

COLORADO STATE SENATE

MAJORITY OFFICE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2014

The Colorado Senate – week in review



DENVER -- The legislature is on day 52 with a total of 479 bills and resolutions introduced as February 28, 2014. Gov. Hickenlooper has signed 35 of those bills into law.

In an effort to help everyone keep pace, here is a week in review of the Senate for February 24-28.

MONDAY, FEB. 24

The Senate passed Sen. Rachel Zenzinger's [HB 14-1079](#), which will help Colorado businesses by giving them access to further capital that allows them to expand and hire employees. One approach to raising capital in Colorado is through limited registration public offerings. This bill allows Colorado businesses to raise \$5 million from limited registration public offerings within a 12-month period, up from \$1 million -- filling a gap that occurs between funding available from friends, family, and angels and funding available from venture capitalists. This bill is awaiting Gov. Hickenlooper's signature to become law.

Sen. Cheri Jahn successfully navigated [SB 14-073](#) through the Senate Business, Labor and Technology Committee. The bill addresses a public health problem that plagues several communities in Colorado: brownfield areas. Brownfield areas are environmentally contaminated areas that have been left abandoned, unused, or underused. This bill extends a state tax credit for environmental remediation and redevelopment activities, effectively leveraging private funds to clean up and revitalize blighted areas.

TUESDAY, FEB. 25

With Sen. Gail Schwartz as the driving force, [HB 14-1021](#) cruised through the Senate Transportation Committee. This bill stiffens penalties for certain driving violations on Independence Pass, with the goal of decreasing unnecessary traffic delays and improving public safety. Specifically, the bill raises the fine for the operator of an oversize or overweight vehicle who violates a road closure or road restriction from \$500 to \$2,000, and, when the violation of a

restriction (e.g., chains required) results in the closure of a travel lane, the fine is increased to \$2,500. In addition, two license suspension points are imposed for each of these violations.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 26

Sen. John Kefalas worked to eliminate the waiting list in Colorado for developmental disability services. The Senate Health and Human Services Committee voted unanimously to approve this bipartisan bill ([HB 14-1051](#)). The bill requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to develop a strategic plan for enrolling people with intellectual and developmental disabilities into home-based and community-based programs as soon as the services are needed. As of today, nearly 9,000 Coloradans are waiting for vital developmental disability services - with about 2,600 waiting for Medicaid waiver developmental disability services and about 6,200 waiting for family support services.

The Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee approved Sen. Lois Tochtrop's bill to expand renewal options for concealed handgun permits. The bill, [HB 14-1166](#), allows a permit holder to renew a non-temporary permit with the sheriff in the location in which he or she resides, maintains a secondary residence, or owns or leases property for business purposes. The bill also allows a permit holder to renew a temporary permit with the sheriff in the location in which he or she resides or in which the circumstances giving rise to the emergency exist. The renewing sheriff must contact the office of the sheriff who originally issued the permit and confirm that it has not been revoked or suspended.

THURSDAY, FEB. 27

Gov. Hickenlooper [signed 28 bills](#) into law. One of those laws, [HB 14-1004](#), sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Nicholson, allows the Governor to authorize individual financial assistance for natural disaster-affected areas not covered by a Presidential disaster declaration. This is one of the bills created through the bipartisan Flood Disaster Study Committee.

Sen. Irene Aguilar, MD was also very busy on Thursday, presenting three healthcare bills to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee – all three were approved. The first bill, [SB 14-144](#), will send more primary care physicians to rural and underserved parts of Colorado while creating much-needed residency training opportunities for medical students. Next, [SB 14-050](#) addresses healthcare costs for low-income Coloradans by specifying what information hospitals must provide regarding financial assistance, charity care and payment plan options. Lastly, SB 14-016, which was [amended](#) in committee, addresses state regulation of freestanding emergency medical centers.

The Senate Education Committee approved [SB 14-124](#), which establishes the School Turnaround Leaders Development Program. Sen. Rachel Zenzinger sponsored the legislation as a way to help the 190 schools and 16 school districts that are categorized as Priority Improvement or Turnaround. Through the program, schools and districts can apply for grants for leadership training. Senate Appropriations Committee will hear SB 14-124 next.

FRIDAY, FEB. 28

Sen. Linda Newell worked to protect Colorado's environment through [SB 14-029](#), which creates a self-funded, statewide paint stewardship program for the recycling, reuse, and disposal of post-consumer architectural paint. The Senate gave final approval to the bill and sent it to the Colorado House of Representatives for consideration.

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About the Senate Majority

Eighteen Democrats comprise the majority of Colorado's 35-member Senate. Leadership for the 69th General Assembly includes Senate President Morgan Carroll; President Pro Tempore Lucia Guzman; Majority Leader Rollie Heath; Assistant Majority Leader Irene Aguilar, Caucus Chair Jeanne Nicholson, and Majority Whip Gail Schwartz.

Breaking news, legislator biographies and photos are available at coloradosenate.org.