

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2017

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GOP VOTES DOWN ZENZINGER BILL BACKED BY SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

Denver, CO -- Republican members of the Senate's Committee for State, Veterans & Military Affairs voted on a 3-2 straight-party vote to kill Senate Bill 17-092 sponsored by State Senator Rachel Zenzinger, D-Arvada, this afternoon. Also known as the "Immunity Peace Officer Background Checks" bill, it was designed to address recruiting problems that had received widespread public scrutiny the last couple of years.

Without voicing any public objection, three Republican members of the Senate Committee voted to kill the bill.

"This expansion of the information-sharing would have benefited everyone," said Senator Zenzinger. "My local law enforcement approached me initially about this legislation, and came today to testify in support because it would have created a bigger pool of job candidates, increased the hiring agencies' confidence in the integrity of the candidates, and given candidates within the private sector a better chance of landing a job."

"Needless to say, I am incredibly disappointed this bill died on a party-line vote, despite no opposing testimony appearing today. I thank the law enforcement officers for coming out to testify in support of the bill, and will continue to work with my local police officers and sheriffs to ensure they have all the resources and

support they need to protect our community.”

While a related bill (HB16-1262) had partially fixed the law enforcement recruiting challenge, Zenzinger’s follow-up bill would have extended the provisions of last year’s bill, and would have allowed hiring agencies to collect complete background information about candidates from non-public/private agencies. Under the terms of last year’s bill, which passed out of the House and Senate with unanimous support, public agencies receive a waiver and hence hold immunity from possible legal liability when they share employment files. Without Zenzinger’s proposal, non-public/private agencies lack immunity from legal liability in connection with the sharing of employment files, and so non-public/private agencies are reluctant to share.

Zenzinger’s bill had the explicit endorsement of Colorado Council of Police Chiefs, County Sheriffs of Colorado, Arvada Police Department, Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office and Colorado Municipal League.

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