is available for changes made to a residence that benefit a qualified individual's dependent.

Important Dates

Sine Die: May 3, 2019