



Legislative Newsletter



February 14, 2017

14305 E. Alamenda Ave., Ste. 300
Aurora CO 80012
Tel: 303-344-1500
Fax: 303-344-1564
www.aurorachamber.org

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

"Love is all you need."-Paul McCartney

Kefalas on database open records bill: 'We're ready to engage'

Colorado Statesman

State Sen. John Kefalas has been working for years to open state databases to the public through the Colorado Open Records Act. His latest bill on the topic was scheduled for a hearing Monday, but news came hours before the hearing was set to begin that Kefalas would have to wait another week to start debate on his bill.

"I found out maybe five minutes before hand," he said, explaining that Senate State Affairs committee Chair Ray Scott delivered news of the delay in person on the floor of the chamber right before the Senate opened for business. "I think [Scott] took leadership in the Senate by surprise, too. They told me they didn't know we'd be laid over."

Sources said the delay came just to give committee members more time to gather information. The hearing is being rescheduled for next week, probably Tuesday. Sooner is better than later, said Kefalas. The clock is ticking. February 16 is the deadline for most non-budget-related Senate bills to have moved through committees and to the chamber floor for a vote.

Taxpayers foot the bill for government-paid lobbyists; officials say they're necessary

The Tribune

Got a certain piece of legislation you're keeping an eye on at the Colorado Legislature this year? Chances are, a government entity has a position on it, and it uses tax dollars on lobbyists in the hopes of getting their way.

The Tribune filed a Colorado Open Records Act request with local cities, school districts, colleges and universities, and all but one - Centennial BOCES - has a contract with a lobbyist. All told, Greeley-Evans School District 6, Weld County, the city of Greeley, Aims Community College and the University of Northern Colorado will spend \$233,000 this year on lobbyists.

For the money, government entities get updates on legislation that may affect them, as well as efforts to push those entities' desires on state lawmakers.

'Extremely Unnecessarily Expensive:' Future Of Colorado's Health Care Exchange Under Discussion

KUNC Radio

In the midst of an ongoing national fight about the future of the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, a measure to replace Colorado's health care exchange is igniting passion in Denver.

On Feb. 7, people rallied outside the state capitol to protest repealing the Affordable Care Act, while in the capitol, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on SB 3, the Repeal Colorado Health Benefit Exchange Bill.

Progressive group 'Save My Care,' who is organizing a cross-country bus tour, says that more than a half million people in Colorado would lose healthcare coverage if the Affordable Care Act is repealed.

Colorado GOP launches campaign against insurance exchange

Associated Press

Colorado Republicans launched their opening attack on the health insurance exchange Tuesday. Just don't call it an attack on Obamacare.

Colorado Republicans sounded strikingly different than in years past when talking about their proposal to abolish the state-run health insurance exchange, called Connect For Health Colorado. Instead of tying the exchange to the federal health care law, or Obamacare, Republicans bristled at suggestions that the move aims to undo it.

The bill "does not repeal anyone's insurance policies," insisted Sen. Jim Smallwood, a Parker Republican and insurance agent who sponsored the bill.

"It's not an attempt to indict former President Obama or his legacy."

House Republicans say speaker's remarks confound transportation talks

ColoradoPolitics.com

House Republicans say Speaker Crisanta Duran tossed a grenade into transportation-funding conversations, perhaps the most important issue facing the legislature this year.

Conversations have become complicated as Gov. John Hickenlooper, a Democrat, is asking for the legislature to come up with a proposal sooner than later.

"I don't think we should let it wait until the end of the legislative session," Hickenlooper said Thursday while addressing the Colorado Municipal League. "I just think we all have to sit down ... let's say by the end of March ... or else we're going to kick this can down the road again."

Transportation funding conversations still jammed by partisan gridlock

ColoradoPolitics.com

Senate Republican leaders said Monday that transportation funding conversations have been moving as slow as a morning commute on Interstate 25.

"We're still talking, so we'll call that progress," said Senate President Kevin Grantham of Canon City.

Republicans and Democrats still disagree over whether money should come from a bonding initiative, or a sales tax increase.

Should Colorado charter schools get a share of local tax increases? Some Colorado lawmakers think so.

Denver Post

Teachers at the Ricardo Flores Magón Academy charter school in Westminster have been forced to take four days of unpaid leave to help balance this year's budget.

The office manager is rationing paper because of a budget that is on "a shredded shoestring," as school leader Kaye Taavialma puts it. If the vacuum breaks, Taavialma doesn't know how she'll replace it.

Such financial challenges are not unusual at many charter schools in Colorado, and yet another attempt to share more local tax revenue with charters is scheduled to get its first legislative test Thursday.

Colorado releases ESSA state plan draft for comment

Colorado Department of Education Press Release

The Colorado Department of Education today released the draft of its state plan for how it intends to implement the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for public review and to collect feedback.

"We are proud today to release the draft of Colorado's ESSA plan, which is the culmination of a year's worth of hard work, thoughtful conversations and deep consideration about Colorado's education system," said Colorado Education Commissioner Katy Anthes.

This plan will be open for public comment for 30 days, from today to March 10. The comments the state receives will be compiled and included with the plan when it is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and incorporated into the plan as appropriate.

ESSA was signed into law in December 2015 with the intention of shifting the country's education law from relying more on federal oversight to giving states more flexibility and more decision-making power at the local level. Colorado, with a history of innovation and fierce individualism, fully embraces this approach to education.

Last year CDE launched a statewide tour that visited seven sites and discussed the plan with approximately 1,500 attendees. Since February 2016, the state has held more than 170 meetings on ESSA and received nearly 4,000 comments about the plan.

In August, CDE created a hub-and-spoke committee process to consider every aspect of the ESSA guidelines. About 130 community members joined seven topical spoke committees that held 30 meetings altogether since August. The hub committee with more than 20 statewide leaders held eight lengthy meetings. Since they began meeting last summer, committee members have given generously of their time, made some tough decisions, and have worked hard to produce this draft of the ESSA plan. The public also engaged in decision points through online surveys that collected about 840 responses.

The final plan to be approved by the State Board of Education and signed off on by the governor will be submitted to the USDE in April.

CDE will also issue a report in the coming months that highlights the various perspectives and feedback considered through this entire process.

PERA bill to shake up board membership has state treasurer in its corner

ColoradoPolitics.com

Senate Bill 158 could shake up the PERA board that oversees Colorado's \$42 billion retirement fund for state employees and teachers to add fewer representatives from the workforce, younger board members and more financial experts.

Sen. Jack Tate of Centennial and Rep. Dan Nordberg are sponsoring the bill, but state Treasurer Walker Stapleton, a frequent PERA critic, is behind the proposal.

"This bill will make sure that the board has a greater range of experience in investment management, economics, accounting, pension administration, or actuarial analysis, while minimizing the appearance of conflicts of interest in matters dealing with PERA's solvency and the financial liabilities of the State," Tate said in a statement released by Stapleton's office. "As a result, we can look forward to a more intellectually honest discussion of what the future holds."

Gov. Hickenlooper announces Communications Office appointments

Office of the Governor

Governor John Hickenlooper announced today two appointments to the Governor's Communications Office. Marie Logsden has been appointed Director of Strategic Communications and Jacque Montgomery has been appointed Press Secretary.

Logsden spent the past 13 years with Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains. She recently served as Senior Vice President of Communications, Learning and Diversity, where she provided leadership to the nonprofit health care provider. Logsden will be responsible for leading the State's communication strategy and connecting the work the administration does with the people of Colorado.

"We are thrilled to have Marie join our staff," Governor Hickenlooper said. "For years Marie has worked at the intersection of policy and communications, and her strategic approach and deep expertise are the perfect combination to lead the communications effort."

Joining the communications team as Press Secretary is Jacque Montgomery. A former broadcast news journalist, Jacque has held media relations roles at Kaiser Permanente Colorado and at the University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medical Campus. She most recently served as Executive Communications Consultant at Kaiser Permanente Colorado. Jacque will be the main media contact for the Office of the Governor.

"Jacque is a highly respected, talented leader who brings a wealth of experience to our team," Governor Hickenlooper said.

Holly Shrewsbury, Director of Communications to Lt. Gov. Donna Lynne and Deputy Director of Communications to the Governor who has served as the interim Director of Communications during the transition, announced that she will leave for private practice on March 15, 2017.

"Holly has been an invaluable asset to this team and we wish her continued success in her future professional endeavors," Governor Hickenlooper said.

Both Marie and Jacque will join the Hickenlooper staff on February 22, 2017.

Gov. Hickenlooper Announces Boards and Commission Appointments

Office of the Governor

The Discovery Project Steering Committee was created to develop, enhance and maintain a statewide discovery sharing system to create more predictable state costs associated with criminal discovery.

For a term expiring July 1, 2017:

- Brittany Beth Lewton, JD of Sterling, to serve as a district attorney from a rural judicial district, and occasioned by the resignation of Thom Kirk LeDoux of Canon City, appointed.

The Sickle-Cell Anemia Advisory Committee uses the existing staff and facilities of the University of Colorado School of Medicine to establish programs and conduct research for the care and treatment of persons suffering from sickle-cell anemia. The Board is composed of eleven members representing hospitals, voluntary agencies interested in sickle-cell anemia, medical specialists in sickle-cell anemia patient care, and the general public.

For terms expiring January 31, 2021:

- Lee Francis Allen, Jr. of Aurora, to serve as a representative of a voluntary agency interested in sickle-cell anemia, reappointed;
- Carol Susan Walton, MS, CGC of Arvada, to serve as a medical specialist in sickle-cell anemia patient care, reappointed.

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

For a term expiring February 1, 2019:

- Tania E. Zeigler of Denver, to serve as a member with expertise in digital health, and occasioned by the resignation of Mary Anne Leach of Castle Rock, appointed;

For terms expiring February 1, 2020:

- Ann Elizabeth Boyer, MD, MPH&TM of Denver, to serve as a consumer engaged in health care, appointed;
- William Adam Brown of Denver, to serve as a representative of health insurance providers, appointed;
- Jonathan Gottsegen of Denver, to serve as the designee of the Governor's Office of Information Technology, appointed;
- Christopher Stewart Wells of Denver, to serve as the designee of the Department of Public Health and Environment, reappointed;
- Herbert K. Wilson, Jr. of Westminster, to serve as the designee of the Department of Human Services, reappointed.

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

For a term expiring July 1, 2017:

- Carolyn Lucey Sanders, RN, PhD, NEA-BC, FACHE of Greenwood Village, a licensed professional nurse engaged in nursing service administration, and occasioned by the resignation of Matthew Paul Fogel of Aurora, appointed;

for a term expiring July 1, 2018:

- Kimberly Anne Allegretti of Englewood, a member of the public, and occasioned by the resignation of Jacque Nichols Riordan of Denver, appointed;

for a term expiring July 1, 2019:

- Chrissy Roberts, LPN of Denver, to serve as a licensed practical nurse, and occasioned by the resignation of Theresa Louise Lindsey, RN, BSN of Westminster, appointed.

Senate Confirms DeVos as Education Secretary with VP Mike Pence breaking 50-50 tie

Denver Post

Charter school advocate Betsy DeVos won confirmation as education secretary Tuesday by the slimmest of margins, pushed to approval only by the historic tie-breaking vote of Vice President Mike Pence.

Two Republicans, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, joined Democrats in a marathon effort to derail the nomination of the wealthy Republican donor. The Senate historian said Pence's vote was the first by a vice president to break a 50-50 tie on a Cabinet nomination.

Despite the win, DeVos emerged bruised from the highly divisive nomination fight. Opposed by half the Senate, she faced criticism, even ridicule for lack of experience and confusion during her confirmation hearing. At one point, she said some schools should have guns because of the threat of grizzly bears.

Calculator

Days Left to Sine Die: 86

House Bills Introduced: 182

Senate Bills Introduced: 178

Dead Bills: 31